

Geographies of Children and
Young People 5

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Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations

 Springer

Geographies of Children and Young People

Volume 5

Editor-in-Chief

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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: 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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Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations

With 10 Figures and 2 Tables

 Springer

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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 sub-discipline within a Major Reference Work (MRW). Springer Major Reference Works are produced in such a way that updating and editing of the online version can be done every few years. This means that the publication does not fix the data, debates, and delivery but rather moves and evolves with the subdiscipline itself. The intention and expectation of this MRW is that this substantive collection will be *the* go-to resource for scholars, educators, and practitioners working with children and young people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

National University of Singapore, Singapore
May 20, 2015

Tracey Skelton
MA Oxon, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Preface

This volume focuses on the geographical dimensions of children and young people's relationships in all of their diverse forms. This includes relationships within the family (including parent/child relations, grandparent/grandchild relations, and sibling relations), relationships with nonrelated adults, and relationships between children and young people themselves. Engaging with the latest research in the field, the chapters in this volume provide important perspectives on key topics in the study of children and young people's relationships, offering both empirical evidence and a range of theories and concepts to help orient readers to important and emerging areas of inquiring and setting agendas for future research. Although all chapters address (albeit in highly varied ways) issues of key concern to geographers related to space, place, community, and environment, they are also decidedly interdisciplinary in nature, with insights not only from geography but also anthropology, sociology, education, psychology, and more. The chapters draw on research from across both Minority and Majority Worlds, illustrating both similarities and differences between the nature of children and young people's relationships in different contexts. Key themes that run through many of the chapters include identities, power, agency, and transforming social relations.

The volume is organized into three primary sections. Section I begins with a focus on familial relationships, an area in which there have been a number of notable geographical contributions in the past. This first section examines the spatial and social complexities of families, including the social and cultural dynamics of families as spatial units and the roles that children play in families. The section starts with chapters exploring broader conceptual issues related to the notion of intimacies (an increasingly prominent concept in the study of relationships), the negotiation of privacy, and the interplays of power, coping with economic upheaval, interdependencies, and the home. These are followed by more focused chapters that consider particular dimensions of children's familial relationships in diverse contexts, such as use of bedroom space, sibling relations, control of digital technologies, family food practices, management of health risks, and work practices.

While Section I focuses on familial relationships, including the dynamics of child/parent relations, Section II focuses on the geographical dimensions of adult/child relationships beyond the dynamics of families and across the lifecourse. It considers the role that intergenerationality plays in children and young people's lives

as well as broader issues related to the (potentially) intergenerational character of communities, networks, and movements. Of concern to many of the chapters is not just the realities of contemporary forms of intergenerational relationships, but also how they could be improved, with potential individual and social benefits. The section begins with broader conceptual issues and themes (child-adult relationships outside the home; intergenerational geographies and spaces; and the intergenerational city) and then turns to more focused chapters addressing current issues, themes, and research related to the geographies of intergenerationality including adoption, looked after children, and fertility (where relevant to geography). The concept of intergenerational justice is also given attention in the chapters from both a philosophical/theoretical perspective and from the perspective of lived experience.

Moving beyond the adult/child dynamics that featured prominently in Section II, Section III focuses on children and young people's relationships with one another. It explores the geographies and spatialities of affective relations and emotional practices among children and young people. Geographies of bodies and embodiment and their connection to identities form an important part of this section. The chapters explore diverse kinds of relationship formations between children and young people (e.g., friendship; sexual relations; bullying) and the spaces and places that facilitate, impede, and organize these relationships. Particular attention is given in a number of instances to the diverse moral judgments that societies make about the relative benefits, risks, and harms associated with different forms of relationship between children/young people. The role of technological transformation is also central to many of the chapters, as new forms of online social networks and other media transform the ways in which children and young people interact in real and virtual spaces.

Stirling, United Kingdom
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About the Editors



Samantha Punch is Professor of Sociology in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Stirling, Scotland. Her research interests are within the sociology of childhood/youth and the sociology of development, including food practices in residential care; children's work and education in Bolivia; the sustainable rural livelihoods in China, Vietnam, and India; youth transitions and migration in Latin America; sibling relationships; and young people's problems in Scotland.

Her current interest in Childhood Studies is about how to move forward the theoretical and methodological debates via cross-world dialogue between the Majority and Minority Worlds (literatures which are often kept separate). In particular, she is interested in processes of generationing and the relational aspects of power and agency within generational orderings. She is also currently working on a new research area regarding the card game of bridge; exploring the sociology of bridge including the social interactions of the game; gendered inequalities; learning across the lifecourse; and the potential links between bridge and delayed onset of dementia.

She is author of *Get Set for Sociology* (2005, Edinburgh University Press) and editor of *Sociology: Making Sense of Society* (2013, Pearson), *Global Perspectives on Rural Childhood and Youth* (2007, Routledge), *Children's Food Practices in Families and Institutions* (2011, Routledge), and *Children and Young People's Relationships: Learning Across Majority and Minority Worlds* (2013, Routledge).



Robert M. Vanderbeck is Professor of Human Geography and Head of the School of Geography at the University of Leeds. His research focuses on social differences, identities, relationships, and contemporary processes of social and legal exclusion. He has particular (often intersecting) interests in (a) childhood, youth, and intergenerational relationships; (b) sexualities; (c) religion; (d) race and ethnicity; and (e) changing urban environments. He has an enduring interest in the

processes that marginalize children and young people in contemporary society, and how these processes are related to constructions of social difference related not only to age (such as perceived differentials in competence and capability between “children” and “adults”), but also race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other issues. His interest in this area has been reflected in previous research studies on issues including young people’s contested uses of urban public space in the United States; the social exclusion of Gypsy-Traveler young people in the United Kingdom; young people’s social and environmental identities; and the narrative construction of the figure of the “inner-city” child in the United States. He also has extensive practical experience working with children and young people in diverse research and applied contexts, including young people from inner-city neighborhoods in the United States; young Gypsy-Travelers in England; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender young people in diverse contexts. He is the joint author of *Law, Religion and Homosexuality* (2014, Routledge) with Paul Johnson and joint editor of *Intergenerational Space* (2015, Routledge) with Nancy Worth. He is currently an investigator on the major Arts and Humanities Research Council research program INTERSECTION (Intergenerational Justice, Consumption and Sustainability in Comparative Perspective), involving fieldwork in the United Kingdom, China, and Uganda.

Editor-in-Chief



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

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

A/P Skelton was a founding editorial board member of the international journal *Children's Geographies* and has been the Viewpoints Editor since 2005 and became the Commissioning Editor for Asia in 2010. She is on the editorial boards of the following journals: *Geoforum*, the *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, *Geography Compass*, and *ACME: International Journal of Critical Geographies* (open access). She has coauthored 2 books, edited 3 collections, guest-edited 2 special

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

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Part I

**Geographies of Familial
Relationships and the Home**

Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations: Introduction

1

Samantha Punch and Robert M. Vanderbeck

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Abstract

A growing body of research across the social sciences draws attention to the complex geographies of children and young people's relationships. This chapter provides a critical introduction to the geographies of children's and young people's relationships. The notion of "generationings" is developed as a useful concept for understanding the ways in which particular generational positions in a society (e.g., adult/child) are constructed and sustained, rather than taking these positions as natural or unproblematic features of society. The chapter then proceeds in three primary sections based on different types of relationship.

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First, familial relationships and the home are explored, focusing particularly on family practices, parent/child relations, sibship and other intragenerational relationships within the family, and the concept of negotiated and constrained interdependencies. Second, extrafamilial intergenerational relationships and spaces are explored, focusing on the opportunities for and constraints on intergenerational relationships between children/young people and nonrelated adults. Finally, issues related to children and young people's friendships, peer group relations, and sexualities are examined, stressing how researching children and young people's relationships among themselves has much broader significance for understanding wider social processes.

Keywords

Children · Families · Intergenerational relations · Intragenerational relations · Young people · Generational order · Parents · Siblings · Interdependencies · Friendship

1 Introduction

This chapter introduces Vol. 5 of the *Major Reference Work on Geographies of Children, Young People and Families*. The volume, entitled "Families, Intergenerationality and Peer Group Relations," focuses on the geographies of children and young people's relationships both within and beyond families. The chapter seeks to provide an orientation to wider developments in understanding children and young people's relationships emanating from within both human geography and as well as other cognate disciplines in the social sciences. As the chapter shows, research and theory in diverse disciplines including sociology, anthropology, and the interdisciplinary fields of Childhood and Youth Studies have been highly influential for how human geography has approached questions of children and young people's relationships. The chapter begins with an exploration of the concepts of the "generational order" and "generationing," which, it is argued, can serve as useful tools for thinking through the processes that construct particular generational positions in society and the power relations involved in doing so. These concepts potentially have broader utility for understanding the diverse range of children and young people's relationships, including relationships with parents, other adult kin, siblings, nonkin adults, friends, peers, and others. The chapter then proceeds in three primary sections which correspond to the major sections of this volume: familial relationships; extrafamilial intergenerational relationships; and friendship, peer group relations, and sexualities.

Before proceeding, however, it is worth reflecting briefly on some issues related to the terminology which is used throughout the chapter and in the wider volume. First, it is important to note the occasional imprecision involved in the various terms used to refer to younger members of contemporary societies. Terms like "child" and "children" have a wide range of colloquial, social scientific, legal, and other meanings depending on context. For example, the rights contained within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are applicable to anyone under the

age of 18 in signatory states, even if a 17-year-old in an everyday context may well resent being categorized as a “child.” Societies have developed a variety of different hierarchical categorizations based on chronological age (e.g., “infants,” “toddlers,” “pre-teens,” and “adolescents”), with these terms also often carrying connotations of particular developmental characteristics that are assumed to correspond to a certain stage in the life course. These terminologies are historically particular and vary between languages and cultures. Becoming an adult in some cultures, for example, can be based more on the transition into a particular status associated with maturity (e.g., marriage) rather than the achievement of specific age (Vanderbeck 2007). The often indeterminate border between “children” and “youth”/“young people” is a potentially important one to reflect upon given that the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” (and the wider series of which it is a part) spans the concerns of both. Despite many points of overlap, there have also been somewhat separate trajectories to the respective interdisciplinary fields of Childhood Studies and Youth Studies. At the same time, however, the academic journal *Children’s Geographies* currently considers its mission to publish research that relates to the geographical worlds of children and young people under the age of 25. In this usage, the study of Children’s Geographies hypothetically spans beyond childhood and youth into realms that would often be considered adulthood. A journal such as *Youth Studies*, however, currently defines its focus on issues related to people aged 10–24, including at its younger end people who would often straightforwardly be considered to be children. It therefore becomes difficult to make a generalization about trends in fields such as Childhood Studies, Children’s Geographies, Youth Studies, and Youth Geographies (Evans 2008) given the often imprecise definitions, with both points of overlap and difference. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to attempt to resolve these terminological difficulties, they are raised here so that readers are aware of the hard-to-avoid slippages that can exist when these terms are used here or elsewhere in the volume.

Second, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of “generation,” a term which features frequently in the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” but which can be a source of considerable confusion given that it can be deployed in a variety of ways (Vanderbeck 2007). There are three dominant meanings of generation that one can identify in the social sciences. First, generation is often used to indicate a position within a system of family or kinship (e.g., “child,” “parent,” and “grandparent” within a three generation family). Second, generation can also be used to denote particular life stages associated with age, e.g., “child,” “adolescent,” “middle-aged adult,” and “older person.” The chapters in the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” thus often differentiate between “familial” intergenerational relationships and “extrafamilial” intergenerational relationships to avoid confusion between these two usages. Third, one can also speak of generations in terms of membership of a particular birth cohort, the members of which are sometimes posited to share certain experiences and characteristics as a result of their common historical position (e.g., Baby Boomers; Generation X; Millenials; the Digital Generation). Although there is a growing social science literature that engages with this conceptualization of generation, it is

the least prominent of the three (Vanderbeck 2016) and features less visibly in the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” than either generation as kinship position or generation as life stage. Although in some senses these three usages are analytically distinct, it should be stressed that there can be considerable overlap between these notions of generation in relation to the lived experience of individuals (Biggs and Lowenstein 2011).

Finally, it is important to clarify the particular metageographical terms (Lewis and Wigen 1997) that are employed in this chapter and other chapters in the volume to differentiate parts of the world based on level of wealth and development. The more recent terms of Majority World and Minority World are used (see also Panelli et al. 2007; Punch 2003) to refer to what has traditionally been known as “the developing world” and “the developed world.” The term Majority World reflects that the “majority” of population, poverty, land mass, and lifestyles is located in the less affluent continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, thereby shifting “the balance of our world views that frequently privilege ‘western’ and ‘northern’ populations and issues” (Punch and Tisdall 2014, p. 241). Such terms do risk over-homogenizing world areas: the “rising powers” of countries such as Brazil, China, and India do not fit comfortably within either category. Yet despite the diversity and differences, the terms Majority and Minority Worlds have fewer negative connotations compared with traditional dichotomies such as developed/developing, first world/third world, etc.

2 The Generational Order and Processes of Generationing

Within the interdisciplinary field of Childhood Studies, childhood is widely understood as a relational concept. Rather than treating childhood in isolation, Alanen and Mayall (2001) argue that childhood must be seen as part of a wider generational order that has broad significance for how societies are understood. However, this generational order is too often taken to be a natural or unproblematic feature of society, with most social researchers giving little attention to how this generational order is reproduced and sustained (see also Leonard 2015). Alanen proposes the concept of “generationing” as a way of capturing how the generational order is constituted by “a complex set of social processes through which people become (are constructed as) ‘children’ while other people become (are constructed as) ‘adults,’” (2001, pp. 20–21). For example, processes of generationing shape the nature of child-parent relations (Mayall 2002) such that:

... one position (such as the parental position) cannot exist without the other (child) position; also what parenting is – that is, action in the position of a parent – is dependent on its relation to the action ‘performed’ in the child position, and a change in one part is tied to change in the other. (Alanen 2001, p. 19)

The social construction of childhood and adulthood involves a relational process which involves the agency of both children and adults. Alanen refers to this

generationing process as a set of “practices” through which “the two generational categories of children and adults are recurrently produced and therefore . . . stand in relations of connection and interaction, of interdependence” (Alanen 2001, p. 21). These practices of the generational order include “childing” practices through which people are constructed as children and “adulthood” practices through which a distinct adult position is produced (Punch 2005). Given that “generationing” is a structural feature of child-adult interactions, it is somewhat surprising that Alanen and Mayall’s (2001) theoretical ideas have not been engaged with more thoroughly in the Childhood Studies literature. For example, how does one recognize that the generational order is being produced or decide which practices are involved in childing and adulthood? The generational order tends to be implicit rather than explored in an explicit way, and as a result the generational order is much less developed theoretically than, for example, the gender order (Punch 2016a).

Of course, a conception of the generational order based solely on a child-adult binary presents too simple a model of how processes of generationing work in contemporary societies [see, for example, the now extensive body of work that has emerged in the Minority World on so-called emerging adulthood (Arnett 2007)]. There remains considerable work to be done to understand both continuity and change in how categories of difference based on age and/or assumed maturity are delineated and the processes through which this delineation takes place. However, it is crucial to recognize that when one speaks, for example, of the need for new forms of intergenerational practice or for improved intergenerational relationships (whether in a familial or extrafamilial sense), one is not speaking about relationships between generations that exist in a natural and inevitable relation to one another, but rather that intergenerational (and intragenerational) relationships are themselves socially constructed and part of a generational order characterized by inequalities of power. One must also recognize that generational positions and identities intersect in complex ways with other forms of social difference such as class, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexuality, and disability, as a number of chapters in the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” emphasize (for example, Esser, ► Chap. 3, “Family Relations in Times of Austerity: Reflections from the UK”). Many of the chapters in the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” not only indicate the ways in which relationships are played out at the microlevel but how these are linked to broader structural issues, like class, gender, and the unequal processes of social change (such as, Bacon, ► Chap. 5, “Children’s Use and Control of Bedroom Space”; Finn, ► Chap. 4, “Young Adults Living at Home: Independence, Intimacy, and Intergenerational Relationships in Shared Family Spaces”). For example, Kustatscher, Konstantoni, and Emejulu (► Chap. 24, “Hybridity, Hyphens, and Intersectionality: Relational Understandings of Children and Young People’s Social Identities”) show how wider structural conditions shape children and young people’s experiential lives and that microsocial relations are key to an intersectional understanding of social identities.

One challenge for researchers in Childhood and Youth Studies has been to get scholars in other fields to take seriously the notion of a generational order. The example of Development Studies is illustrative here. In Roy Huijsmans’ recent

volume on “Generational Development” (2016), he argues that a relational approach that embraces processes of generationing can help to bridge the gap between Childhood Studies and Development Studies. These two fields have tended to remain quite separate (Punch and Tisdall 2014) but a more interdisciplinary approach could lead to greater reflection and learning in relation to childhoods and intergenerational relations across different parts of the world (Punch 2016b). Huijsmans’ recent volume strives to:

... capture twofold dynamics of how development, in its various conceptualisations, restructures generational social landscapes, and also how young people themselves, as constrained agents of development, renegotiate their role and position vis-à-vis others and in particular places and spaces of development. (Huijsmans 2016, p. 4)

This requires understanding relationality in generational terms (see also Esser et al. 2016; Esser, ► Chap. 21, “Children’s Agency and Welfare Organizations from an Intergenerational Perspective”). Nevertheless, considerable work remains to be done in terms of the engagement between Childhood and Youth Studies/Geographies for other subfields to engage more rigorously with the generational order. Furthermore, it would be appropriate to use the term “generational orderings” in the plural in order to reflect the dynamic nature processes of generationing.

3 Section I: Geographies of Familial Relationships and the Home

3.1 Family Practices

It is widely recognized that the study of families must take into account not only how families are composed but also what they do in practice, such as caring, sharing resources, meeting responsibilities, and fulfilling obligations (Silva and Smart 1999). Many of the chapters in the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” proceed in the spirit of Morgan (1996) proposal to investigate what he calls “family practices,” a concept that brings attention to how families are products of daily interactions, routines, and exchanges in particular spatial contexts in ways that may be both enabling and constraining. Familial relationships can be experienced as a mixture of love and hate, burden and duty, support and neglect, approval and disapproval (see Finn, ► Chap. 4, “Young Adults Living at Home: Independence, Intimacy, and Intergenerational Relationships in Shared Family Spaces”; Punch, ► Chap. 6, “Negotiating Sibling Relationships and Birth Order Hierarchies”).

Recent demographic and social changes in family structures have contributed to an increased focus on relationships (Punch and Tisdall 2014), rather than seeing the family as a social institution (Morgan 1996). Given that there are a range of ways of “doing family,” geographers explore what family means to people at different stages over the life course (Finn, ► Chap. 4, “Young Adults Living at Home:

Independence, Intimacy, and Intergenerational Relationships in Shared Family Spaces”), as well as the diverse spatialities and scales through which familial relationships are constituted (Hallman 2010). Sociologist Finch has proposed the concept of “display” as a novel means of apprehending the diversity and fluidity of contemporary family relationships. Finch defines “displaying families” as:

The process by which individuals, and groups of individuals, convey to each other and to relevant others that certain of their actions do constitute ‘doing family things’ and thereby confirm that these relationships are ‘family’ relationships. (Finch 2007, p. 73)

Finch argues that “displaying” family is as important as “doing” family (see also Dermott and Seymour 2011). It is necessary to “display” family in order to demonstrate to others that one’s actions and interactions are family practices that are recognized as such by others. This can be even more relevant where relationships take a nonconventional form such as in residential child care (McIntosh et al. 2011) or in “families of choice” (Weeks et al. 2001) wherein the state does not necessarily grant recognition to the relationships involved, such as in cases where a person lives alone but maintains intimate relationships with others. Finch also asserts that the need for display varies over time, as relationships are renegotiated at different stages over the life course or according to evolving circumstances. Hence, the concept of display accords with a perception of families as constituted by qualitative relationship lived out in specific contexts “rather than a thing” (Morgan 1996, p. 186). This highlights the contingent nature of contemporary family relationships, which need to be both “done” and “displayed” in order to recognize their family-like quality:

It is precisely because relationships are both defined and experienced by their quality – not simply their existence – that family relationships need to be displayed as well as ‘done’. Displaying families confirms the qualitative character of a given relationship, at a particular point in time, as ‘family’. In itself this requires a message to be conveyed that this relationship ‘works’ as a family relationship. If it does not work, then its existence as a family relationship is called into question. (Finch 2007, pp. 79–80)

Over the past two decades there has been a challenge to the use of “family” for understanding close relationships. Concepts such as “intimacies” (Jamieson 1998, 2005), “personal life” (Smart 2007), and kinship (Mason 2008) have been proposed as new ways of referring to human connectedness. In her research on *Researching Intimacy in Families*, Gabb (2008, p. 1) states that: “Intimacy is about our everyday relationships and affective interactions . . . It now symbolises an emergent intellectual framework around the detraditionalization of interpersonal exchanges and kin formation” (see also Valentine 2008 for reflections on the geographies of intimacy). Gabb’s work strives to increase understanding of the ways in which families show love and affection, both within and across generations (see also Fairbrother and Ellis, ► Chaps. 8, “Everyday Family Food Practices,” and ► 3, “Family Relations in Times of Austerity: Reflections from the UK”; Rowa-Dewar and Stjerna, ► Chap. 9, “Health Risks in the Home: Children and Young People’s Accounts”). Jamieson defines intimacy as follows:

In everyday current usage, intimacy is often presumed to involve practices of close association, familiarity and privileged knowledge, strong positive emotional attachments, such as love, and a very particular form of ‘closeness’ and being ‘special’ to another person, associated with high levels of trust. Recent discussions of intimacy emphasise one particular practice of generating ‘closeness’ above all others, self-disclosure. Intimacy of the inner self, ‘disclosing intimacy’ or ‘self expressing intimacy’ has become celebrated in popular culture as the key to a ‘good relationship’ although some academic work has suggested that this type of intimacy may be more of an ideological construct than an everyday lived reality. (Jamieson 2005, p. 189)

Building on this, Smart (2007) has developed the term “personal life,” not to replace the “family,” but rather as an inclusive concept that reflects the complexities and ambiguities of relationships and intimacy:

‘The personal’ designates an area of life which impacts closely on people and means much to them, but which does not presume that there is an autonomous individual who makes free choices and exercises unfettered agency. This means that the term ‘personal life’ can invoke the social, indeed it is conceptualized as always already part of the social. This is because the very possibility of personal life is predicated upon a degree of self-reflection and also connectedness with others. (Smart 2007, p. 28)

The concept of “personal life” incorporates a sense of fluidity and diversity, connecting family spaces with other arenas such as work, education, and leisure. Thus these alternative approaches of intimacy and personal relationships emphasize “the quality rather than the structure or status of relationships” (Gillies 2011, p. 1). While both intimacies and personal life have become popular and useful lenses for exploring human connectedness, some argue that these recent terms are not adequate replacements for the notion of familial relationships (Gillies 2011; Morgan 2011) and that family must be retained as a distinct concept to be researched alongside intimate and personal relationships. Ribbens McCarthy notes that the pervasiveness of the language of family “may be used in the most taken-for-granted ways, as something that is unremarkable while also highly significant” (2012, p. 72). She suggests that:

‘Family’ is able to pull many disparate relational strands together – including the possibility of family culture in its own right, the significance of time past and future, and the sense of being part of something bigger – in a way that other terms are unable to do. (Ribbens McCarthy 2012, p. 85)

Along similar lines, Morgan (2011) states three reasons for retaining a focus on families: some significant relationships are not categorizable outside of the framework of family relations (such as sibship, twinship, and extended kinship); family is a dominant discourse in public life (used by the media, politicians, and religious leaders); and “family continues to matter” in everyday life. As he notes, “while it is true that not all intimate relationships are family so it is also true that not all family relationships are intimate” (2011, p. 7). Ribbens McCarthy (2012) also stresses the potent ways that the term “family” is used in everyday life with favorable connotations

of closeness, deep feeling, care, and stability while also encapsulating the constraining aspects of family expectations and inequalities of power (see also Finn, ► Chap. 4, “[Young Adults Living at Home: Independence, Intimacy, and Intergenerational Relationships in Shared Family Spaces](#)”). She claims that the language of “family” encourages an understanding of “the complex interweaving of relationality, autonomy and connection in the context of close relationships that persist over time” (2012, p. 82). Thus, as Gillies (2011) suggests, it is useful to apply the “family” in a critical manner alongside a critical use of the “personal.” Furthermore, K. Davies (2015b) emphasizes how these approaches can be linked to children and young people’s relationships as their lives are relational (Carsten 2004; Esser et al. 2016; Mason 2004) and embedded (Smart 2007) in webs of connection over time and space.

3.2 Parent-Child Relations

Many forms of intimate relationship in the contemporary world continue to be marked by forms of inequality (including gendered inequalities) as well as transience (resulting in part from changing social norms and legal frameworks relating to the dissolution of relationships and the increased social acceptance of nonmarital forms of sexuality). However, this fragility of intimacy is less likely to apply to the parent-child relationship, and some argue that parent-child relations are perhaps more permanent and durable than marriage (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Gabb 2008). It is often also noted that, especially in many Minority World countries, there seems to be a more markedly democratic character to parent-child relations in recent decades than was evident in the past, something in part resulting from changing understandings of what constitutes effective parenting (with highly authoritarian forms of parenting often spoken of disparagingly in popular and academic discourse about “good” parenting). As Jensen and McKee (2003, p. 1) argue:

Modern childhood is often portrayed in terms of enhanced democratic relationships between parents and children, with the assumption that children’s negotiating power has increased over time. The suggestion is that families today permit more individual choice and facilitate negotiated relationships.

Childhood Studies recognizes that children are social actors who participate in and actively construct their everyday experiences and relationships, both within and outside of families (James et al. 1998; Mayall 2002). Nevertheless, there should be some caution regarding the extent of children’s ability to negotiate with more powerful adult social actors, such as their parents:

Within a market society themes of self-actualization, individualism and the ideology of personal choice may be masking persistent inequalities between children and adults, and children and parents. (Jensen and McKee 2003, p. 167)

Particularly in the Minority World there is a greater awareness of children's rights and an increase in child-centered policy development but there are still limitations on the ways in which children can influence and shape their daily lives. The generational distribution of power within families tends to remain unequal:

In reconceptualising children as social actors, this is not to argue that children are now seen to wield more power *vis-à-vis* adults, but rather to understand them as having the potential and the competences to exercise power. . . . Children's lives are lived within the structural context of power in which adults regulate children's bodies and minds. In their general status as children, and in their particular statuses as sons and daughters, children's ability to act autonomously and their access to resources are constrained. (Brannen et al. 2000, p. 178)

Similarly, others warn that it is important to consider children's agency in relation to generational orderings (Punch 2016a) and avoid seeing it:

. . . as a universal, unitary phenomenon. It is the task of a sociology of children to document that capacity when observed, but also to recognise incapacity, abuse, power relationality, torture and exploitation. But the task also relies on a recognition of children's dependency. (Oswell 2013, p. 280)

Communication between children and parents is an issue that can be problematic within many families (Solomon et al. 2002). Parents who seek information from their teenage children may intend their enquiries as a way of developing closeness, but this can be perceived as controlling by the young people themselves. Open communication between children and parents can engender intergenerational power struggles (see also Punch 2005):

For parents, information gain means the retention of power and control, while for teenagers, withholding information from their parents ensures their privacy, power and identity. (Solomon et al. 2002, p. 965)

In the Minority World, contemporary families are sometimes represented as having become more democratic and equal, yet mutual disclosure of honesty and openness between children and parents does not necessarily reflect the realities of everyday interactions. As Finn (► Chap. 4, "Young Adults Living at Home: Independence, Intimacy, and Intergenerational Relationships in Shared Family Spaces") argues, intimacy and family can be challenging and the spatial practices of living together echo and/or move beyond power relations. It is increasingly recognized that family relationships, between and across generations, are subject to negotiation and compromise (for example, between siblings see Bacon, ► Chap. 5, "Children's Use and Control of Bedroom Space"; Punch, ► Chap. 6, "Negotiating Sibling Relationships and Birth Order Hierarchies"). Family relations are unlikely to be either completely amicable or conflictual but rather are characterized by both cooperation and competition (Punch 2001). As Finch and Mason (1993) point out, on the one hand, families function as units of mutual support and solidarity, where moral obligations and expectations are fulfilled. On the other hand, such long-term

relationships also subject to negotiation, tension, and conflict. People work out responsibilities and commitments in their daily interactions: “Family responsibilities thus become a matter for negotiation between individuals and not just a matter of following normative rules” (Finch and Mason 1993, p. 12). Therefore, family relationships are constantly being renegotiated through parent-child and sibling negotiation (Punch 2001).

The changing role of parents in regulating and surveilling children’s lives is linked to recent issues involving children’s use of the Internet and social media (see KucirKova and Sakr, this volume). For example, within contemporary Britain, parents are expected to be responsible for their children’s physical, emotional, and social well-being. Buckingham (2011) emphasizes that discourses of “good parenting” promote a democratic, “companionate” approach to child rearing. This can lead to some parents over-protecting their children or over-compensating with material goods. Adult concerns for their children in public spaces (because of road safety and fears of stranger danger) mean that homes may be perceived as safer than streets or parks for children to play. While Rowa-Dewar and Stjerna (► Chap. 9, “Health Risks in the Home: Children and Young People’s Accounts”) remind us of the health risks within home settings, Livingstone (2009) suggests that the relative perception of home as a safe environment may result in children having media-rich bedrooms to compensate for their curtailed mobility and lack of independence in public spheres. Much of children’s time is structured and under adult surveillance, and it has been argued that “paranoid parenting” (Furedi 2008) may mean too much supervision and control of children by adults.

Nonetheless, geographical research on children and young people has provided a wealth of evidence demonstrating how children are not passive in relation to adult power, and that they employ strategies for avoiding the adult gaze and asserting some control over their use of time and space (Davies and Christensen, ► Chap. 2, “Sharing Spaces: Children and Young People Negotiating Intimate Relationships and Privacy in the Family Home”; Punch 2001). For example, Fairbrother and Ellis, (► Chap. 8, “Everyday Family Food Practices”) demonstrate how children play an active part in family food practices, while KucirKova and Sakr (this volume) discuss the ways children counteract their parents’ attempts to try to control their Internet use. Livingstone (2009) illustrates that older children in particular use social media to spend more time engaging with friends rather than family (see also Hatchell and Subrahmanyam, ► Chap. 20, “Sexuality and Intimacy: Adolescent Development in the Digital Sphere”). Intergenerational tensions are often amplified around the use of new technologies as children are more likely to be flexible and creative users compared with adults. As digital natives rather than digital residents (see Raghunandan 2016, ► Chap. 21, “Young People in the Digital Age: Metrics of Friendship”), the current generation of children and young people tend to develop greater online skills and new literacies more readily than their parents (Livingstone and Bober 2004). Internet communication technologies such as Skype have also opened up new ways for children and young people to maintain relationships with distant adult family members, such as parents who live separately (for example, due to divorce or working abroad) but also grandparents and other significant adult

relations (Tarrant 2015). Thus, while new technologies can be utilized to subvert adult (particularly parental) control, they can also serve to enhance and sustain familial relationships in new ways.

3.3 Intragenerational Relations Within Families

Research on familial relationships and identities in the social sciences has tended to focus on intergenerational relations to a much greater extent than intragenerational ones. Davies argues that:

... sociology as a discipline has tended to focus on the role of parents in shaping who we are through socialization. This is not to suggest that siblings have been overlooked entirely, and there is growing empirical interest in sibling relationships amongst some sociologists. However, there remains an emphasis upon the significance of intergenerational transmission in the formation of the self, and resultantly the role of *intra*-generational transmission remains largely unaccounted for in sociological theory. (2015b, p. 680)

This is similar to the use of generational orderings (Alanen and Mayall 2001; Punch 2016a) where there has been a tendency to explore intergenerational power relations more than intragenerational relations. A consideration of processes of generationing within Childhood Studies has tended to focus more on vertical relations between parents and children, rather than lateral relations such as between siblings. There have been critiques of the use of the term “lateral” because it suggests equality which overlooks the power imbalances within intragenerational relations (Davies 2015b; McIntosh and Punch 2009). While the nature of power is different between children and parents compared with between siblings (Punch 2005), nonetheless both vertical and lateral relationships should be taken into account particularly when considering the formation of social identities and sense of self (Davies 2015b). Davies’ work clearly demonstrates that “sibling identities can be constructed not only in relation to other siblings in the family, but also in relation to complex webs of relationships with and between others formed over time” (2015b, p. 692).

Similarly, Gulløv et al. (2015) caution that parents should not be perceived as the main determinant for the nature of sibling relations between children within families. They show that by exploring the dynamics of “horizontal” relations between siblings, it can be seen that the fluctuating practices and emotions shape the nature of family relatedness. They argue that:

Children and young people’s engagement – practical as well as emotional – in their sibling relationships mirrors more general sociological understandings of families as reservoir of emotions and intimacy rather than functional units. (Gulløv et al. 2015, p. 516)

Gulløv et al.’s research with Danish siblings thus demonstrates the ways that horizontal and vertical relations can be intertwined within families so that “it is not just parents’ routines, choices, needs and dreams that frame children’s relations; the reverse is also true” (2015, p. 514). Edwards and Weller (2014) also challenge the

assumption that parents tend to be perceived as central regarding gender socialization. In their longitudinal research of British children from diverse backgrounds, they show that siblings take an active role in constructing and reconstructing each other's gendered identities. In particular, they argue that not enough attention has been placed on the changes and continuities of sibling relations and gendered practices:

... there is a neglect of the complex ways in which children and young people actively shape the gendered and other aspects of their own and their siblings' identities over time and in different spaces. (2014, p. 187)

In line with Morgan's (1996) notion of "family practices," Edwards et al. (2006) conceptualize sibling relationships as "sibling practices." This focus on the "doing" of sibship allows an understanding to emerge of the ways in which siblings construct their relationships and identities (see Bacon, ► [Chap. 5, "Children's Use and Control of Bedroom Space"](#); Punch, ► [Chap. 6, "Negotiating Sibling Relationships and Birth Order Hierarchies"](#)). For example, it enables us to see how gendered power relations are enacted and challenged (Bacon 2012, p. 308).

3.4 Negotiated and Constrained Interdependencies Within and Between Generations

Discussions of generational orderings mostly refer to intergenerational relations (Huijsmans 2016), but can also include the dynamics of intragenerational relationships. Punch (2015) uses the notion of "negotiated and constrained interdependencies" as a way of counteracting the linear youth transition model which positions children as moving from dependence to independence. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of children's agency located within generational orderings and can be considered both within and across generations (see Esser, ► [Chap. 16, "Children's Agency and Welfare Organizations from an Intergenerational Perspective"](#)). As Edwards and Weller assert, "Feminist approaches often stress interdependency and how people's sense of self is relational; formed and shaped by interactions with other people" (2014, p. 188). A more relational understanding of family relationships highlights how processes of generationing are constructed, negotiated, and resisted within everyday interactions.

Negotiated and constrained interdependencies are applicable to child-adult relations across both the Majority and Minority Worlds. Bowlby et al. (2010) point out that many children in the Minority World have caring responsibilities particularly given recent structural changes such as the demise of the youth labor market, shifting gender roles, and new policies on social security and housing (see also Weller 2013). Furthermore, Rabain-Jamin et al. (2003) argue that sibling caring practices encourage relations of interdependence between children. Research in Tanzania and Uganda showed how sibling heads of household often cared for their younger siblings until their education was complete and their siblings were able to support

themselves (Evans 2012). Such sacrifices led to emotional bonds and stronger relations of interdependence between the siblings. Both Punch in Bolivia (2015) and Evans (2012) in Tanzania and Uganda found that intergenerational and intragenerational relations of interdependence persisted throughout the life course often being renegotiated and reciprocated across different contexts. Evans uses the framework of “sibling caringscapes” to explore the spatialities and temporalities of caring pathways:

This approach seeks to integrate young people’s everyday activities of caring with the emotional geographies and reflective positions that young people adopt and negotiate across different locales through time. (Evans 2012, p. 825)

Such an approach reminds us to incorporate a spatial and temporal lens, while not neglecting emotions, when exploring children and young people’s evolving relationships. This echoes Edwards and Weller’s (2014) longitudinal work with siblings and friends, which emphasizes the value of taking account of the situated changes and continuities that occur over the lifecourse in different contexts. Their research also highlights the interplays of power in different arenas such as the home, school, and neighborhood. Chapters in the first section of the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” explore such power relations in a variety of contexts including the negotiation of privacy (Davies and Christensen, ► Chap. 2, “Sharing Spaces: Children and Young People Negotiating Intimate Relationships and Privacy in the Family Home”), coping with economic upheaval (► Chap. 3, “Family Relations in Times of Austerity: Reflections from the UK”), use of bedroom space (Bacon, ► Chap. 5, “Children’s Use and Control of Bedroom Space”), control of digital technologies (Kucirkova and Sakr, ► Chap. 7, “Digital Technologies, Children’s Learning, and the Affective Dimensions of Family Relationships in the Home”), family food practices (Fairbrother and Ellis, ► Chap. 8, “Everyday Family Food Practices”), management of health risks (Rowa-Dewar and Stjerna, ► Chap. 9, “Health Risks in the Home: Children and Young People’s Accounts”), and contributions to family work (Coppens et al. ► Chap. 10, “Children’s Contributions in Family Work: Two Cultural Paradigms”).

4 Section II: Extrafamilial Intergenerational Relationships and Spaces

The previous section focused primarily on generational processes and children and young people’s familial relationships. However, the notion of generational orderings that extend beyond families has also been central to geographical research on children and young people over the past two decades, although the term “generational order” is itself only rarely used explicitly. In particular, a major emphasis of research since the 1990s has been to critique unequal power relationships and problematic patterns of interaction between children and adults in a range of spaces, including urban public spaces (Valentine 2008), consumption spaces (Vanderbeck

and Johnson 2000; Thomas 2005), educational spaces (Mannion, ► [Chap. 15, “Intergenerational Education and Learning: We Are in a New Place”](#); Millei, ► [Chap. 14, “Generationing Educational and Caring Spaces for Young Children: Case of Preschool Bathroom”](#)), residential child care settings (Punch and McIntosh 2014), social welfare settings (Esser, ► [Chap. 16, “Children’s Agency and Welfare Organizations from an Intergenerational Perspective”](#)), and elsewhere. Often informed by notions of children’s rights and children’s competent social agency, much of this work argues that children and young people’s lives (particularly in Minority World countries) are becoming increasingly subject to forms of adult control and surveillance that limit their independent spatial mobility (Loebach and Gilliland 2016) and opportunities to develop personal autonomy (McIntosh et al. 2010). Although research in this vein has been critiqued for sometimes constructing an overly simplistic image of the figure of the “adult” and the power that this figure is assumed to wield (Vanderbeck 2010), nevertheless the critical analysis of power relationships between children and adults beyond the family sphere remains a key theme of work in the subfield of Children’s Geographies.

A significant development within geography over the past decade has been the growth in research that is framed specifically in terms of the concept of intergenerationality. This development has been in part attributable to critiques over the past decade or so of the tendency for geographical research on age and generation to be compartmentalized into separate literatures on children/youth and old age, with adulthood itself (and its diverse stages and trajectories) not often featuring as a focus for research (despite the fact that nonelderly adults remain the implicit focus of much research in human geography and the social sciences) (Vanderbeck 2007; Hopkins and Pain 2007; Vanderbeck and Worth 2015). Further, it was noted in these critiques that although relationships with parents and other family members are often paramount in the lives of children and young people, there existed a need for more careful consideration of the geographies of extrafamilial intergenerational relationships, both as these relationships actually exist and also the ways in which these relationships might be reformed in socially productive ways.

The notion of intergenerationality, as argued elsewhere in this series (Vanderbeck 2017, Vol. 1), has been deployed within the research literature as both an analytical tool and a normative ideal. As a tool of analysis, intergenerationality has proven a useful frame for understanding processes of cultural reproduction, continuity, and discontinuity. Researchers, for example, have explored how intergenerational processes are significant for understanding how patterns of prejudice and racism are alternately transmitted and contested between generations both within and beyond families (Valentine 2015). Research has also called attention to the significance of patterns of intergenerational interaction for processes of identity formation, such as in research on notions of intergenerational political recognition (Kallio 2015) and the potential for intergenerational forms of activism (Taft and Gordon, this volume), or on the ways in which particular forms of inter- and multigenerational spaces have shaped the identities and life courses of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (see also Schroeder, ► [Chap. 13, “Conflict, Empowerment, Resistance: Queer Youth and Geographies of Intergenerationality”](#)). Research also recognizes

that there are important connections between the intergenerational negotiations that take place both within families and in the wider society (Vanderbeck and Worth 2015).

Uses of intergenerationality as a normative ideal are typically predicated on particular understandings of the nature of contemporary patterns of age segregation and (where these patterns exist) their deleterious social, cultural, political, economic, and other consequences (Riley and Riley 2000; Hagestad and Uhlenberg 2005). Age segregation varies significantly in its nature and extent across contexts, and it operates at different scales (Vanderbeck 2007). In the US context, researchers have commented, for example, that “[o]ur society segregates children from adults to an unusual degree, prescribing distinctive life styles for them and establishing a panoply of specialized institutions to serve them in relative isolation” (Medrich et al. 1982, p. 63). In other contexts, however, particularly in the Majority World, there can be much greater participation of children in the everyday activities of adults, such as the world of work (Rogoff et al. 2010; Coppens et al. ► [Chap. 10, “Children’s Contributions in Family Work: Two Cultural Paradigms”](#)). Accounts of age segregation (particularly, although not exclusively in the Minority World) typically emphasize the sequestration of children and young people into spaces of education and leisure where there is little interaction with nonfamilial adults except as authority figures (e.g., teachers); the employment of adults in relatively age segregated places of work; and the withdrawal and/or exclusion of older people from spaces of work and leisure that involve the young. Age segregation, in these accounts, is seen to be the result of both structural features of society (e.g., legal frameworks that circumscribe or limit the potential for interaction between people of different ages, such as laws regarding compulsory schooling) and cultural norms about age appropriate forms of interaction.

Although not all forms of age segregation are necessarily constructed as equally problematic, there have been many calls for society to break down structural and cultural barriers to intergenerational interaction and to produce societies with a greater degree of age integration (Riley and Riley 2000). An extensive literature has emerged on forms of intergenerational practice and design that are intended to promote new patterns of interaction and improved age relations in contemporary societies (Cushing and van Vliet, ► [Chap. 12, “Intergenerational Communities as Healthy Places for Meaningful Engagement and Interaction”](#)). These activities take diverse forms and operate on diverse scales, from small scale programs designed to bring together groups of younger and older people in conversation and shared activities; experiments with how spaces and institutions might be redesigned to promote new forms of interaction (such as in the intergenerational shared sites model: see Thang 2015; Melville and Hatton-Yeo 2015); and wider calls to produce new forms of intergenerational communities and “cities for all ages.”

A normative dimension to intergenerationality is also evident in the extensive philosophical and social scientific literatures that deal with themes of intergenerational justice, equity, and related concepts (Diprose et al., this volume). Here the emphasis is typically less on everyday patterns of social interaction but rather with the intergenerational implications of particular approaches to resource

use, distribution, and conservation (for example, Punch and Sugden 2013). The concern can be both in relation to currently existing generations of people (e.g., how do current policies of taxation and expenditure by government serve to redistribute resources between younger and older generations, and to what extent is this fair?) but also the presumed needs of generations not yet born (e.g., what obligations do current generations have to preserve wealth and resources for the benefit of future generations of people?).

5 Section III: Friendship, Peer Group Relations, and Sexualities

Although intergenerational relationships and intimacies (whether familial or extra-familial) have proven to be a significant focus for Children's Geographies and the wider fields of Childhood and Youth Studies, there has also been a longstanding interest in the nature of children and young people's relationships and affiliations with one another. Children and young people's "personal lives" clearly involve other children and young people beyond families (Davies 2015a). As part of the wider patterns of age segregation evident in many contexts, children often spend significant amounts of time in their own company separate from adults (or, even if in view of adults, participating in activities among themselves) (Medrich et al. 1982). There are traditions of work in Childhood and Youth Studies that, in different ways, focus on cultures and patterns of interaction that children and young people develop and sustain among themselves to varying degrees apart from (or in some cases, in opposition to) the world of adults. A particular tradition in childhood research – labeled the "tribal child" by some theorists in Childhood Studies (James et al. 1998), although the term is less frequently used at present – emphasizes how children can produce their own rituals and systems of meaning among themselves which can be difficult for adults to access and understand (Punch 2003). This is evident, for example, in the groundbreaking work of folklorists Iona and Peter Opie, who produced a significant body of work documenting the stories and lore that children pass among themselves and which are preserved orally over long periods of time (e.g., Opie and Opie 1959).

A substantial body of research has also developed related to youth cultures, influenced by Hebdige's (1979) well-known research on working class youth subcultures in postwar Britain which posited that class processes were central to the oppositional styles adopted by these groups (such as mods, rockers, and Teddy Boys). Other youth researchers have challenged the notion of subculture and, influenced by Maffesoli (1996), argue that the concept of the "neotribe" better captures the fragmented groupings organized around consumer culture that, it is asserted, characterize contemporary society (Bennett 1999). Although there are a range of different approaches to understanding youth affiliations, the nature of young people's affiliations with one another and the interests that bind them (such as music) remains an important area of research inquiry (for some geographical approaches to understanding these issues, see, for example, Skelton and Valentine 1997).

Relationships with friends are clearly a major feature of the lives of children and young people. There have been recent calls for geographers to take friendship more seriously, given that “(f)riendships are an important part of what makes us, and our geographies of various kinds, human” (Bunnell et al. 2012, p. 490). These relationships must also be seen as part of the dense web of interdependencies through which children and young’s people capacities to act in the world are constituted (Konstantoni 2012). However, friendships have been given substantially less attention than familial relationships despite the relevance of these relationships for understanding a range of important social questions, such as issues of identity, difference, and belonging. For example, although research on notions of “home” has typically emphasized the family, Wilson, ► [Chap. 23, “Ambivalence, Autonomy, and Children and Young People’s Belonging or not in Home Spaces”](#) shows how the homes of friends are crucial sites where “looked after” children in Scotland are developing a sense of safety and belonging.

Children and young people’s friendships, it is argued, are “not only important at the level of personal development” but rather also are also implicated in “wider processes of social ordering and transformation” (Bunnell et al. 2012, p. 503; Kustatscher, Konstantoni and Emejulu, ► [Chap. 24, “Hybridity, Hyphens, and Intersectionality: Relational Understandings of Children and Young People’s Social Identities”](#)). Although patterns of friendship and antagonism between children and young people are often researched from within the boundaries of Childhood or Youth Studies, there is also recognition that these relationships and interactions have much wider social significance. Research on migrant integration, for example, has begun to combine quantitative and qualitative forms of social network analysis to understand how patterns of children’s in-school friendships can influence patterns of adult interaction outside the school (Windzio 2012; Windzio, ► [Chap. 19, “Children’s and Adolescents’ Peer Networks and Migrant Integration”](#); Carol 2014). Windzio (2012), for example, has demonstrated how invitations to children’s birthday parties can provide opportunities for adults of different ethnic backgrounds to interact and come to know one another in ways that might not otherwise take place, thus making the study of children’s relationships important for the broader field of research on migration and integration.

Recent work has evidenced a growing interest in the spatialities of children and young people’s friendships and antagonisms. The spatialities of schools and schooling have provided one key focus of interest, such as in Millei’s work (► [Chap. 14, “Generationing Educational and Caring Spaces for Young Children: Case of Preschool Bathroom”](#)) on how the preschool bathroom is implicated in processes of generationing or Mannion’s (► [Chap. 15, “Intergenerational Education and Learning: We Are in a New Place”](#)) work on schools as potential sites for intergenerational learning. Cribari-Assali’s work (this volume) explores the negotiation of notions of skillfulness between children in different contexts and how these negotiations relate to children’s senses of well-being. Morris-Roberts (2004), for example, in an ethnographic study of an English secondary school documents the complex spatialities of young women’s friendships both within and beyond the context of the school, showing how processes of friendship inclusion and exclusion unfold in relation to dominant ideas about femininity. The gendered geographies of friendship are also

central to Thomas' (2011) study of girls in a California high school. Thomas uses the example of a "turf war" between Latino and Armenian students to reflect upon the nature of American multiculturalism and the complex geographies of racialized exclusion and inclusion that are enacted and reproduced by young people. These forms of work serve as important reminders of how children's relationships with one another are situated within wider systems of power based on gender, race, class, national identity, sexuality, disability, and other factors (Kustatscher, Konstantoni and Emejulu, ► [Chap. 24, "Hybridity, Hyphens, and Intersectionality: Relational Understandings of Children and Young People's Social Identities"](#)).

The neighborhood has also been examined as a crucial scale for the production and maintenance of children's friendships (Blazek 2011). Wridt (2004), in her work on what she calls "block politics," discusses how young people in an area of New York City engage in practices of territoriality wherein particular neighborhood spaces are claimed as belonging to certain young people while others are excluded (sometimes violently) from occupying or traversing the space. A small body of geographical research has also considered practices of bullying and their spatialities (Percy-Smith and Matthews 2001), although the subject of bullying is developed in much greater depth beyond the discipline of geography.

Processes of globalization and new technologies have arguably increased the scope for children and young people to develop and sustain relationships of friendship beyond their local environments. Internet communication technologies (ICTs) have undoubtedly had a profound effect on how many children and young people maintain relationships with other children and young people beyond the sphere of the family. A rapidly growing body of literature explores how forms of social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Weibo, VK) have influenced the capacity of children and young people to seek out and find others who share particular interests or affinities. Researchers have explored, for example, how young people who identify as nonheterosexual or who are questioning their sexual orientations have often been able to find communities of support via the Internet in ways that would not have been previously possible (Hatchell and Subrahmanyam, ► [Chap. 20, "Sexuality and Intimacy: Adolescent Development in the Digital Sphere"](#)). These forms of support and friendship can prove particularly important for young people who live in geographically isolated areas or contexts where nonheterosexual identities remain profoundly stigmatized.

The growth of new ways for young people to connect with other people via the Internet has also, however, contributed to a narrative of danger around young people's Internet use. Although in some ways potentially empowering, there is growing evidence of the impact of cyberbullying, with young people now often unable to escape bullying from peers even within the confines of their own homes. The mental health and other consequences of this have become a significant subject of recent research interest (Smith et al. 2008). Questions have also been raised about the ways in which racism, sexism, homophobia, able-ism, and other systems of oppression can be reproduced – or even amplified – within cyberspace (Hatchell and Subrahmanyam, ► [Chap. 20, "Sexuality and Intimacy: Adolescent Development in the Digital Sphere"](#); Raghunandan, ► [Chap. 21, "Young People in the Digital Age: Metrics](#)

of Friendship”). Young people thus become at risk of encountering forms of oppression for which they may not be prepared when navigating the worlds of social media. As shown by Raghunandan (► Chap. 21, “Young People in the Digital Age: Metrics of Friendship”), the Internet creates both new possibilities and risks, and scholars continue to debate the implications of the increasingly digital lives of children and young people (see also Kucirkova and Sakr, ► Chap. 7, “Digital Technologies, Children’s Learning, and the Affective Dimensions of Family Relationships in the Home”). Provocatively, Raghunandan (► Chap. 21, “Young People in the Digital Age: Metrics of Friendship”) also asks whether the definition of friendship itself might also be changing as a result of new means of including and excluding particular individuals as “friends” within online social networks.

6 Conclusion

A growing body of research across the social sciences draws attention to the complex geographies of children and young people’s relationships. The chapters in the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” collectively contribute to apprehending and theorizing both continuity and change in these relationships in diverse Majority World and Minority World contexts. They also clearly establish research on children and young people’s relationships as having major relevance beyond disciplinary specialisms on childhood and youth. These relationships are critical for understanding wider processes of social exclusion, belonging, integration, social reproduction, globalization, and more. The particular geographies addressed by these chapters are diverse, ranging from the microspatial geographies of the home to the institutional geographies of schooling, neighborhood relations, digital geographies, and international cross-cultural comparison. In some cases, the chapters trouble simple geographical terms such as the “home,” showing how home is neither simply a place nor a feeling but rather a dialogue between space and emotion.

Collectively, the chapters elucidate both the opportunities and constraints of different relationship types (whether those be familial, between children/young people and adults, or between children/young people themselves) and the variegated spatial, temporal, emotional, and ideological dimensions of children and young people’s relationships. The processes by which these relationships are constructed, maintained, severed, and surveilled are explored within wider cultural and structural contexts that both provide relational opportunities but often also produce and reinforce inequalities. Several chapters emphasize the potential value of using an intersectional approach that foregrounds how categories of difference including age, gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation must be considered as overlapping and intersecting within everyday lives and relationships.

Rather than taking for granted that particular generational positions are universal and somehow “natural,” many of the chapters in the volume on “Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations” are attentive to the processes through which particular generational positions are constructed and naturalized.

The chapters demonstrate the complexities and contradictions of the relational ways in which processes of generationing are played out both within and beyond families. As such, taken together, the chapters exemplify the claim made earlier in this chapter that it is more appropriate to refer to generational orderings in the plural given how these intergenerational and intragenerational processes take shape in multiple ways. Power, agency, and identity are reoccurring themes (see also Panelli et al. 2007) when considering the relational aspects of children and young people's experiences within and beyond families.

Furthermore, the volume on "Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations" illustrates the potential for dialogue across Majority and Minority Worlds (Punch 2016b). For example, the notion of negotiated and constrained interdependencies within and across generations as well as the dynamic and contingent nature of children's agency demonstrate the learning that is possible from Majority World childhoods, which can be relevant to the study of Minority World childhoods. The intricacies and complexities of generational orderings in some Majority World contexts can enable a reconsideration of children's agency as a concept in the Minority World.

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Sharing Spaces: Children and Young People Negotiating Intimate Relationships and Privacy in the Family Home

2

Hayley Davies and Pia Christensen

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Abstract

This chapter discusses children and young people's experiences of and opportunities for privacy and intimacy within their family homes, a topic that so far has been relatively neglected in research with children. Using contemporary conceptualizations of intimacy and privacy, the chapter explores how these notions are negotiated by children and young people within the family and through different spatial constellations. The chapter also demonstrates how public risk discourses associated with young people's maturation and sexuality inform the propriety of intergenerational and gendered family practices. While children and young people often report valuing time with other family members, and the opportunity to develop relationships of intimacy, they also seek time and space for privacy,

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peace, and quiet within and outside of the home. The chapter argues that recent and emerging changes in how families live require new understandings of what privacy and intimacy mean to children and young people, for example, in relation to young adults moving back to the family home to live with their parents, children living across households post divorce or post migration, and the emergent new online spaces. There is therefore a need for research to pay greater attention to how children and young people themselves achieve, manage, and negotiate intimacy and privacy in their everyday family lives. Such new knowledge is needed in order to inform future research, policy, and practice in these areas.

Keywords

Intimacy · Privacy · Family · Space · Spatialities · Time · Home · Embodiment/body

1 Introduction: Home In-Motion

Within the home, families defined by biological, emotional, and social bonds are constituted, practiced, and maintained, that is, families are enacted through what families do in their everyday practices (Morgan 2011). In this chapter, our discussion of *families* rather than *the family* indicates the diversity of families; the plural formulation implies a shift away from ideological and Unitarian notions of *the family* (Morgan 1996, 2011). Neither homes nor families are static entities: “home is in-motion.” Mallett (2004, p. 80) observes capturing a notion of home as fluid, where home and by implication family too, is under continual (re)constitution. During the family life course, inhabitants change their everyday practices and the spatial and material configuration of the home (Stevensen and Prout 2013), allowing family members to reflect upon, negotiate, and evaluate their personal and family relationships: “the given and the chosen, then and now, here and there” (Mallett 2004, p. 80). The notion of “given” encapsulates how family members do not necessarily have autonomy in determining their relationships. Children, for example, will often have limited capacity (depending on their position in the life course and the associated expectations of independence from parents) to exercise choice about with whom they live and share intimate space and time at home (Christensen 2002). Nevertheless, children (and adults) engage in negotiations about what home (and by implication family) means over time.

At the time of writing, this lack of choice for young people has become a pressing issue. The most recent analysis of data from the European Quality of Life Survey questions the degree of choice that young people have regarding how, where, and with whom they live (Eurofound 2014). In the report, this is expressed as a deep concern about young people’s opportunities for independence and their social exclusion when they remain living at home involuntarily. The economic downturn and recent policy developments in Europe have resulted in young people and their parents experiencing a prolonged transition period whereby young people, across

social classes, leave their family home later in the life course than previous generations – often returning to live at home for an extended period of time because of the difficulties of setting up and affording independent living arrangements (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005). These new and emerging living arrangements give new urgency to questions about how cultural conceptualizations of childhood and youth as a process of “becoming independent” fare during times when normative expectations of a young person to “move away” from home and become financially independent are being symbolically and materially eroded and transformed (see also Finn, this volume).

European and North American social and cultural ideals of the achievement of independence in young adulthood and the assumption that young adults will be able to “choose” their own family home and living arrangements do not seem to work as a symbolic boundary marker of growing up for the present generation of children and young people. Furthermore these new circumstances require families to (re)negotiate the socio-physical spatialities of the parental home. This obviously includes family members’ changing needs, expectations, and practices of privacy and intimacy (Gabb 2010; Lewis 2011). At present, we know very little about privacy and intimacy in childhood and youth: for example, what are the practices, norms, and expectations relating to privacy and intimacy; how variable and diverse are they; what seems to shape them; how do they change over time, as families’ configurations change and as children age?

This chapter seeks, therefore, to synthesize the somewhat scattered literature and research findings about practices of intimacy and privacy around children and young people at home in their families. Contemporary family life in its changing forms is integral to how families negotiate intimacy and privacy – personal and shared space – in their ongoing emotional, affective, bodily, and material interactions. Cultural perceptions of the child and family’s life course trajectories, and the changing status of the child as a young person within the family home, reconfigure social relations between children and adults (Gabb 2010, p. 87), and among siblings, and invoke reflection on what constitutes a private intimate space or activity (see also Bacon, this volume). Family beliefs, values, norms, and everyday practices of affection and care may become more overt or vague when membership of the family changes. For example, the arrival of a new baby involves parents in new caring and affectionate relationships not only with the new family member, the baby, but also with the other parent/partner and other children, young people, and adults in the household. Likewise, when a parent’s new partner (and children) moves into the family home, relationships change and diverse perspectives and interests including spatial arrangements are renegotiated (Smart et al. 2001; Davies 2015a).

Contemporary notions of the fluidity of family (mediated by marriage, gender, sexuality, class, religion, and ethnicity) and of social institutions more widely unsettle notions of the stability, dependability, and durability of relationships (Bauman 2003). Nevertheless, in European policy, legal and popular debates about contemporary family life (including post divorce), home appears as spatially significant for the creation of personal and family identities (Smart et al. 2001; Fehlberg et al. 2011). “Home is where one best knows oneself observe Rapport and Dawson

(1998, p. 27): it is a physical shelter for shared living among people (and pets) and a place to keep personal possessions and objects that evoke identity and family members' connectedness to past and present relationships. As Mallett puts it:

Home is a place but it is also a space inhabited by family, people, things and belongings – a familiar, if not comfortable space where particular activities and relationships are lived. . . home is a virtual place, a repository for memories of the lived spaces. It locates lived time and space, particularly intimate familial time and space. (2004, p. 63)

As a physical, experiential, and sensorial place, families over time attribute (or not) a sense of belonging, togetherness, and safety to home (see also Rowa-Dewar and Stjerna, this volume). Home and family become made and re-made through the experiences and practices of intimacy, care, love, and wider social interactions. From children's perspectives, home provides shared space and time with people (family and wider kin especially), enabling assessments to be made about the "family-like" qualities of relationships and interactions (Christensen et al. 2000a, b; Mason and Tipper 2008; Davies 2012). The metaphorical coupling of home with family also means that the notion of home evokes the "family imaginary," the family to which individuals aspire (Gillis 1997). Thus, home is not static and identities are not fixed to a particular space or locality (Rapport and Dawson 1998). Home and belonging is constituted as much through the fluidity and movement of people and things around, in, and out of the home (Christensen et al. 2000a, b), and children's and adults' perceptions of "family" cannot be mapped onto the physical boundaries of home (e.g., Edwards et al. 2006). More recent post-divorce family arrangements favor children (or their parents) *living across* households, rather than *within* a household, in order for children to share everyday life with their parents equally (Fehlberg et al. 2011).

2 The Silence Around Children's Intimacy and Privacy

Home has been much discussed as a site of intimacy, although it is by no means the only site in which intimate relationships occur (Spencer and Pahl 2006). In this chapter, home is seen as a primary site for children forming and developing family relationships, including social, cultural, and spatial meanings of intimacy and privacy. In family and relationship studies, adults' intimate relationships have been given considerable attention (Jamieson 1998, 2005, 2011; Gabb 2010). Only a few disparate studies consider children's perceptions, experiences, and practices of intimacy and privacy (Gillies et al. 2001; Gabb 2010; Lewis 2011; Davies 2015b). At present considerations of children's privacy appear ever urgent, as new technologies have made it increasingly possible for children's personal communications online to be monitored by adults. Despite such monitoring being justified by concerns about ensuring children's safety, there has been little concern for children's own experiences of and possible desire for privacy. There is an apparent dearth of work considering children's entitlement to privacy (Dowty 2008) and their capacity

to withhold information, or “keep secrets,” from parents (exceptions include Solomon et al. 2002) and other significant adults or young people. This is, perhaps, an indication of how social scientists over the past three decades have been extensively occupied with public and policy concerns regarding children’s voice and participation, inadvertently muting concerns about the value and preservation of intimacy and privacy in children’s lives. Without wishing to endorse the pessimistic Foucauldian view that “incitement to speak” is a “gateway to control,” we nevertheless note that important concerns about children’s rights to silence, intimacy, and privacy, which ultimately grant children “a choice about voice,” seem somehow sidelined in research on children’s personal and social lives. The exception perhaps is in relation to ethical practices in research with children (Christensen and Prout 2002; Alderson and Morrow 2004). Clarke and Moss specifically make a plea for researchers to:

...acknowledge their [children’s] rights to express their point of view or to remain silent. We are keen that a participatory approach to listening is respectful of children’s views and also of their silences. (2011, p. 9)

3 Conceptions of Privacy and Intimacy

Over the last two decades, research into intimacy within families has critiqued notions of intimacy as the mutual disclosure of emotions and as a deep emotional knowledge of another person in equal and democratic relationships (Giddens 1992). In empirical explorations of family relationships, intimacy has been reconceptualized to take account of a wide range of practices of “close association, familiarity, and privileged knowledge” which extend beyond having in-depth knowledge of another person; such practices occur in relationships characterized by “strong positive emotional attachments” which constitute a very particular form of “‘closeness’...associated with high levels of trust” (Jamieson 2005, p. 189). Such practices, Jamieson suggests, include “giving to, sharing with, spending time with, knowing, practically caring for, feeling attachment to, expressing affection for another person” (2011, p. 22). Intimacies may also be formed in children’s wider personal lives, for example, in children’s longstanding friendships, in which a depth of mutual intimate knowledge of one another is accumulated (Davies 2015b). Smart’s (2007) research on the sociology of personal life illuminates the potential significance of various close relationships outside of the family and kin group.

Intimate practices are often embodied (Gabb 2010), ranging from the sensory reading of familiar expressions on the face of a loved one (Morgan 2011) to more interphysical interactions involving touch (Mason and Tipper 2008) and the closer proximity of bodies. Morgan defines three forms of intimacy: embodied intimacy, emotional intimacy, and intimate knowledge (2011, p. 35). Embodied intimacy includes practices of care and tactile everyday actions, while emotional intimacy involves sharing and disclosing personal knowledge, including a capacity to observe, empathize with, and understand another person’s embodied and emotional reactions. Intimate knowledge is generated through embodied and emotional

intimacy and the “interweaving of personal biographies over a period, often a considerable period, of time” (Morgan 2011, p. 35), or as we will argue, the sharing of personal biographies that takes place within children and young people’s families more specifically rely upon the sharing of physical, emotional, and/or virtual spaces in time.

Like intimacy, privacy is a relational concept and has embodied spatial and emotional dimensions, which are often entangled. Studies of family and childhood have troubled the distinction between the private sphere (family and home) and the public sphere (the street, community and state) (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards 2001; Harden 2000; Christensen and O’Brien 2003). While the home has often been assumed as a place of privacy, the home is not necessarily a space within which family members achieve privacy from one another (Allan and Crow 1989, p. 5). In practice, children achieving privacy in the home has a number of contingencies including how children are viewed, positioned, and accommodated within the home and the availability of physical space and household organization, including how space is distributed and/or appropriated by family members over time.

4 Children Negotiating Intimacy and Privacy

As we will go on to show how children find ways to achieve embodied and emotional privacy, solitude, and time on their own, children also occupy a particular status of disadvantage that may hinder their achievement of such needs and desires (Christensen 2002; Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013). It is important therefore to consider how sociocultural perceptions of children’s right to privacy and intimacy within families may be contested by wider efforts to protect them – and how social status and the differential positioning of family members are pivotal to this. An illustrative example relates to how risk discourses associated with maturation and sexuality inform the propriety of intergenerational and gendered family practices. A recent study offers an example of how a mother attempted to monitor what she perceived as her “teenage” daughter’s growing sexuality and the probability of her engaging in a risky intimate sexual relationship with her boyfriend (Gabb 2010, p. 101). When the daughter’s boyfriend visited the home, the daughter’s bedroom – ordinarily a site of privacy for the young woman – was designated as a semi-open space. During visits her mother assumed the right to enter the bedroom at any point, thus denying her daughter privacy (Gabb 2010, p. 101). This example starkly demonstrates how one family member’s desire for privacy, rather than sexual engagement (in this case, the daughter), become in tension with another family member’s (the mother’s) concern to protect the child from engaging in what she deemed age-inappropriate behavior.

Conceptions of privacy evolve over time and cross-culturally. The allocation of space may shift according to changing cultural notions about the family, notions of the life course, the independence of the child and young person, and the shared spatial arrangements that are deemed age- and gender-appropriate both between children and between children and adults, as illustrated above. For example,

stipulations about gendered bedroom sharing in the room standard (Housing Act, 1985 section 325) – underpinning the allocation of public housing in the UK – state that children of the “same sex” may only share a bedroom up until the age of 16, or of opposite sex until the age of 10; otherwise, a home is deemed “overcrowded.” These stipulations are generative of wider social and cultural assumptions about gender, age, and privacy that parents draw on in making decisions about room allocations in private housing. This allocation of rooms is also based on heteronormative assumptions about age-appropriate bedroom sharing for boys and girls. Such guidance specifies the intimate encounters and bodily exposures of girls and boys sharing the same household, privileging older, rather than younger children’s opportunities for privacy through having their own bedroom (see also Bacon, this volume).

The guidance rests upon a notion of privacy as embodied rather than emotional, which means that space is not allocated to younger children to enjoy emotional privacy or personal space to call their own. It cannot, of course, be assumed that a bedroom of one’s own is the (only) way in which children wish to be afforded embodied and emotional privacy and the (only) way to keep their personal belongings (Roberts-Hughes 2011). As we have discussed above, the appropriation of space is intertwined with the relations that occur in the home. Across Europe, homes have traditionally been designed to reflect and cater to particular historical and cultural constructions of the family (Stevensen and Prout 2013), which assume the home as catering for a “reproductive...family unit with master bedrooms and smaller spaces for children” (Gabb 2010, pp. 87–88). A trend among the middle and upper classes for *en suite bathrooms* – rather than shared family bathrooms – shapes the interactions and experiences of intimacy and family cohesion, simultaneously enhancing experiences of solitude and privacy, as desirable. As we have shown, the embodied nature of family practices and the appropriation of household spaces brings to light the “tensions, ambiguities, and contradictions evident in our everyday experiences of family” in managing intimacy (Gabb 2010, pp. 87–88) and, we suggest, in managing privacy too.

While changing notions of youth within families seem to shape children’s opportunities for privacy at home, the globalization of ideas about childhood, more specifically, is claimed to reconfigure understandings of children’s privacy more widely (Naftali 2010). Children’s realization of privacy may therefore fluctuate at a societal and familial level as a consequence of cultural shifts in thinking about the place of the child and young person in society. The assumption that the home is a site for children’s privacy underpins children’s right to privacy as set out in Article 16 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 16 specifies the state’s obligation to protect from interference children’s private, family, and home life. As such, it reinforces the public/private distinction that scholars in family and childhood studies have critiqued, as noted above. Within Article 16, children’s privacy is subsumed within the privacy of the family and home, which oversimplifies the complexity of family relations and practices that may both afford and infringe upon children’s privacy according to how families recognize children and young people along the scale of independence, dependency, and interdependence. Paradoxically, Article 16 does not envisage the possibility of

children maintaining privacy or a personal life that is separate from their family and home.

Children's right to privacy, as set out in Article 16, has, however, had some impact on how families facilitate children's privacy within the home. An ethnographic study with parents and grandparents in China shows how, among other factors, the rights discourse has infiltrated the conceptualization of the person as an autonomous being. This conception has transformed cultural understandings of children as individuals from traditional views of children as members of, or belonging within families, communities or the nation (Naftali 2010, p. 299). The consequence of the repositioning of children within Chinese society has, for the parents in Naftali's study, led them to place greater importance on securing children's right to privacy at home, for example, ensuring children have sufficient space to store their personal belongings and allocating him/her their own bedroom. This focus on children's right to privacy has been endorsed by the Chinese Law on the Protection of Minors which was launched in 1992 (and amended in 2006) (Naftali 2010, p. 302). The accompanying socioeconomic change – including the growth of a private housing market – and improvement in living standards, such as more spacious residences, has facilitated these Chinese parents in affording their children privacy (Naftali 2010, p. 301). As a contrast, the UK housing market has been highlighted for the significant impacts of inadequately sized homes on health, well-being, educational attainment, and family relationships (Roberts-Hughes 2011). Considerations of children's privacy are both in the home and in social, cultural, or legal discourse necessarily relational. The privacy of children and young people, as members of a family or household cross-culturally, is worked out through family and household practices, including the spatial configurations of resources and access.

5 Children Developing Intimate Relationships in and Across Homes

Having defined privacy and intimacy and illuminated how shifting and consistent notions have shaped public understandings of children's privacy and intimacy in their family homes, we now examine children's experiences of sharing their home spaces, developing intimate relationships, and securing privacy. In doing so, we endeavor to better understand how children practice intimate relationships and make time and space for privacy.

Children and young people may not use the word intimacy, as adults do, but studies which ask them to describe what it means to be a family find that they note many of the qualities that Jamieson (2005) suggest comprise intimacy, and which would be interpreted as emotional and embodied forms of intimacy (Morgan 2011). These include children describing having family or family members: spending time and living together (e.g., Christensen et al. 2000a, b; Gillies, Ribbens McCarthy and Holland 2001), "being there" for them (e.g., Morrow 1998; Christensen 2002; Davies 2013), providing a sense of belonging (Brannen et al. 2000; Gillies

et al. 2001), knowing each other well (Davies 2012, 2015b), trusting and supporting one another, being able to understand, talk to, and listen to one another (Smart et al. 2001; Edwards et al. 2006). Many studies find that children and young people define relationships as “family” relationships on the basis of these manifest qualities.

A sense of family togetherness or of “being there” for one another through shared time may appear to be threatened by circumstances such as parental separation and divorce, parental employment away from the family home, or parental labor migration (Duquo-Paramo 2013). When parents separate, divorce, or work long hours, children and young people report that family members need not physically be together to feel a sense of “togetherness”; rather, they value the knowledge that parents will “be there” (Gillies et al. 2001; Christensen 2002; Davies 2013). Feelings of intimacy and closeness are equally produced through an imagined sense of togetherness as they are through spending actual time together. For example, for children who live across households, whether that is at weekends or in weekly shared care arrangements, relationships defined by intimacy may transcend the boundaries of the single family home, as children experience a sense of closeness with family members in two or more homes (Davies 2015a). A useful distinction here is between the notion of being in “proximity” to another person and being in the “presence” of another person: the former denotes physical distance and/or physical but not necessarily emotional and mental closeness; the latter indicates being emotionally and mentally aware of and alert to one another, but not necessarily physically copresent with them (Christensen 2002). While experiences of intimacy and closeness are not exclusively produced through co-presence and sharing time together in one space, some forms of intimacy, for example, those that are sensory and embodied, involve bodies and require people to be in the same physical space. This might include a caring affectionate expression, a touch, an embrace, or a kiss. Embodied intimacy is made possible in children and young people’s family relationships with those whom they see regularly – primarily those with whom they live or come into regular face-to-face contact or co-presence (Davies 2012). Such contact offers opportunities for the development of close relationships, understood and articulated as embodied acts of love, care, and intimacy.

While many aspects of intimacy are ineffable or mundane, it is suggested that children may be more likely to attend to and voice the sensory, physical, embodied, and tactile aspects of their relationships (Mason and Tipper 2008). Indeed, in inviting children to describe their family and kin relationships, children attend to their family members’ appearances and bodies, as a rich library of intimate knowledge that adults might often overlook or simply refrain from articulating (Mason and Tipper 2008; Mason 2008). This intimate knowledge can only be generated through face-to-face co-presence with those family members observing and noticing intimate details (and changes) relating to their bodies and appearances (Mason and Tipper 2008; Davies 2012, 2015b), including sensory observations such as smells, emotional expression, body strength, temperature, and skin tone. It is suggested that children in middle childhood may feel more able to articulate relational connections that are sensory and interphysical without the “self-consciousness” or embarrassment that adults might feel (Mason 2008). These ideas resonate with earlier studies of how bodies,

physicality (Prout 2000; Christensen 2000a, b), materialities, spatialities, and affectivity truly matter to children but nevertheless have often been overlooked in research (Horton and Kraftl 2006).

6 Managing Intimacy and Privacy Through Spatial Boundaries

While rooms or spaces within the home may carry connotations of privacy or intimacy (e.g., bedrooms and bathrooms), research shows that it is the activities and practices that characterize those rooms and not just the physical spaces that signify intimacy or privacy. Moreover the embodied identities of those who occupy those spaces and the relationships between people who share those spaces may determine the intimacy attributed to that encounter and the level of privacy required (Gabb 2010; Lewis 2011). In researching the perspectives of parents and young people (age 11–15) on communication about sex and sexuality in Scotland, Lewis asked parents about their perceptions of and attitudes towards their own and their partner's responses to their child or stepchild's bodily development and experience of puberty. The parents and stepparents viewed it as imperative to offer their children more privacy by not entering the bathroom while they were in there and by assuming, more so, that it might be improper for a father or stepfather to share the bathroom with a daughter or stepdaughter (Lewis 2011). The young people interviewed noted "closing the door" to the bathroom while changing or showering and feeling a need to cover up. For a small group of young women with stepfathers, considerations of bodily privacy were heightened, and Lewis suggests that the bathroom becomes a "heterosexed space," a space which is appropriated (or not) based on heteronormative assumptions (2011, p. 72).

Particular points in the life course, for example, adolescence, are assumed to require greater privacy and personal space as young people navigate changing bodies and bodily functions (Gabb 2010). From adolescence onwards, cross-gender bathroom sharing between parents/adults and young people may become a space of contention for those young people and/or parents (Gabb 2010) and particularly in nonfamily relationships (see Lewis 2011). We know comparatively little about younger children's expectations of and experiences of negotiating privacy perhaps because younger children have been assumed not to desire or need privacy (McKinney 1998). Yet this is an important issue for understanding the extent to which children recognize their own right to bodily autonomy and privacy which may keep them safe from harm and from threatening sexual behavior.

In a study based in London, investigating children's understanding of their bodily boundaries, Davies invited children aged 8–10 years old to respond, in pairs, to a fictional vignette. The vignette describes a scenario where a mother's new boyfriend, Mike, moves into the home of 10-year-old Katrina. Mike is, in Katrina's view, overly affectionate in his interactions, including hugging and kissing her. This progresses to Mike entering the bathroom while Katrina is changing her clothes, causing her

increasing discomfort. This vignette deliberately invokes a discussion of children's expectations of bodily boundaries and privacy, and children were asked what Katrina *should do* or what they *would do* in this situation. Some children initially viewed Mike's actions as affectionate, and several children noted that Mike potentially threatened Katrina's safety because in entering the bathroom, he transgressed proper gendered boundaries, particularly as a nonfamily member (Davies 2015b). Children's gendered identities and emerging constructions of heterosexuality were integral to the way in which these younger children made sense of bodily privacy and bodily boundaries. Mike entering the bathroom was regarded as an invasion of Katrina's "privacy," particularly some suggested, as Katrina was almost a teenager. For example, Abena (aged 10) said:

... she [Katrina] just needs to have her *own privacy* and she's not like a surrounded person who everyone needs to see her. She's a girl and he's a boy. She *needs her own privacy*.

These cultural understandings of the intersection of gender, sexuality, and age which are all present here in children's accounts also inform cross-gender bedroom sharing.

While these children are slightly younger than Lewis' sample, expectations of touch are heavily steered by similar factors. The children's accounts resonate with the discomfort young people and stepfathers expressed about their presence with stepdaughters or fathers (Lewis 2011). Those stepfathers in particular were weary of overstepping the boundaries of propriety for fear of being viewed as a predatory male (Itzin 2000; Gabb 2010). As in Lewis' study, the closed door became a marker of a child or young person's need for privacy. However, where Davies' study diverges from Lewis' is in her observations of children's apparent tolerance of breaches of their personal bodily boundaries. While some children imagined themselves disclosing Mike's behavior to other adults, others felt that they would put up with his behavior, until it became "unbearable," which illuminates a need to make children more aware of their rights in relation to guarding their own bodies and to privacy (Davies 2015b) in order to clarify to themselves and others what an unclear distinction such as "unbearable" may mean in terms of setting a rule.

7 Intimacy and Care

The boundaries between appropriate forms of touch that are brought about through caring for and caring about others, and forms of touch which may be more sinister in intent, are indeed blurred. Embodied intimacy, enacted through, for example, practices of care (Morgan 2011, p. 35) is a type of intimacy that is characteristically practiced within the home, and in the example above, children were not naive to initially assume that Mike's hugging or kissing represented affection and care for Katrina. Children are not simply recipients of care but also contributors to caring practices within their families. Many UK and European studies have highlighted

children's moral impetus in caring for family members in their homes, through their involvement in acts of practically and emotionally responsive care which demonstrate compassion and concern (Brannen et al. 2000). Children's caring practices produce embodied intimate knowledge brought about through sensory mechanisms – watching and attentive looking (Christensen 1993; Davies 2015b); articulating, hearing, touching (Morgan 2011, p. 35); and feeling, and smelling, in some cases. These sensory experiences are important in guiding children's caring practices. Children's everyday observations and assessments of facial expressions, body language, and bodily interactions of family and kin (Mason and Tipper 2008; Davies 2012, 2015b) mean that children are highly expert in knowing and interpreting the mood, emotion, and practical needs of others. Morgan employs the concept of “bodily monitoring” as the watchful looking that generates embodied knowledge of family members on an ongoing basis (Morgan 2011, p. 98), and boys and girls show themselves to be engaged in such practices. Bodily monitoring may describe actions such as children observing their baby and toddler siblings and interpreting their care needs. In Davies' (2015b) study, girls, in particular, presented themselves as key contributors to the everyday care of younger siblings, including interpreting preverbal toddlers' actions, assessing why they were crying, intervening to offer milk, a comforting cuddle, or to discipline the younger child (Davies 2015b). These children's sibling relationships are characterized by particular intimate engagements and embodied knowledge of one another. This builds upon previous understandings of siblings' intimate embodied interactions which find them to be highly tactile and to be mutually characterized by affectionate touch but also by more provocative forms of sensory and tactile interactions in playing and fighting (Edwards et al. 2006; Punch 2007), teasing and arguing. Such sibling practices constitute forms of intimacy through which children observe and relate to one another (and others) (Edwards et al. 2006, pp. 4–5). In such interactions, the home may emerge as a space in which interactions that would not be acceptable outside of the home are enacted (Punch 2007; see also Punch, this volume). It is in these relationships that children come to understand the nature of “family” intimacy and privacy and the spatiality of these interactions.

It is claimed that it is in the context of sibling relationships that children learn to negotiate verbal as well as physical power struggles (Punch 2007; Edwards et al. 2006), i.e., struggles that often centers around rights to privacy and objections to personal intimacy. Physical sibling play may evolve into a physical dispute that includes bodily and sensory provocations, such as one sibling shouting at, or touching, another or their belongings. The significant marker being made clear in such disputes is that *touch* is unwelcome – a prohibition that is often cited by children as causing tensions (Davies 2015b). Arguments over shared space and personal belongings within the home illustrate how close relationships are challenged by interferences in one another's bodies, spaces/places, or personal things (Christensen et al. 2000a, b). While intimacy may be achieved in close proximity, tensions about having time on one's own and having personal belongings respected are acute in the close proximity of life within the family home.

8 Time to be Intimate and Time Alone

Idyllic images of children and parents spending time together in close proximity – sitting around the table, sharing their evening meal, or watching television together – are often invoked as symbols of intimate relationships within the family home (Gillis 1997; Morgan 2011; Christensen 2002). Nevertheless, much research has pointed to how contemporary family life is also torn between the accomplishment of togetherness, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the desire to spend time on one’s own – (or time together with other family members) which is not “family time” per se. Indeed, one formulation of this is the focus upon “quality time” that parents should spend with children. Christensen’s article “Why more quality time is not at the top of children’s lists” reveals that while time with family members may be one of the valued qualities of time that children consider, the 70 children aged 10–11 whom Christensen involved in her research mentioned five important qualities of family time which included ordinariness and routine (including watching TV or being in the house together), someone being there for you, having a say over one’s time, having time for peace and quiet, and the value of being able to plan one’s own time (Christensen 2002, p. 81).

For children in families, sharing time together with family members and having sufficient time on one’s own is a delicate balance to achieve. The children appreciated time with their family members doing *ordinary* things that families do, such as watching television on the sofa and having their family member’s support. They also wanted to contribute to decisions over how family time is spent and to be afforded their own time, peace, and quiet (Christensen 2002). Further studies show that children value, but also create, time and space away from families and others, although not necessarily always on their own (Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013), and that they try to control and achieve family time together (Davies 2013; 2015b). The experience of intimacy and closeness in children’s relationships then and their desire for personal privacy is, we conclude, often heavily entangled.

9 Private Time, Peace, and Quiet

Children, like adults, seek out privacy, not only for time alone but for time to “pursue their own interests and social relationships” (Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013, p. 1). A study which mapped children’s exploration of their local areas in Copenhagen, Denmark, illuminated how two girls aged 12 years old created a meaningful place of their own in the form of a den they made in bushes, a place where they felt “at home” (Christensen and Mikkelsen 2013). This was a space away from the children’s school, peers, family, and home where they gained a sense of independence and privacy over their own actions. Examples such as this one reveal that children desire privacy as part of their everyday undertaking of personal relationships, outside and

away from their families and homes. Such attempts to achieve privacy may challenge commonly held notions of parents' entitlement to have absolute knowledge of children's whereabouts and assumptions that children's privacy with friends would ordinarily be negotiated with parents.

Parents may regard with suspicion a child or young person's attempt to conceal information about their relationships or their emotions (McKinney 1998) or view this concealment as undermining the intimate relationships that comprise the close family who populate the imagined family, that is, the family to which they aspire and against which they consider their own lived family relationships (Gillis 1997). Intimacy within the family, Jamieson argues, involves parents attempting to develop "know[ledge]" and "understand[ing]" of their child(children) (1998, p. 74). Such intimacy relies in part on the mutual disclosure of "thoughts" and "feelings" (Jamieson 1998, p. 158) which Giddens' (1992) argues characterizes the democratic relationship. Giddens' assumption about the equal and democratic nature of parent-child relationships has been undermined by empirical research into intimacy (Jamieson 1998; Solomon et al. 2002; Gabb 2010). In particular, research into teenagers' relationships with their parents reveals that the teenagers view the impetus to talk openly to parents, as parents eliciting information and undertaking surveillance, while teenagers felt that withholding information enabled them to maintain their privacy and personal identity but compromised the development of intimacy (Solomon et al. 2002; Gabb 2010). Therefore, privacy in the form of a secret the child or young person would like to keep may carry multiple and sometimes ambiguous meanings: for the child, the focus may be protecting and maintaining their independent social relationships, and for a parent, a child withholding a secret/information will undermine a parent's claim to having a close relationship with their child. Individuals may also present mixed messages on this issue. As Smart notes, there can be "a complex ambivalence (e.g., secrecy is bad/privacy is good)" to secrecy (2011, p. 544).

Here we may conclude that family privacy and children's privacy within the family is negotiated both within and outside of the family home. For children and young people, the development of personal relationships outside of the home can represent a careful balancing act in relation to the expectations of other family members; having intimate relationships with other children outside of the home may take on greater significance as children grow older. Sharing intimacies or disclosures with friends, particularly in girls' friendships in middle childhood onwards, has been shown as key to how girls solidify their friendships (Dunn 2004). Children are engaged in keeping private issues that characterize one intimate relationship without upsetting or undermining family intimate relationships, which assume openness between family members, but which often exclude nonfamily others.

Trust in families relies on children, often under direction, to keep confidential even ordinary mundane family practices but also more serious family troubles. Families are constantly involved in managing information that others – both those within and outside of the family – have about them (Smart 2011). This includes keeping secrets from family members, as well as between family members. Children

may be party to and asked to keep private a “family” matter or made aware that they should not discuss intimate family practices outside of the home or with those outside of their immediate family (McKinney 1998). In this way, the sharing and “keeping (and breaking) of secrets” serve both to “bond[. . .]” and to “exclud[e. . .]” family members, making clear who is and who is not part of that family grouping (Smart 2011, p. 540).

Like adults, children desire time away from much loved family members in order to appreciate that time together. For children, peace and quiet may “indeed prove very difficult to achieve” within their home (Christensen 2002, pp. 85–86). Daily routines, as well as younger siblings, were mentioned as compromising opportunities for this time and space for peace and quiet. For some children, only that time in the evening when they were in bed, i.e., that period of time before they fell asleep, was the time for peace and quiet in a day. The tensions of busy everyday family life often lead children to seek out time away from family members. Some children in Davies’ study mentioned locking themselves in the family bathroom for peace and quiet or retreating to their bedrooms to escape their siblings but also noted the difficulties arising when their sibling(s) disrespected their desire to be alone. When children had nowhere within their homes to retreat to without disturbance from others, they were creative in seeking out spaces outside of their homes where they could achieve quiet time. Two boys mentioned sitting in off-the-road cars that their family owned. Will (aged 10) described appropriating the family van as his space to be away from his family:

I just sit in the van. . . if you want some peace and quiet, you have to. . . you need to shut it and lock it, or Tim or Mike (brothers) will come in. I just lie on the floor so that no one can see me. (Quoted in Davies 2015b, pp. 82–83)

A combination of factors, including the historical shift towards children spending more time indoors, the family’s social and material circumstances, the amount of space in the home (Sibley 1995), as well as the availability of safe space outside of children’s homes have come together to shape children’s opportunities for and experiences of time away from others. Kayla, a participant in Davies’ (2015b) study, shared a bedroom with her three siblings and lived on a housing estate in a cul-de-sac on the margins of town with virtually no space outside to escape to. She experienced a sense of calm on her weekend visits to her mother’s home, in which she was able to escape her shared room with all the noise and commotion that surrounded everyday bedtime. While it is assumed that one of the key ways to afford children privacy is through them having their own bedroom, the cultural specificity of this assumption overlooks other possibilities (and implies a conceptualization of the child as an individual who necessarily needs separateness to develop). Indeed, a room of one’s own may be a place of retreat for peace and quiet away from family members, yet a shared bedroom may equally be a site of intimacy. While these circumstances illuminate how a family’s socioeconomic circumstances shape children’s opportunities to have space and time alone, in or outside of their homes, the relationships that manifest are quite varied. Having a room of one’s own may take on

greater significance for children who have limited outdoor or other space to which they can retreat away from the close proximity of shared family living.

10 Negotiating Privacy Across Households/Homes

We have noted above that because of migration, separation, and parental employment, contemporary childhoods have witnessed new formulations of intimacy that are not reliant upon everyday togetherness in a single family home. The notion of home, therefore, spans and relates to multiple sites, for example, when a child's family owns two homes, one in the country of origin and one in their new host country (Mallett 2004; Mand 2010). Children in migrant families may also have different opportunities for intimacy and privacy across these two homes. Examining British-born Bangladeshi children's understandings of "desh" (home) and "bidesh" (away), children aged 9–10 in Mand's study compared their spatial and relational experiences of both family homes (in London and Bangladesh) in similar terms to the children in Davies' (2015a, 2015b) study, which included many separated families. The children in Mand's study focused upon the amount of space available to them in and outside of both homes. Closely proximate conditions (e.g., all of the sixty children interviewed shared bedrooms, some with more than one person), "fumes," "noise" from the traffic, and the "smell" of litter characterized the London homes (Mand 2010, p. 280). Many of the girls felt they lacked "privacy and ownership" at home due to sharing that space with their "annoying siblings," and one boy complained of being "cooped up" in a London flat (Mand 2010, p. 283). Most had experienced family from Bangladesh arriving and living with them temporarily until they found their own homes (Mand 2010, pp. 280–281). Sharing home spaces with extended kin when they visited or moved to London to set up home was not problematized by the children perhaps because of a cultural assumption among families that Bangladeshi children (and children in much of South Asia) are "part of collectivities like families" (Mand 2010, p. 282) rather than autonomous individuals who require their own bedrooms or personal space.

Children have varied opportunities for privacy when living across households. In Davies' (2013, 2015b) study, eleven of the twenty-four children lived across their parents' households, although to varying degrees. These living arrangements exposed children to diverse experiences of and opportunities for intimacy and privacy. The children compared their different homes, relationships, and spatial arrangements. While children reported valuing time with family members in their respective homes and viewed this as an opportunity to share in intimate relationships with family, including developing intimate relations with new step- or half-siblings, they were also attentive to their potential for time alone from siblings in these homes. Harriet and her sister Catherine, participants in this research, experienced a shared care arrangement, living with their mother and father on alternate weeks. The two children transitioned from one home to another, always together. Harriet compared her opportunities for privacy across the two family homes explaining that when she became upset, in her mother's home (in which she shared a bedroom with

Catherine), Catherine would follow her upstairs and “annoy” her, but in her father’s home, where Harriet had her own room, she could be alone in her room, away from Catherine (2015b). These studies which examine children’s experiences of living across households show that children may develop multiple understandings of intimacy and privacy that incorporate cross-cultural ideas and ideals and accommodate parental circumstances which enable them to make sense of and adapt to different home situations.

11 Online Privacy, Protection, and Risk

Children’s protection is often privileged over or used as a justification for breaching families’ privacy and children’s privacy within families (Dowty 2008). Families are “subject to strict regulation and governance,” to surveillance by health visitors, school teachers, social workers, general practitioners, and families’ everyday practices which invoke discussion of bodily propriety, are shaped by prevalent ideas underpinning family policy and practice, populating the media, and within their personal circles (Gabb 2013, p. 639). Children too are involved in abiding by, or subverting, adults’ attempts at bodily propriety, which speak to wider risk discourses surrounding children’s relationships with others. Public concerns about “stranger danger,” abduction and sexual abuse of children, seek to locate child abuse outside of the family and home and as an external threat to the family. Attempts to protect children from these dangers aim to educate them about such risks.

The Internet is occupying much concern in contemporary public media debates, which at one time claimed that children and young people were the unequivocal “media experts,” a status that has been challenged by, for example, Livingstone (2009). She questions the extent to which children are to be seen as “experts,” cautioning a more balanced and realistic perspective on children’s Internet use when compared with media accounts of this use. In later writings, she addresses the increased attention to online risks for children, which is a focus for public and policy concern, parental “anxiety,” and a source of “moral panic” (Livingstone and Haddon 2012, p. 3). Children’s use of the Internet and the extent to which they are considered able to manage intimacy and privacy in this domain is at the heart of these concerns; the Internet is a medium that invites children and young people to disclose personal information to others who may be enabled to put children’s safety at risk, as a site for on-line personalized bullying and discrimination, and with the potential for children to be exposed to age-inappropriate content (Livingstone and Haddon 2012). While one response, as noted above, has been to educate children and young people in schools, homes, and families, about the dangers of sharing information online, a second approach is to manage or rather limit children’s access to Internet sites and undertake surveillance of the material they access. For example, the development of “apps” for mobile devices (e.g., TeenSafe and MamaBear, which are widely used in the USA) enable and encourage parents to monitor children’s web browsing on electronic devices and oversee children’s posts on social media sites and messages that they have sent and received (Morris 2015). This sharing of online space may be

(un)comfortable for children but may nevertheless influence their understanding of a child's right to privacy. Designed for and marketed to parents as a tool to facilitate child protection, these "apps" enable parents to monitor their children's online interactions. This may potentially breach children's privacy and undermine parent-child trust and dialogue about how children can safely manage their own online interactions. These tools all constitute responses to *adult* concerns about children's digital lives, yet Livingstone and Haddon take children's perceptions of the risks and opportunities associated with online activities as a starting point in their research, revealing that children's concerns often do not reflect those of adults (2012, p. 4).

Nasman (1994) coined the term "institutionalization" of childhood to capture how the historical trend towards increased compartmentalization of childhood was introduced by schooling. Nasman's work has brought attention to the loss of unstructured time and free space that follows from the regulation and monitoring of children's activities (but see also Rasmussen and Smidt 2003; Zeiher 2003; Prout 2005). A growing body of research suggests that children's movements and practices are under surveillance outside the home, in the institutional and public spaces in which they now spend so much time (Dowty 2008; Taylor 2010). Apart from bringing children under the gaze of professionals who work in such spaces, parents may use global positioning system (GPS) technology to track their children's movements when they leave the family home (Fahlquist 2015), simultaneously suggesting that the home is a safe space compared with the potential dangers to children that exist outside of the home (Harden 2000). However, the use of GPS to track children's movement is more than a protective strategy; it is also a breach of children's freedom of movement even though the increased surveillance of children and young people is justified by (sometimes sensationalized) risk discourses about the dangers of strangers, traffic, and young people's risk behaviors.

The use of surveillance devices raises important ethical questions about children's autonomy to navigate the world without parents (or other adults) monitoring their every movement; it invites reflection upon the implicit messages adults give children about the dangers that they face in the world and the degree to which they can trust others (Fahlquist 2015). However, this form of extended monitoring of children is only one of many invasions of children's privacy that occurs in contemporary society. The use of CCTV cameras in schools and playgrounds which monitor children, and other forms of surveillance which are conducted in the name of child protection, has been noted by researchers in the UK, continental Europe, Canada, the USA, and Japan (Dowty 2008; Taylor 2010; Fahlquist 2015). This body of research highlights the importance children attribute to having privacy free from CCTV cameras, for example, within school bathrooms (Taylor 2010). Furthermore, it has been suggested that infringing upon children's rights to privacy may diminish their ability to understand and uphold their right to privacy including realizing and protecting their personal boundaries (Dowty 2008). Furthermore, eliminating all risks from children's lives can hinder children in developing resilience through their exposure to and successful navigation of risky activities (Boyden and Mann 2005).

12 Conclusion

While recent decades have seen an extensive public, policy, and academic preoccupation with allowing children's *voice* and *participation*, the authors of this chapter argue that this concern has muted engagement with the meaning of intimacy and privacy to children and young people and their rights (indeed, the need) to preserve these. This chapter is a call for research with children and young people to engage with how intimacy and privacy are experienced in the everyday life of families. We are keen to promote research conversations about intimacy and privacy in children's family relationships and for researchers to engage with how children and young people may or may not actively achieve, manage, and negotiate intimacy and privacy within families and with others (both adults and children) more generally. At present, children's intimacy and privacy are afforded little attention in research, policy, or practice. It is revealing that the research we have reviewed often considers topics concerned with intimate and private aspects of children's lives but nevertheless frames these within a broader but less critical interest in family relationships, detracting from their personal meaning for children and their significance for the constitution of childhood and youth. We have used recent formulations of family intimacy, including embodied intimacy and embodied knowledge, as well as understandings of intimacy as disclosure, to open up a different and more critical research agenda.

In studies of children and young people's lives, where privacy and intimacy are considered, the chapter described the ways in which children's intimate relationships and private information is shared with close others outside of the home and family. This process is managed by children as they necessarily maintain a balance between relationships inside and outside of their households. Much of the research that explores children and young people's understandings of intimacy and privacy acknowledges the embodied nature of this relationality by, for example, focusing on the management of gendered and intergenerational contact between bodies, particularly at "private" times. This research recognizes that risk discourses, which construct external threats to children and young people, provide a rationale for parents' desires to know what their children are doing, who they are spending time with, and where they are, constituting a tension for parents who wish to protect their children from harm but in doing so infringe upon their children's right to privacy, perhaps unintentionally shaping children's understanding of their own limited entitlement to privacy and diminishing their opportunities for forming intimate personal relationships outside of the family. In what can also be seen as a tension between adults' overprotection and children's resilience, parents may be inadvertently reducing the capacity of their children and young people to develop resilience in the face of risks (Boyden and Mann 2005). This raises the need to acknowledge that safeguarding children against risks should be accompanied with a recognition that children and young people have an invested interest in finding solutions to risks that allow them freedom to pursue their own interests and activities (Christensen and Mikkelsen 2008). We suggest that a reconsideration of the value of intimacy and privacy for children would offer families scope for reflection on family practices

and has the potential to open up new kinds of family practices which allow for the emotional privacy that children value and attempt to achieve and maintain.

Drawing on embodied understandings of intimacy and the value children attribute to tactility and inter-physicality, it is clear that children find these dimensions of relationships significant as ways of knowing others and formative in the development of their relationships. Therefore, there is a careful balance to be struck between, on the one hand, the management of bodies and, on the other, the development of relationships that benefit from being physically connected and endorsed with embodied affection, touch, hugging, and physical play. Furthermore, the nonverbal senses offer a range of opportunities for the development of intimacy, which is not only affective but also communicative, for example, in the case of children's relationships and interactions with young, preverbal siblings.

We suggest that privacy is highly embodied (as well as emotional). In considering the spatialities of developing intimacy and achieving privacy within the family home, we have suggested that the degree of choice children and young people have over their living arrangements may be minimal. Children and young people's access to and appropriation of space for private time alone from others is contingent on innumerable factors relating to socioeconomic status, family/household formations, and the distribution of resources. We do not suggest that privacy is necessarily achieved through children being afforded their own bedroom, for example, but have shown that children seek out and value opportunities for time alone in the family home or time with others away from their family homes. We suggest that there is a need for families (and/or family practitioners) to reflect upon the opportunities that children have to be alone and the value of these opportunities for children in terms of a place to achieve a sense of calm and quiet. The challenge for policy is to ensure that homes are adequately sized to accommodate space for all family members, whether this is determined by housing allocations or house-building guidelines. These issues have become increasingly pertinent in times of austerity as older young people move back home to live with families at a time in their life course when intimacy and privacy may be increasingly integral to the formation of their personal relationships, with consequences for the privacy and intimacy needs and wishes of other family members in the household.

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Family Relations in Times of Austerity: Reflections from the UK

3

Sarah Marie Hall

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Abstract

This chapter examines the ways in which family relationships and everyday practices may be open to change and contestation in times of austerity. While an extant body of literature explores changing familial relations as a result of social and cultural transformations, there remain pertinent questions concerning how such intimate relationships are impacted by economic upheaval. This issue is particularly timely, given the widespread impacts of austerity policies in the UK and across Europe currently. Drawing on insights from literature and supported by family ethnographies in the UK, this chapter sheds light on this very topic. Using the examples of austeritizing welfare and austere consumption, it brings to the fore the inseparability of familial and financial relations, everyday life, and economic change. The conclusion calls for further research into the social geographies of austerity, to extend beyond families and households to include friendships, intimacies, and acquaintanceships.

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1 Introduction

Kinship, procreation, cohabitation, family, sexual relations, love – indeed all forms of close affective encounter – are as much matters of state as they are matters of the heart. (Oswin and Olund 2010, p. 62)

Families are at the center of austerity politics, entwined together as matters of both the state and the heart. Since 2010 the UK government's main fiscal policy has been austerity – the conditions that result from significant cuts to public expenditure – with few measures to stimulate the economy (Hall 2016b; Oxfam 2013). Austerity is not, of course, only limited to the UK, for austerity politics are practiced in diverse places internationally, in the Minority and Majority worlds, and as a result of varying types of social, economic, and political crises. Such economic changes are felt at a range of spatial scales, from very personal to cross-national affects, although as yet little is known of how austere policies play out in everyday family life (Hall 2016a).

This chapter explores current understandings and literatures about how everyday family relationships and practices might be subject to change in times of austerity and economic upheaval. It advances these discussions by taking a geographical focus on family that accounts for everyday relationalities, spatialities, and temporalities. Rather than discussing family life in austerity in the abstract, the analysis is anchored in a discussion of recent austerity policies proposed and implemented by the UK government. Approaching austerity with a focus on everyday family life, it is argued, enables the study of these significant events and moments by cutting through and across time, space, and relationships.

Recent writings on family geographies have also argued for a more nuanced and in-depth investigation into everyday family relationships and the need to open up the “black box” of intimate family geographies (Hall 2011; Jackson 2009; Morgan 1996). More specifically, it is suggested that “geographers might better understand such complex dynamics by using family ethnographies to explore the active nature of relating within, and beyond, the affective space of the home” (Valentine et al. 2012, p. 791). With this in mind, this chapter draws upon insights from four years of family ethnographies in the North West of England, first in 2007–2009 and later in 2013–2015. Both research projects were focused on everyday family relationships and practices (consumption and living in austerity, respectively), both involved six families from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, and applied a similar methodological approach: participant observation supported by taped discussions, photographs, and participatory tasks (for further details, see Hall 2016a, b). Rather than shaping the focus of this chapter, these data are instead used for illustrative purposes, adding color and texture to the discussions within.

The remainder of this chapter takes the following structure. First it charts debates about “the family” in geography and the wider social sciences, including changes to traditional family formations and relationships and the resurgence in talking about family in an academic context. Literatures that speak specifically to the matter of family life in austerity are then unpacked, identifying the need for a more focused approach on understanding everyday family relations in the context of such economic change. From here, the potential and actual impacts of austerity policies on family practices and relationships are explored, using examples of government policies introduced in the UK since 2010. The conclusion notes the value of family geographies in raising important questions about social relationships in times of austerity, and suggests that such discussions would benefit from an expansion of the parameters of enquiry to include other significant social relations.

2 Family Relations and Changing Family Geographies

Valentine (2008, p. 2100) describes how “the family leaked into geography through early feminist research,” which argued for greater recognition of the gendered divisions of labor. From the 1980s, feminist activists and scholars have been destabilizing the concept of “the family,” with much of this early work having developed from second-wave feminism’s critique of the social inequalities borne from patriarchal and capitalist processes. Ideas about the family were being dismantled with changes in paid work and marriage (Bowlby 2011), and feminist geographers were redefining many unquestioned theoretical and methodological traditions within the discipline.

More recent queer and postcolonial critiques, as well as debates around individualization (e.g., Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Weeks et al. 2001), have also called for greater recognition and appreciation of difference and diversity within and between family forms and relations. It is posited that heteronormative ideologies about what families are and should be often overlook (at best) or discriminate against and curtail (at worst) other intimacies and forms of personal life beyond traditional kinship systems (see Smart 2007). As a result of these discussions, there was a general consensus within the social sciences about the decline of “the family,” or rather the *nuclear* family, mirrored by a shift away from talking about families in an academic context (Edwards and Gillies 2012).

Although geographers have made significant contributions to family-related topics, Harker and Martin (2012, p. 769) describe family as only “haunting now well-established geographical conceptualisations of gender, sexuality, home, private space, social reproduction, livelihoods, and childhood.” Family, it is argued, remains a somewhat “peculiar absent presence in the discipline of geography” (Valentine 2008, p. 2101). However this distancing of geographical writings and research from family is not necessarily reflected in, or is a reflection of, everyday life. Indeed, despite its decline, the image of the nuclear family continues to hold a strong ideological resonance in governance and policy-making (Edwards and Gillies 2012; Jackson 2009), being heavily entrenched in how many governments

communicate ideas of citizenship and responsibility and in how welfare and social benefits are distributed (Harker and Martin 2012; Harrison 2013).

Moreover, while family formations, relationships, and living situations might be changing, including that more people are practicing kinships across greater distances (see Holdsworth 2013; Parrenas 2005), this is not to say that family is an antiquated concept or practice. Many nonheterosexual couples also use the term “family” to “emphasise the strength of their kin-like social networks and commitments to their partners” (Jackson 2009, p. 3), as do non-related friends (Bowlby 2011). These significant inter- and intragenerational relations are often referred to as “families of choice” (Weeks et al. 2001; Valentine 2008). Likewise, traditional family relationships remain important in a range of cultural and social contexts. For example, drawing on research in West Africa on young people’s responses to parental death, Evans describes (2014, p. 547) how “kinship is lived, remade and displayed through gendered ‘family practices’.” Finch (2007, p. 66), building upon Morgan’s (1996) thesis of “doing family,” has proposed “family display” as both an activity and a concept, arguing that “families need to be ‘displayed’ as well as ‘done’” (see also Dermott and Seymour 2011). As Jackson (2009, p. 3) confirms, “the image of the nuclear family remains a powerful, normative social ideal, underpinned by strong institutional forces and capable of exerting considerable moral force.”

Within these conceptualizations of family, one important and defining feature is that family is rarely approached as only material or practical; the imaginary elements of family are, it is argued, just as important as the realized (Morgan 1996; Smart 2007). As Gillis (1996, p. xv) explains in this oft-cited passage:

We not only live with families but depend on them to do the symbolic work that was once assigned to religious and communal institutions: representing ourselves to ourselves as we would like to think we are. To put it another way, we all have two families, one that we live with and another we live by. We would like the two to be the same, but they are not.

Ideologies and normative understandings of family are constructed over time and space and therefore vary across these scales (see also Davies and Christensen, this volume). Family relationships themselves also transcend the spatialities and temporalities of home, household, parenthood, and the present moment, to encompass multiple generations and relations, spaces and distances, memories, and imaginaries (Hall 2016a; Vanderbeck 2007).

While there might have been changes in some cultures and societies with regard to social attitudes, formations, compositions, and cohabitation practices of families, many elements of family remain. One of the most pervasive familial norms is around parental responsibility. As Ribbens McCarthy et al. (2000, p. 800) concur, “the moral imperative around taking responsibility for putting children’s needs first may be one of the few remaining unquestionable moral assertions.” Parents are tasked with a moral duty for the present and future lives of their children, to ensure they become “good citizens” – but are blamed if they do not (Jensen and Tyler 2012).

Furthermore, a rich literature reveals that despite changes in the role of women in society, particular within waged labor, these responsibilities remain largely

gendered. Duncan et al. (2003, p. 310) explain that “when it comes to dependent children, there can be nonnegotiable, and deeply gendered, moral requirements to take responsibility for children’s needs and to place these first,” what they refer to as gendered moral rationalities (see also Evans 2014; McDowell et al. 2005). Based on observations from research with lone mothers, they argue that these responsibilities:

were gendered because they fundamentally dealt with notions of mothering, they were moral in providing answers about the right thing to do, and they were rationalities in providing a framework for taking decisions about participation in the labour market. (Duncan et al. 2003, p. 313)

While literatures around reimagining family have urged for a recognition of familial difference and diversity, including the role of fathers and fathering practices, these transitions have not been embedded evenly or consistently across space and time. As Aitken (2000, p. 596) explains, reflecting upon research with heterosexual parents in San Diego, USA, “as often as not and even when they are primary caregivers, men position themselves as ‘helpers’.”

Research interests within human geography have also evolved to explore the complex decisions women face about combining paid work and caring responsibilities (Bowlby 2011; Murcott 1983) and the ways in which employment decisions impact on family relationships (Aitken 2000; McDowell et al. 2005). In recent years, these shifts in the private sphere have become increasingly coupled with changes in the public sphere, with cuts to welfare and subsidized care, signifying a broader rolling back of state-provided care (England 2010). Such changes, Popke (2006, p. 506) explains, “have placed the burden of care increasingly onto individuals and families,” particularly inter- and intragenerational care for young, disabled, and elderly kin.

It is economic changes such as these that are of interest in this chapter. For while increasing burdens on female family members in times of austerity have long been noted (Hall 2016a; Harrison 2013), much less discussion has been afforded to how family relationships might be altered or confirmed as a result of such economic change, particularly when, as in the case of austerity in the UK presently, public spending cuts are a moving target. This chapter now turns to discuss literature pertaining to this very topic, on families, relationships, and austerity.

3 Families, Relationships, and Austerity

Within the social sciences an exciting body of literature is emerging that explores how familial relations in times of austerity can be understood and conceptualized. This work comes from and draws upon debates within sociology, social policy, human geography, cultural studies, women’s studies, and further. The accumulation of these discussions can be seen with the publication of numerous special issues, including “Lived Experience Through Economic Downturn in Britain” (Edwards and Irwin 2010) and “Austerity Parenting” (Jensen and Tyler 2012), as well as in a steady stream of journal articles and conference talks.

Within much of this literature it is recognized that families, as a complex, connected group of individuals, are “a key site of change” (Thomson et al. 2010, p. 150), in which everyday economic and social change may play out. Thomson et al. (2010, p. 152) describe how, during times of economic recession, families engage in a “negotiation” of present and past encounters of financial hardship, establishing a dialogue between current and previous generational experiences in order to face the future. From their longitudinal research with first-time mothers, they also found that those from less privileged backgrounds tend to develop “well-honed survival skills necessary for hard times” (p. 152). Indeed, as Smart (2007) argues, the imaginary has an important role to play in how family relationships are understood, envisaged, and replicated, and memories of family practices can likewise shape how we think about family, in past, present, and future tense.

Similarly, Maclean et al. (2010, p. 11), in a study of financial trajectories during the credit crunch, found that family members engaged in “safeguarding” against the future and that having learned from past experience they were more able to weather the recent recession. There is again a temporal element to note here. As Goode (2009, p. 222) also argues in her reflections on qualitative research with financially indebted couples, past family experiences of recession and austerity must be viewed “in the context of time,” of “past and concurrent events, as well as consequences and goals projected into the future” (see also Jensen and Tyler 2012).

Furthermore, Harrison’s (2013) study of economic decline in New Haven, a coastal town in the UK, illustrates how the context of time is important, not only for what it reveals of the moments in which families encounter and are faced with economic change, but because these experiences are also played out *over time*. Interviews with families, residents, and community workers emphasized this point:

the recent recession was not experienced as a ‘shock’, but was rather ‘more of the same’. Obviously, sudden and unexpected loss of employment was a shock for some, and felt particularly acutely by those who had been in reasonably well-paid jobs. But more commonly, we talked with people who had experienced a gradual attrition and erosion of relative well-being over several years. This was often coupled with low expectations and a sense of continuity over time. (Harrison 2013, p. 105)

Harrison (2013, p. 102) explains that New Haven is a town that is known for its “intergenerational continuity, with many families who can trace back their roots over multiple generations.” This, combined with low levels of educational attainment, forms the basis of derogatory stereotypes which are perpetuated through intergenerational continuity and memory (see also Vanderbeck and Worth 2015). The wider intersecting geographies of family, community, and nation are, therefore, an important context of place, space, and time for thinking through everyday economic change. An interesting twist to the story is Harrison’s “own history of association with the town, in a personal as well as an academic capacity.” Several members of her family lived in New Haven while she carried out the research, and her niece also became a coresearcher on the project (Harrison 2013, p. 101). As in this example, researchers’ social worlds – personal, familial, and professional – can sometimes collide, creating new ways of understanding family relations (Hall 2016b).

Within these examples, there is a sense of the collective and the convivial: that family experiences of austerity and economic change are often experienced *together*. Indeed, in ethnographic research with families before and during the recent financial crisis (Hall 2016a), and later into the current period of austerity (Hall 2016b), everyday financial practices have been shown to be “simultaneously family practices, bound up in the relational and emotional experiences and negotiations of everyday family life, themselves involving a whole set of interpersonal, inter- and intra-generational, gendered, reciprocal and sharing practices” (Hall 2016a, p. 326). It is hard to extrapolate those elements of economic change that are about families and those that are about finance or money, for they are co-constitutive, knotty, and messy.

One of the reasons for this is that family is a key source of economic support. While meanings of and relationships between family may have changed, “kinship relations still hold significance as sources of practical and financial help” (Finch and Mason 1993, p. 1). As Finch and Mason (1993, p. 5–6) illustrate in their reputed study of family responsibilities, there can coexist “very different types of help—money, practical assistance, looking after someone who is ill,” in which kin relationships are often the “means through which people receive various types of assistance.” Familial support, therefore, brings together different kin combinations and relationships, everyday practices, and ways and means of helping. As such, financial support within families is argued to be inseparable from sentiments of care, love and responsibility, worry, shame, and guilt that are present in sharing, borrowing, lending, and giving within families (Goode 2009; Hall 2016a; Heath and Calvert 2008).

The supportive role of family is therefore important when considering the current economic climate, from the global financial crisis and “credit crunch” around 2008 to recent austerity cuts. As Valentine (2008, p. 2106) suggests, contemporary economic systems, and insecurities therein, effectively shape family relationships and responsibilities:

the rolling back of the welfare state and financial insecurity that characterises contemporary neo-liberal economies mean that many people are increasingly dependent on family or other intimate relations for material and moral support.

There are numerous examples of the ways in which families provide this support in times of economic hardship. Heath and Calvert (2013, p. 1120), for instance, illustrate that “amidst rising housing costs and restricted employment opportunities in the UK, younger generations are increasingly dependent on their families for material and financial support to offset the costs of living independently.” Economic insecurity at the personal level has ricocheting impacts, whereby “behind these reported trends lie complex intergenerational negotiations relating to obligations and responsibilities, indebtedness and gratitude, dependency and independence, fairness and equality” (Heath and Calvert 2013, p. 1121). Families are therefore often a source of practical, material, and emotional support, an interrelational space of care, interdependency, and responsibility (England 2010; Popke 2006).

Although contemporary family life is understood to be significant in policy-making, there has been a relative dearth of research that reflects on family relationships in times of austerity (Hall 2015; Hall 2016a). This means that there is scope for a fuller understanding of the impacts of such economic change on the everyday lives of families, and how family relations may change within and because of austerity. In addition, empirical studies of families and economic change have tended to adopt a narrow view of these experiences, restricting their focus to specific social/demographic groups, relationships, or moments in time (see Henwood et al. 2010; MacLean et al. 2010).

Furthermore, and of particular significance to this chapter, there has been very little consideration of how everyday family relationships tie into broader economic changes, such as welfare reforms, tax changes, and other austerity policies, especially as and when they occur. This chapter will now explore the ways in which everyday family life might be subject to change as a result of austerity, taking the UK as an example.

4 Family Relations in Austerity: Reflections on Policy, Insights from Research

This section reflects on the actual and possible impacts of recent austerity policies introduced by the UK government since 2010, and until the time of writing in late 2015, in terms of what they might mean for everyday family relationships and practices. To give a flavor of some of the economic changes made in the present period of austerity, examples of policies related to welfare and consumption are drawn upon. These discussions are peppered with insights from ethnographic research with families in the North West of England, both around the time of the financial crisis (2007–2009; funded by the Economic and Social Research Council), and into the later period of austerity (2013–2015; as part of a Hallsworth Research Fellowship from the University of Manchester).

4.1 Austeritizing Welfare

Welfare reforms in the UK, undertaken as part of a series of government cuts, have provoked much opposition to date, with many civil society organizations campaigning against proposed policies and changes (see Oxfam 2013). In these debates, dualistic discourses have been created between the deserving and the undeserving poor (Jensen and Tyler 2012), strivers and skivers (Valentine and Harris 2014), and families working hard and families that are welfare dependent (MacLeavy 2011). Indeed, at the time of writing this piece, the main landing page on the UK government website for welfare policies prominently features the following statement:

The benefits system needs to be reformed to be fair, affordable and able to reduce poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency. This will make sure people are helped to move into work while the most vulnerable get the support they need. (Department for Work and Pensions 2015)

On top of £8.1 billion of cuts from changes in personal income tax and social security benefits proposed in June 2010, in 2015 the newly elected Conservative government announced a further £12 billion of cuts to the welfare budget as a means of achieving these reforms (Pearson and Elson 2015). The recent batch of welfare cuts includes reducing the household benefits cap to £20,000 a year (£23,000 a year within Greater London), restricting housing benefit entitlement for those aged 18 to 21, and from April 2017 limiting Child Tax Credits to two children (HM Treasury 2015). These policies are likely to have a huge impact on family relationships and daily practices, falling heaviest on those families already struggling (Hall 2016b; Oxfam 2013).

Perhaps the most controversial austerity policy introduced in the UK since 2010 is what is known as the “bedroom tax.” While not technically a tax, the changes involved the removal of what the government calls “the spare room subsidy” from housing benefit. In effect, it means those claiming housing benefit have had their allowance cut because they are deemed to be living in a property that is in excess of their spatial requirements. Under the reformed system, an adult individual or adult couple (married or unmarried) is entitled to one bedroom, two children under 16 of the same sex are expected to share bedrooms, and children under 10 (regardless of sex) are also expected to share bedrooms (see Brown 2015).

There are clear financial implications of this policy change for families, whereby “the imposition of the so-called ‘bedroom tax’ has inevitably increased the rental cost to social tenants” (Pearson and Elson 2015, p. 20). Government figures show that “those with one spare bedroom will lose 14% of their eligible rent and those with 2 or more spare bedrooms will lose 25%” (Department for Work and Pensions 2014). As well as having impacts on personal and familial financial stability, such welfare policies are also assuming of the spatialities of everyday familial and personal relations, what people do in their shared homes, if and how such spaces are shared, and the rhythms and practices this sharing involves.

By imposing conditions on how domestic spaces should be shared, the “bedroom tax” is an excellent example of the direct impact that welfare policies can have on family relationships and the issues this creates. For example, what do these changes mean for those couples who do not share a bedroom? What about when an individual has a disability or health condition that prohibits them from sharing their sleeping space? What about couples that have terminated their relationship, or are experiencing interpersonal issues, but are still cohabiting?

The questions do not end there. What about parents who have lived in their home for years and only have a “spare” bedroom because their children have moved out? And what if their children have only moved out temporarily? What if your children, all under the age of 10, do not get on but have to share a bedroom? What about children who are reaching puberty and feel they need privacy from their younger sibling(s)? What about the links that people have to their families, neighborhoods,

and communities, only to be unable to afford to live there anymore? Huge assumptions are made about inter- and intragenerational relationships and the very intimate everyday practices of families (see also Oswin and Olund 2010). However, as this policy is still in place, for many families these issues are a reality.

The reduction of child tax credits to two children is another controversial policy, which speaks to ideals of the nuclear family (Edwards and Gillies 2012; Weeks et al. 2001), and with additional class-based connotations about the “appropriate” size of families (Valentine and Harris 2014). In a recent ethnographic study in the north of England by the author (see Hall 2016b), four of the six families were recipients of child tax credits. The removal of these benefits has resounding impacts, not least for the welfare of those third, fourth, fifth, etc. children born into families already struggling, but also for those upon whom they are dependent. These participating families told of their careful negotiations between income from employment and income from the state, with constant worries about losing their entitlements, whether because of welfare cuts or changes in personal circumstances.

One example of this comes from the Watson family who took part in ethnographic research from 2013 to 2015. Kerry and Daniel are a couple in their early thirties and got married in early 2014. They have four sons, who at the time of the research were all under six years old. They are financially dependent on Daniel’s income, who earns £23,000 a year before tax as a mechanic, and on child tax credits, housing benefit, and child benefits.

Having discussed it at length, Kerry and Daniel decided it made little sense for Kerry to go back to full-time work after having the boys. They figured they would actually be worse off financially, because Kerry would have to earn more than she receives from social security payments and then some extra for childcare. However, a consideration of everyday family relationships and practices sheds light on how these decisions are never purely financial, but incorporate many elements of what it means to live in and with families:

Kerry: Work’s not an option because if I go back to work, we’ll be probably worse off, which is absolutely stupid. [. . .] Because of how much Dan earns and how much we get in benefits and stuff, if I earn. . . I think, if I earn or Dan earns, say, five hundred pound more in the year, we’re not entitled to any benefits.

Sarah: More than what he gets now, in total?

Kerry: Basically, I could earn about four hundred and fifty pound a year and then we’d lose all our benefits. So I’d need to have a job which then was more than our benefits to be worthwhile going back to work, so I’d have to get a really good job which, I’m only qualified as a nursery nurse, which is not going to get that, and I’d need it between school hours and stuff.

(Kerry Watson, Interview, April 2014)

Here, Kerry relays how the decision-making process for her not to go back to paid work was the result of interpersonal, intra-couple negotiations (Hall 2016a; Jackson 2009), conversations between herself and Dan about what was best for their family. This decision-making involved the consideration of intergenerational responsibilities, an unquestioned parental obligations to the boys (Duncan et al. 2003; Hall 2011;

Ribbens McCarthy et al. 2000), and of how everyday rhythms of this (typically gendered) intergenerational care had to be balanced with paid work (Evans 2014; McDowell et al. 2005). There was an anxiety to note in Kerry's voice as she talked about the possibility of them losing all their entitlements and the impossibilities of making work pay with the responsibility of raising four young children (see Goode 2009; Harrison 2013). This concern therefore manifested itself in imaginaries about their future as a family, as the basis upon which family decisions were made in the present (see Smart 2007; Vanderbeck 2007).

Moral discourses of family relations therefore loom large in discussions of austerity, feeding into changes to the welfare system and with distinct impacts "on the ground." Indeed, in the UK a new system for distributing social security benefits is currently being introduced, known as Universal Credit. Under this new system, state benefits will be paid to recipients using a single monthly payment per household. In effect, this reifies ideas about the nuclear family as a cohesive "unit" (Edwards and Gillies 2012; Smart 2007) and ignores intra-household, intragenerational, and gendered tensions around financial security and autonomy.

It is well known that responsibility for intra-household finances can exacerbate gender inequalities, interdependencies, and inter-relationalities. Women in families and households are often placed with responsibility for managing household budgets and indebtedness but often have little control over spending and saving (Goode 2009; Hall 2016a). The new system is also predominantly operated through an online platform (see GOV.UK 2015a), meaning there are also inequalities in terms of access which arguably affect those who are most in need of state support. While Universal Credit is not an austerity policy per se, because of the timing of its being rolled out, it has the potential to compound the impacts of austerity and reify moral ideas of family.

The introduction of the *Married Couple's Allowance* in a time of austerity also provokes interesting questions and reveals heteronormative assumptions about what families are and should be (see Harker and Martin 2012; Jackson 2009). This is a tax allowance that gives couples who are married or in a civil partnership, or living with their spouse or civil partner, the opportunity to reduce their annual tax bill by up to £835.50. Those living in families with different forms or structures, such as lone parents, divorced couples, cohabiting couples, couples living apart but with dependent children, etc., are excluded. The scheme thus benefits those who conform to particular ideals of the cohabiting family and those who have access to the financial resources to get married or live together. This is another example of how, as Brown (2015, p. 977) accurately observes, "the self-reliant couple is being promoted over households that cannot provide for their own welfare needs."

This is confirmed by further details on the official government website, which states that "for marriages before 5 December 2005, the husband's income is used to work out Married Couple's Allowance. For marriage and civil partnerships after this date, it's the income of the highest earner" (GOV.UK 2015b). Here, the notion of the breadwinning husband still resonates (Duncan et al. 2003; Edwards and Gillies 2012); ideas and assumptions feminist have been challenging for decades (Valentine 2008).

The project of austeritizing welfare is a process by which differences, responsibilities, and inequalities in and between families emerge, such as around class, inter- and intragenerationality, inter-relationality, and gender. These themes are critical in discussions about the everyday impacts of austerity on family relationships and are continued in the discussion below.

4.2 Austere Consumption

The relationship between families and consumption, particularly food consumption, has long been applied as a lens through which to understand everyday familial relationships, practices, decision-making, and inter- and intragenerational responsibilities (Hall 2011; Jackson 2009). Family norms, values, and attitudes are thought to be transmitted through everyday consumption practices and in the shared, proximate, and convivial spaces and moments in which they occur (Hall 2016a; Valentine et al. 2012). Consumption is also an important feature of austerity politics, whereby in the period immediately following the financial crisis, “politicians [were] urging the public to spend more in order to help the economy to recover” (Hinton and Goodman 2010, p. 275). Consumers are again placed center stage in the lived impacts of austerity, if we consider the increased cost of food and perishables, the growth of food banks and the number of families relying on them, and the popularization of World War II “make do and mend” discourses (Hall 2015).

In addition, political campaigning by the elected government about reducing the deficit highlights further implicit links between consumption, austerity, and everyday family life. Claims of the need to cut the deficit and clear national debt, as one of the key drivers behind current austerity policies in the UK (MacLeavy 2011), have often been equated with the need for citizens to manage their own finances effectively. Since the global financial crisis, the notion of “living within one’s means” has been regularly applied to both the state and the family, suggesting a simplified and misleading correlation between the budgeting, (mis)spending, and indebtedness of government and families (Graham-Leigh 2015; Hall 2016a).

Furthermore, the metaphor of “belt-tightening” is regularly used within academic and media discussions of austerity (see MacLeavy 2011), symbolizing the need to cut costs and budget accordingly. This phrase also has connotations of austerity as felt, embodied, and corporeal (Hall 2016a), telling us something about the condition and consumption of the “austere body”:

Amidst austerity, comprising cuts to publicly funded health services and social welfare, the “larger public” are routinely extolled to literally exercise greater self-discipline and “tighten their belts”. Lean times, we are told, necessitate lean, efficient, healthy bodies and the cutting of unwanted, aberrant flesh that is weighing us all down. (Monaghan 2014, p. 1)

As Graham-Leigh (2015) argues, the ideological associations made between overconsumption, obesity, poverty, and class proliferate everyday life in the UK. It is thought to be a widely held and rarely contested assumption that bodies cannot be

financially restricted if they are fat and, by extension, that it is morally unacceptable to be fat if living on state support. To be fat and unemployed is considered feckless, lazy, irresponsible, and an undue burden to the taxpayer (see also Valentine and Harris 2014). Thus, “as with discussions of austerity, it seems that those who have the least are the ones who have the greatest responsibility to be restrained in consuming it” (Graham-Leigh 2015, p. 20).

Given this context, it is interesting that “Change4Life,” a flagship policy for the Department of Health, was set up in 2009 to encourage healthier yet affordable eating within families (see also Fairbrother and Ellis, this volume). The scheme undoubtedly reifies traditional ideologies about the structure and function of “the family,” particularly the pervasive image of the nuclear family, consisting of heterosexual parents with dependent children (Edwards and Gillies 2012; Weeks et al. 2001). Change4Life might also be said to represent the encroachment of the state into intimate family practices while at the same time retreating from responsibilities for health and social care (England 2010; Oswin and Olund 2010).

These observations are compounded by an examination of the content of the website (see NHS 2015). In terms of imagery, there is the constant presence of the figures of two adults and two children, notably slim and gender distinct by color. These figures also comprise the wording of the logo, contorted to spell “life,” accompanied by such text as: “Would you or your family like to be healthier and happier? Would you like loads of ideas, recipes and games to help you do this? Then you already know why you should join Change4Life” (NHS 2015).

Austerity policies concerning consumption speak not only to an ideology of familial relationships, structure, and form but also to notions of “acceptable” family consumption practices. In March 2012 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, announced in his annual budget detailed plans to extend the taxing of hot takeaway foods (HM Treasury 2012). The plan was considered confusing, because it involved applying 20% value-added tax (VAT) – a policy already applied to most hot takeaway foods – to baked items that may be sold hot or cold, such as pasties, pies, and sausage rolls, hence the colloquialism “pasty tax.”

The taxing of these food stuffs, typically bought from bakeries and supermarkets, was seen as having a direct impact on “ordinary people” and their ability to afford “everyday food” (see Malik 2012). It was met with huge public disapproval, as well as being petitioned by bakers across the country and a national newspaper. The pasty tax debate centered around discourses of class, poverty, and everyday consumption. More specifically, the policy was argued to highlight the differences between the political establishment and their often privileged upbringings and those families and communities most affected by austerity policies. As such, the Conservative party were portrayed as “out of touch” with the UK public.

The plan to tax these hot high-street savory snacks was announced between the aforementioned family ethnography projects; however, it provoked memories for the author of a photograph taken by the Robinson family and the accompanying conversation. Like most of the families involved in the ethnographies, Emma and Tom took part in the research for over a year and in three episodes of research (or periods of participation). These episodes usually lasted a few months, with an



Fig. 1 Photograph of Emma sharing a pasty with her children (Taken by Tom Robinson, July 2008)

interval of a month or two between. During one of the intervals, families were asked to take photographs of their day-to-day lives. Then, upon returning for the next episode of research, the photographs were collected (either in the form of a disposable camera or files if taken on a digital camera) and hard copies made. At the next visit, the photographs would be discussed and the conversation recorded.

The Robinsons approached the photography task as a shared responsibility, whereby the taking of photographs and our later discussion were done *together*, parents and children (Bowly 2011; Dermott and Seymour 2011; Finch 2007; Hall 2016a). The photograph above (Fig. 1) was one of a handful taken during a family trip to the theater in the school summer break. It shows Emma with a pasty in her hand, holding it to Peter's mouth. Beside Peter is his older sister, Mary, with younger brother Ben sat in the foreground.

Emma and Tom were very frugal, with both in receipt of state support. They were also health conscious, for medical reasons, and described an aversion to "fast food" (Hall 2011). This image therefore came as somewhat of a surprise, although it was pleasing that the family had been so candid in their photographing. The initial analysis therefore found it to illustrate the value of ethnography - that what people say and what they do can be mismatched. However, their discussion about the photograph clarified and confirmed family practices that the author had observed, but not fully realized:

Sarah: what about this photo? I'm guessing you took that? [to Tom].

Tom: this is a pasty.

Sarah: what kind of pasty is it? You're eating on this one, Peter.

Emma: cheese.

Tom: it's probably a cheese pasty, yeah.

Peter: and that's baby Ben.

Sarah: so were you eating your mum's then? [to Peter].

Emma: yeah.

Sarah: and do you usually buy food when you go out to town, or do you take your own?

Emma: we mostly buy food don't we, we always think "take it", but we're usually rushing so we end up buying something.

Tom: we'd buy something like that [points at photograph], wouldn't we?

Emma: erm, if it's me I'd probably just get something like that, but if the kids are with me sometimes I end up going to McDonald's, yeah its usually like McDonald's or Pizza Hut or something.

(Robinson, Interview, August 2008)

While healthy eating was important to Emma and Tom, affordability could at times eclipse these priorities, particularly if their children were hungry. This illustrates how "family consumption practices and negotiations that centre on monetary concerns are an example of everyday ethical consumption," in that they involve much moral balancing (Hall 2011, p. 632). Parents from across both ethnographic projects noted the sheer expense of days out with children, particularly the costs of eating out. Ensuring children ate something filling was a priority, but finding foods that were also relatively healthy and inexpensive was difficult. Convenience foods, such as pasties, sausage rolls, or chips, were commonly consumed on these occasions, ticking the "filling" and "inexpensive" boxes, and as foods that children would eat without argument. The photograph also significantly shows Emma feeding her lunch to a hungry Peter, resonating with debates on gender, care, and intergenerational responsibilities (Duncan et al. 2003; McDowell et al. 2005).

Although this photograph and taped discussion predate the pasty tax debacle, the imagery and the explanation of the moment captured are very relevant. They reveal that, as much of the media and petitioning suggested, baked goods like pasties are an effective and convenient way to feed oneself and one's children when money and time are short (Jackson 2009; Murcott 1983). The pasty tax was scrapped in May 2012, a mere two months after it was announced, whereby a change was implemented that meant if baked foods were cooling, then no VAT should be added. Yet, as this vignette reminds us, it remains an excellent example of how a seemingly innocuous policy has the potential to impact on everyday family relationships and practices, impacts that are uneven in their social and spatial distribution (Hall 2015).

5 Conclusion

This chapter has used a range of materials – including literature, policy documents, imagery, media stories, interview extracts, and ethnographic observations – to explore the ways in which family relations may be open to change and conflict during times of austerity. For the most part, it has focused on intergenerationality, intragenerationality, gender, class and interpersonal relations, and the connections between them, in order to flesh out how austerity impacts on and in everyday family

life. Indeed, austerity policies such as those recently implemented by the UK government have been shown to be personally and socially affective, situated in familial relationships, practices, and experiences, concerns of both the state and the heart (Oswin and Olund 2010).

The multi-scalar, interpersonal, and socially uneven impacts of austerity on families are not, of course, restricted to the UK, and the findings herein also speak to experiences across Europe, the USA, and to non-Western experiences of austerity. Indeed, austerity might be understood as both a personal and socioeconomic condition, and furthermore the two do not necessarily coincide (Hall 2016b). To be living in austerity does not require one to live in the context of sociopolitical austerity (i.e., with the retreat of state funding for public expenditure), for there are multiple experiences of living in a personal condition of austerity in a range of contexts (Hall 2015). To wit, it is imperative to recognize that everyday family life is not situated within a vacuum, but that economic changes, regardless of scale, are likely to impact familial relationships and practices.

To close, this chapter proposes further avenues for thinking about intimate, personal, and social lives in times of austerity. This includes broadening the scope of inter- and intragenerational relationships, transcending the often imaginary boundaries placed around kin, families, and households (Hall 2016a), to consider other important social relations and how they too might be impacted by austerity. For example, this may include a consideration of friendship, acquaintanceship, everyday encounters, and other intimate relations – such as social workers, hairdressers, or colleagues – and the ways in which these social relationships intersect and blur, including with familial relations (Bowlby 2011; Hall 2016b). The social geographies of austerity are a fruitful space for further social research into the messiness of everyday relationships, whereby the geographies of family relations, as described here, are only part of the story.

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Young Adults Living at Home: Independence, Intimacy, and Intergenerational Relationships in Shared Family Spaces

4

Kirsty Finn

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Abstract

This chapter is concerned with young people’s changing patterns of home leaving. Around the world young people are delaying the process of moving out of the parental home and are living with family for much longer periods into early adulthood. There are a number of reasons for this transformation; principally it reflects the shifting experience of adulthood and independence as well as changes to family formation and employment for young adults. More than this however, changing patterns of home leaving among young adults are suggestive of transformations within intergenerational relationships and what it means to feel “at home” during young adulthood. As young people delay leaving home, they share their home space with parents and wider family well into adulthood, and this has implications for intergenerational intimacies as well as individual identities. Negotiating shared family space can be a complex and emotionally charged endeavor, not least for young adults who have previously lived away from home only to “boomerang” back at a later date. This phenomenon, studies suggest, is a growing trend in the Minority World. Accordingly, this chapter brings together

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literatures on changing patterns of home leaving, the meaning and experience of being “at home” for children and young adults, and the emergence of boomeranging or “homecomings.”

Keywords

home leaving · boomeranging · graduates · intergenerational support · sexuality · home · higher education

1 Introduction

The patterns and processes associated with leaving home are changing for many young people around the world, with many now delaying their exit and living with family for much longer periods into early adulthood (Cobb-Clark 2008). In the UK, the number of young adults (i.e., those aged between 20 and 34 years old) living with parents in the family home was recorded as 3.3 million or around 26% in 2013. Comparable statistics for 1996 reveal a much lower figure of 2.7 million or 21% of young adults living within the parental home (ONS 2014). This changing pattern of home leaving is not limited to the UK; it can also be seen in Mediterranean Europe (Becker et al. 2005) and Australia, where in 2007 almost one in four (23%) young adults were living at home with their parents, compared with 19% in 1986 (ABS 2009). A similar story is identifiable in the USA too, where the number of young adults living at home rose from 4.7 million to 5.9 million between 2007 and 2011 (U.S. Census Bureau 2013).

This changing landscape of young people’s home-leaving strategies has received increasing attention from scholars, media commentators, and policy analysts. There are a number of key reasons for this growing interest and these will be explored in this chapter. Firstly, understanding young people’s routes out of the family home is integral to the study of youth transitions and the related concepts of “independence” and “adulthood.” When, how, and with what kinds of support young people are able to leave home is telling, then, of the broader experience of growing up and is often linked to demographic shifts in employment and relationship status. On a separate level, the issue of co-residence into early adulthood is worthy of public debate because it reveals something about how young people, together with their parents and wider families, imagine and actively negotiate kinship, care, intimacy, and intergenerational responsibilities. Intergenerationality refers to the relations, interactions, and tensions between and within different generational groups, and issues of contact, conflict, and cohesion between generations have important spatial dimensions (Vanderbeck 2007). With this in mind, understanding how young adults in the Minority World share their home space and feel “at home” with kin is an important task of intergenerational geographies.

Finally, changing patterns of home leaving among young adults are interesting because they not only reveal the incidence of delayed departure but also the probability of one or more returns. It has been suggested over recent years that many young adults recorded as living within the parental home may have already left

and experienced a period of absence before returning for financial, social, or emotional reasons (Stone et al. 2014). The ways in which these periods of return have been conceptualized within youth research have changed significantly since the early 1990s, when they were framed as failed or problem transitions with young adults taking up space in “crowded” nests (Schnaiberg and Goldenberg 1989). More recent research has cast these young adults as “boomerang kids” (Mitchell 1998, 2006), and there is now growing research on the apparent trend toward boomeranging or what is referred to here as “homecomings.” This emerging literature reveals the significance of gender, social class, and young people’s educational trajectories in structuring the experience of return in early adulthood.

This chapter is organized around three important areas of theory and research: leaving home, being “at home,” and homecomings. The first section considers the changing patterns and processes underpinning young people’s home-leaving strategies in light of theories of social change and notions of independence and adulthood. Following this, the chapter reviews literature on the meaning and significance of home for children and young people and the ways in which this space is constructed as a site of intimacy, family, and care. This discussion outlines some of the challenges and contradictions underpinning ideas about what it means to be “at home” and considers the impact of co-residence on the quality of intergenerational relationships and young people’s sense of self. The final section examines the phenomenon of boomeranging and synthesizes the few available studies with a detailed description of two case narratives generated through research with young women graduates in the UK (Finn 2015).

These three themes synthesize different and often disparate debates within the study of children and childhood, youth transitions, and intergenerational geographies. The discussion offers important insights into how and in what ways a prolonged stay within the family home, or indeed a period of return after an initial departure, may impact upon notions of independence and adulthood for the young person living at home but also for the quality and emotionality of intergenerational relationships and the spatiality of family life. Although the concerns addressed here relate to young adults in the Minority World, there may be points of overlap with Majority World experiences too.

2 Leaving Home

Young lives and identities are often approached in the language of transition, and leaving the parental home is regarded as a key event in the process of becoming independent and entering a phase of early adulthood. Leaving home has emerged as significant moment for young people and their families and one worthy of academic study, not least because empirical data reveals that individual experiences of this transition are extremely varied (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005). These variations – from country to country, between men and women, and young people in urban and rural settings – illuminate the different levels of planning and control that are available to different groups of young people, the various opportunities and

constraints at play in different contexts, and the kinds of familial support to which they have access at this time. Moreover, home-leaving strategies are often indicative of the availability of public support for young people and housing and broader generational shifts with regard to household formation and relationships (Heath 2008, p. 10).

Leaving home has long been understood as one dimension of a threefold trajectory toward adulthood which includes employment or professional transitions as well as housing and changes to relationship status (Coles 1995; Galland 1991). These three separate but often overlapping experiences have become the main typologies underpinning youth transitions research. For much of the last century, young people's pathways into adulthood were highly structured and linear, and these three transitions were relatively synchronized and condensed within a short space of time (Molgat 2007). It is now widely acknowledged, however, that this synchronicity of transition has been replaced by feelings of uncertainty and a general sense of irregularity and disruption with regard to how and when young people move from dependency to independency (Furlong and Cartmel 1997). Routes in and out of the family home are now conceptualized as disjointed or "yo-yo" transitions (Biggart and Walther 2006), often including peer-shared or solo living as well as more traditional exits for family formation (Heath 2008).

These changes to young people's patterns of home leaving are understood in the context of broader social changes which shape the opportunities and constraints that young people must navigate. Variations in the timing and nature of young people's routes out of home are articulated in terms of individualization, the destandardization of the life course, and the declining significance of age-defined transitions (Bynner 2005). From this perspective young people's housing pathways are characterized as reflecting varying degrees of choice and risk as the traditional structures of gender, family, social class, and employment cease to pattern pathways out of home in routine and predictable ways. Leaving home early is regarded as a "fast-track" transition and part of a standardized or normal biography. This route into early adulthood is mostly associated with young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and the gendered pathways of young women into early parenthood. By contrast, delaying the move out of home reflects a choice-based approach and more flexible orientations of young people who have the resources to adapt to the changing circumstances of employment and shifting expectations around family, lifestyle, and so on (du Bois-Reymond 1998). These slow-track, choice biographies are not structured by gender and, in the main, refer to the experiences of middle-class young people who are or have been engaged in higher education.

There are great variations in young people's patterns of home leaving, and as outlined above, these reflect inequalities of social class and gender and the unequal processes of social change. In a seminal study of young people's housing transitions, Ford et al. (2002) illuminated for the first time the mixed picture of housing pathways in England. The research reveals that while some young adults experience leaving home in chaotic, unplanned, and relatively under-resourced ways, others articulate carefully planned strategies of exit which often reflect lifestyle and identity-related concerns, as well as material and emotional needs. Ford et al. (2002) identified five

distinct housing pathways: chaotic, unplanned, constrained, planned (nonstudent), and student pathways. These different models of home leaving highlight the key resources that young people must access if they are to move successfully from dependence to independent living, as well as the complex interdependencies that develop in this context. Finally, this important study draws attention to the centrality of higher education and student experiences for the process of housing transitions in the Minority World.

The massification of higher education in Western societies is understood as having a significant impact on the patterns of home leaving among young adults, particularly in the UK where leaving home to attend university has a strong tradition (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005). Leaving the family home is linked to notions of independence and regarded by some as central to the experience of university (Holdsworth 2009). Whether it is the experience of living with peers or negotiating the private rented sector (Christie et al. 2002), living away from home during university study can be transformative and give rise to greater feelings of autonomy and freedom. Often, experiences of peer-shared living within higher education are sustained after graduation. Research by Heath (2004) and Heath and Kenyon (2001) reveal that for many young adults, this is an active choice and ties into the kinds of lifestyles young professionals intentionally seek out. Independent living with friends and peers is therefore part of the process of home-making and establishing a sense of self and belonging in early adulthood (Gorman-Murray 2014). More than this, however, it is thought that the expansion of higher education and the rising costs of study in the UK have led to a decline in the financial returns of a university degree, and this has had a significant impact upon the transition into home ownership for young graduates (Heath 2008).

A recent study by Heath and Calvert (2013) examined the impact of debt and the global financial downturn upon young people's patterns of leaving home and living independently. The authors reveal the important role of intergenerational financial support for facilitating routes out of home.

It has been estimated that the proportion of UK first-time buyers under 30 who were dependent on financial support from family members rose from 10 per cent in the mid-1990s to around 40 per cent by the mid-2000s . . . and to around half by 2008. Furthermore, many mortgage products available to first time buyers are premised on some form of parental contribution, including equity release schemes. (2013, p. 1122)

This emerging trend of intergenerational support to enable young adults to offset the costs of independent living is interesting. At one level, it illuminates the enduring importance of leaving home as a social and cultural milestone, a turning point within the life course. Looked at another way, however, the elasticity of parental support – that is, its stretching beyond the defined spaces of family home to a new, independent home – may be indicative of the strains put upon relationships through the experience of prolonged co-residence. Alternatively, this might be telling of parental anxieties regarding the possibility of “failed” or unsuccessful transitions of adult children.

Studies in the USA and Canada have documented some of the challenges for intergenerational relationships in the context of young adults' delayed transitions. Schnaiberg and Goldenberg (1989) invoke images of the "crowded nest" when young adults remain at home. Aquilino and Supple (1991, p. 24) reflect on "parental satisfaction with the presence of 'unlaunched' adult children." This body of research highlights the complexities and pressures felt by parents and children as they negotiate roles and responsibilities in order to avoid disagreements and ensure co-residence is a successful enterprise. In a more recent study, Mitchell (2010) argues that parents reported being unhappy when their children failed to properly transition or when they felt "entitled" to support from family. The following section examines the meaning and experience of home for children and young adults and considers what it means to feel "at home" and how this relates to intergenerational relationships and support.

3 Being "At Home"

If the timing and experience of leaving home is important for understanding youth transitions, then it is important also to recognize what being "at home" means for young adults and how this relates to intergenerational relationships and familial intimacies. In their research into young people's transitions into adulthood and independence in three distinctive European contexts – Liverpool, UK, Bilbao, Spain, and Trondheim, Norway – Holdsworth and Morgan argue that the "centrality of home of home is such that, for most people, it is something that we take for granted" (2005, p. 68). Certainly, home is an everyday experience and, as a consequence, has a multiplicity of meanings and can refer to a range of locales and scales as well as feelings and sentiments. Mallett (2004) provides a comprehensive review of the different ways in which home is understood within sociology, anthropology, psychology history, architecture, and philosophy as well as geography. This critical discussion of home reflects upon the ways in which home is often conflated with "house," reducing home to a one-dimensional experience. As Mannay's research with young people in South Wales illuminates, "home" does not simply refer to a geographical space "but the site of a close-knit kinship network" (2013, p. 95).

Being "at home" thus relates to feelings of belonging, identity, and connections to places, people, as well as different temporalities. In this way, home operates on a range of levels from the real and everyday to the idealized and imagined. Home can be framed in romanticism and nostalgia, depicted as a haven or retreat where people can seek out sanctuary away from the public world (Moore 1984). Several scholars have challenged this perception of home and have sought to trouble the dichotomies of home/work, inside/outside, private/public, and safe/unsafe (Sibley 1995). In doing so, romantic notions of home are destabilized mostly through an exposition of the difficulties experienced by women, children, and young people who are subject to violence and sexual abuse which can have the effect of making individuals feel "homeless at home" (Wardhaugh 1999). Indeed, research has highlighted that for children and young people living in homes in which there is domestic violence

(Overlien and Hyden 2009) issues of substance misuse (Wilson et al. 2012), problem gambling (Valentine and Hughes 2012), and parental mental illness (Fjune et al. 2009), being “at home” is often far from stable, safe, and within their control. Intimacy and family can, therefore, be experienced in challenging ways, and the spatial practices of sharing home with kin are constructed in ways that reflect and/or transgress power relations.

The rhythms and routines that constitute home are important for a variety of social processes from eating and caring to production and reproduction. Home is in many ways, therefore, the synthesis of the social and the spatial (Saunders and Williams 1988) providing opportunities and constraints for action, identities, and modes of relating. Understanding the dynamics of family relationships within the shared spaces of home is a significant challenge for geographers and sociologists. David Morgan’s (1996) work on family practices has been influential in shifting the sociological gaze away from “the family” (i.e., as an institution) toward an understanding of families as constituted by the things that they do, more or less routinely. Morgan defines family practices as “sets of practices which deal in some way with ideas of parenthood, kinship and marriage and the expectations and obligations which are associated with these practices” (1996, p. 11). Similarly, Daly (2003, p. 771) considers the everydayness of family and home revealing a range of concerns – material, health, moral and spiritual, and spatial relationship – that are not always apparent in theorizing about families.

Valentine and Hughes (2012, p. 243) also stress the limited attention paid to the meaning and quality of relationships and the “doing” of intimacy within families within contemporary geographical research. Their study of problem gamblers’ experiences of familial space makes a strong case for exploring the interiority of family life – what it means to live in families – and how space is used as a dynamic resource in the everyday enactment of family and intimacy. Their research illuminates some important issues with regard to being “at home” particularly in contexts where sharing domestic space is challenging and underpinned by secrecy and difficult relationships. The research does not draw explicit conclusions about the meaning and experience of home for children and young people; nevertheless, there are some valuable insights into the ways in which space (and time) are utilized, relationally, as family members relate to each other in the home and attempt to manage the boundaries between the personal and the social/familial (Valentine and Hughes 2012, p. 243).

The home is understood as an emotional and sensory space in which “families must manage the transition from dispersion to convergence” (Valentine and Hughes 2012, p. 245). In his work on family practices, Morgan (1996) considers the significance of negotiating claims to a particular chair or for exclusive use of a room and attempts to coordinate multiple timetables for the micro-politics and spatiality of family life. The increasingly specialized use of space within the contemporary home, for example, children’s own bedrooms, designated office space, dens, and so on, can engender “individualized time/space” that is more in step with personal interests or hobbies rather than collective family activities. Moreover, as media and communications technologies (e.g., smartphones, tablets, and iPods)

develop and permeate the home, they have the effect of creating a sense of distance between family members even when sharing the same space (Valentine and Hughes 2012, p. 245).

The spatial politics of family and being “at home” are given further consideration in Wilson et al.’s (2012) study of 10–18-year-olds living within the context of parental substance misuse. The authors contend that children and young people’s use of space, the meaning of spaces to them, and their own place-making are fundamentally linked to issues of access and power but also, and crucially, reflect the ways that “intergenerational relationships are made and made sense of through sensory experience” (2012, p. 96). Spaces of home matter for children and young people, and bedrooms and private spaces were significant for coping with difficult family relationships. It was within these carefully marked out spaces that the respondents in the study felt a sense of control over their personal space, and through the use of visual, auditory, and physical strategies, they were able to carve out a space that felt safe and secure. This contrasted sharply with their lack of control in shared domestic spaces.

Co-residence of parents and young adult children is not always experienced as challenging or problematic. Studies have highlighted that parents generally have a positive assessment of co-residence (Aquilino 1991) and that shared experiences in the home and having an enjoyable time together served to strengthen intergenerational bonds (Aquilino and Supple 1991). In addition to the emotional and social benefits, co-residence with parents is an important mechanism through which resources are transferred between generations, usually from parents to their adult children and, perhaps, intragenerationally between siblings too. Generally speaking, staying at home with family into early adulthood “allows young people to consume, save, invest and maintain their relative income position even in difficult financial contexts” (Cobb-Clark 2008, pp. 162–163).

Family transmission is an important concern for understanding home and intimacy in the lives of young adults. Several studies have revealed the complexity and diversity in terms of how families construct and transmit identities and practices based on notions of giving and receiving support between kin (Finch and Mason 1993, 2000; Brannen 2006; Heath and Calvert 2013). Some families have a strong sense that they should provide for their own and, thus, do not view solidarity as dependency. In this way, co-residence, into early or even late adulthood, would be part of “what families do.” Other families exhibit cultures in which support is much more limited and highly contingent (Brannen 2006) emerging out of negotiated responsibilities (Finch and Mason 2000). These studies reveal how the transfers that take place within families, and of which the shared space of the home or provisions for an independent home are often a central part, are shaped in context, that is, at particular life-course phases and in particular historical conditions. Families thus attribute meaning and importance to giving and receiving in multigenerational families. At times, however, there can be ambiguities and complexities regarding the nature of gifts or loans (Heath and Calvert 2013), and emotional work is required to ensure that identities and intergenerational ties are kept intact in this process. This is explored in detail, below.

4 Homecomings

The growing incidence of co-residence in the family home not only reflects the delayed exit of adult children but also the trend toward return, or homecomings, of “boomerang kids” (Mitchell 2007). As a concept, homecomings offers a way to think about young adults returning to live with parents which presents this experience as both intentional and relational. This contrasts with a view of young adults “failing” to launch or move along a preferred pathway or as bouncing back and forth from one experience to the next with little to no control. Having said that, homecomings understood as deliberate and thoughtful should not be read as necessarily positive or enriching experiences. As shall become clear, just because the decision to return to live with parents emerges out of relational considerations, this does not mitigate problems in terms of the ways home is experienced (emotionally, spatially, ideologically), nor does it render the processes of identification and belonging trouble-free for young adults.

It is estimated that homecomings are a common feature of young people’s transitions into independence and adulthood, with many making one or multiple returns to the family home after an initial departure (Mitchell 2006, p. 47). This trend was observed in the 1990s in the USA (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999) and has gained currency in popular debates in the UK particularly since the recession in 2008. Although there is an observable increase in rates of co-residence among parents and adult children in the UK, there is virtually no empirical research on whether or not this relates to young people returning home or simply delaying the process of leaving (Stone et al. 2014; see also, Berrington and Stone 2013). A number of studies have now begun to tackle the idea that young adults in the UK are “boomeranging” back to the parental home. Drawing on longitudinal data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS 1991–2008), Stone et al. (2014) examine the apparent trend of returning to live with parents after an earlier exit. The study concludes that, overall, homecomings are a relatively rare event for young adults in Great Britain. Nevertheless, they argue that there are subgroups of young people for whom returning home has become the norm.

The subgroups they refer to include but are not limited to young women who have engaged in higher education. The trend toward homecomings is particularly evident for young women in their mid-20s largely due to the apparent feminization of higher education in the UK (Leathwood and Read 2008) and the fact that females now outnumber their male counterparts in UK universities. Stone et al. (2014) reflect that homecomings are less likely among single parents because of the availability of means-tested social assistance and social housing. Single people without children, therefore, face more difficulty in accessing housing and perhaps more likely to turn to family if, for example, a partnership breaks down.

The study raises some interesting questions about what the incidence of homecomings may indicate in broader terms, for example, with regard to young adults’ experiences of unemployment or underemployment, an increasingly volatile youth labor market, low wage levels, and the burden of debt for graduates and other young adults. In their conclusions, Stone et al. (2014, p. 272) reflect on the limitations of the BHPS for gaining insights into the everyday, relational experience of homecomings. Suggesting further research to unpack these issues, the authors highlight the need to

better understand how families manage co-residency when parents have downsized their home or when there are competing demands of siblings on familial resources (including home space). Additionally, this timely study calls for a more robust consideration of the tastes, attitudes, and social expectations of young people, their families, and wider peer group in order to ascertain how these are shaping the everyday experiences of homecomings.

In an attempt to address some of the questions outlined above, and to consider the issues raised throughout this chapter in relation to patterns of leaving home and the experience of shared family space, what follows is an exploration of two detailed case studies in which the experience of homecoming is central. The two case studies of Emily and Catherine (pseudonyms) were generated as part of a 7-year qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) project with young women engaged in higher education in the UK (Finn 2015). The project began in 2006 and interviews were conducted with 24 participants at three intervals: before, during, and on completion of their first year of undergraduate study. These young women were recruited through sixth forms and colleges in an area of North West England (“Millthorne”) that is characterized by old industry and deindustrialization, problems of deprivation, and ethnic segregation. Notions of home and place were, thus, important features of the young women’s narratives of choice and change.

In March 2012 ten of the original 24 young women were interviewed for a fourth time. This stage of fieldwork captured the young women’s experiences of exiting university and finding employment amidst a global recession and severe austerity program in the UK. Depending on their program of study, the participants were between 2 and 3 years out of full-time study. During this period, eight young women returned from universities around the UK to live with their parents and family in Millthorne. Although some spent just a short spell at home initially, others remained for longer periods. At the time of the fieldwork, three young women, including Emily and Catherine, were living with their parents in the family home on a more or less permanent basis. The complexities, contradictions, and relational dimensions of these homecomings are reflected below.

4.1 Case Studies: Emily and Catherine

Emily and Catherine are first-generation entrants to higher education and articulated narratives of escape as they discussed their plans to move away from Millthorne to attend university in London and the South Coast of England, respectively. These young women are local to Millthorne with family connections to the area dating back generations. When they were interviewed in 2006 and 2007, both young women exhibited a strong but complicated sense of connection to Millthorne and home. They were aware of the deprivation and lack of opportunities for young women and had begun to regard their home town, and the some of their relationships, as provincial, stagnant, and suffocating. Despite this, through their broad regional accents and relational connections to friends and family, these young women were also embedded in this place and carried it with them to university.

Leaving home was a significant experience for both Emily and Catherine and allowed them to position themselves against others – siblings, friends, and neighbors – who opted for local universities and remained proximate to home. They made no attempt to hide their confusion and disdain for other young adults who made local choices. Indeed, in leaving the spaces of Millthorne, these young women hoped both to evidence and consolidate the social, cultural, and emotional distance that existed between them and their peers. As the first year of university progressed, Emily and Catherine lived at a distance from home and embedded themselves in their new lives and relationships at the university.

When interviewed for the fourth stage of fieldwork, the two young women were living with family in Millthorne. Emily had been out of full-time study for almost 3 years, and over this period, she had moved back and forth between her parents' home and rented accommodation. Due to a failed first year of study and what she described as "a sort of breakdown" in her final year, Catherine had been back in the North West of England for a shorter period. Emily and Catherine's exit from the university, and their experiences of homecoming were complicated by a challenging graduate labor market and a lack of jobs to move into. Emily oscillated between part-time, casual work in the retail sector and unpaid internships as she attempted to get a foot in the door of the music industry. Catherine could not find full-time employment and relied on local bar work to supplement her income from a temporary administrative job at the local council. It is important to understand their experiences of homecoming within the broader context of these difficult transitions into employment and, as shall become clear, their relationship transitions.

It is within the context of their relationships that these two stories of homecoming begin to look rather different. At the time of her fourth interview, Emily was living within her parents' home with her boyfriend. The couple occupied a specially demarcated space, and their homecoming had been negotiated as part of a longer-term plan to save for a down payment on a mortgage. Prior to the homecoming, Emily and her partner were living in a rented flat on the other side of Millthorne. The accommodation and the experience of shared living were important for Emily and her partner who, she explained, were "at that stage" in their relationship and perhaps more generally in their lives as young adults. Living together, and crucially independently of family, signified their maturity and autonomy and the practices of home-making unified them as a couple. Notwithstanding this, the rented home they shared did not live up to its idealized image. As Emily's partner worked away for long periods, she often found herself feeling isolated and alone: "I'd kind of just be twiddling my thumbs. I didn't have a car at the time. . . so, I couldn't just nip home for a bit and hang out with family. I was just stuck there. It was depressing really." Emily's feelings of loneliness, the high rental costs, and her precarious employment status took their toll and this experience of independent living became untenable.

After some deliberation, Emily and her parents came to an agreement about how to solve the problems she was facing. Negotiating her own needs, for independence on the one hand and emotional support on the other, and the values of her parents, notably that renting was a waste of money, they discussed the possibility of another homecoming. This time, however, Emily and her partner would have their own space

and would work toward a clear plan for the future. Although Emily's parents had "always been very much like, 'there's always a home for you here,'" her previous homecomings had not been the most productive for her relationships with family. Her parents often felt that she "treated the house like a hotel," and this had to be addressed in this new period of co-habiting. "Living at home is different this time; it has to be. I know it's a means to an end and so do they. There's a different focus somehow. It's kind of a partnership this time around."

Emily's narrative of homecoming was, thus, deliberate and intentional and reflected relational concerns and not simply individualistic motivations. Of course, this move was in part a product of her limited resources and the difficulties she faced finding employment. As she stated, however, homecoming was also much more than this for her and her parents because "knowing I have their support has been really important. I hated being at the flat knowing that my dad thought it was a bad idea. I like to know they're on board." This suggests that feelings of independence, self-responsibility, and autonomy are not always undermined by co-residence but actively achieved through these kinds of relational considerations.

Catherine's descriptions of co-residing with her parents revealed a far less democratic and open process. Her younger sister was now living away at a university and so she shared her home space with her mother and father. Although they had once been close, Catherine had recently entered into a same-sex relationship and her parents refused to accept her sexuality. Over the course of her interview, it transpired that the "sort of breakdown" was linked to a traumatic experience of coming out and coping with the tensions this brought within her relationship with her mother. Thus, Catherine's experiences of co-residence were stifled and underpinned by secrecy, distrust, and a deep sense of unhappiness on her part. Rather than feeling "at home," Catherine felt alienated and alone within her parents' house. "Its hard being around mum when I know how she feels about, well, about who I am; my life. . . I don't want to be there but I have no choice and I have to look grateful of her *generosity*. It's insane." (Original emphasis). As a result of the tensions that cast a shadow over this period of co-residence, the idea (and the ideal) of a home with her new partner took on great significance and provided a way of coping with present unhappiness.

I'm on the verge of being ready to move out I think. I've lost my relationship with my mum now really in terms of that anyway. So it isn't home for me anymore here. I think a move would be best because it opens up the jobs. You can move wherever you need to. And it's a new start for both of us. Whereas [her partner] has past in [nearby city] I have family here. So, to move away would give us both a chance to start something without anybody overlooking or saying, why are you doing that? Are you sure you're not doing it too early on? Things like that. We could just get on with it really.

Catherine's narrative reveals the ways in which homecomings can be challenging both for the nature and quality of intergenerational relationships and for personal identities. Sharing the physical space of home is complicated when there is a rupture in shared symbolic or cultural space. Catherine and her parents, who provided a rent-free home, were acting relationally, and yet this story reveals that feelings of embeddedness and connectedness to others can be experienced in destructive and

constraining ways. As the quotation above reveals, although her parents were showing support for her during a difficult time, the slow decline of her relationship with her mother meant that “home” was emptied of all positive emotional connection and not the space of belonging it had once been. Catherine’s narrative is one of struggle; that is, to reconcile her relationships, with her parents and her new partner, with her lack of residential choices. Thus, contrary to receiving “something for nothing” financial support, for Emily and Catherine, was highly contingent on specific circumstances (saving for a mortgage, suppressing one’s sexuality), and this complicated claims to legitimacy, independence, and autonomy.

The undertone to these two case studies is, of course, sexuality. For Emily who was in a heterosexual relationship, the experience of homecoming was relatively smooth and she could be open with her parents who shared her plans for the future. Catherine’s narrative reveals much more explicit constraints and power relations. As a nonheterosexual, co-residence with (straight) parents is complicated and emotionally debilitating, as has been noted elsewhere (Einesdottir 2011; Valentine 1993, 2002). These case studies thus reveal that home is neither always a place nor a feeling, but a dialogue between the two. Moreover, these stories highlight that the spaces of home can be central in confirming and/or denying particular ways of becoming (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Waitt and Gorman Murray 2007).

5 Conclusion

This chapter has brought together disparate research on housing transitions and the significance of these amidst changing notions of adulthood and independence, the meaning and experience of (shared) home space for children and young adults, and the emerging trend of homecoming among young adults who have at one time lived away from family. Whether young adults are returning to live with parents and family or simply delaying the transition out of home, there are many issues at play for young people caught up in “extended” transitions. At one level it appears that living at home with parents and being dependent upon parental support – material, financial, emotional, and social – is accepted as part of the order of things for many young people. Data from the Minority World reveals a steady increase in the proportion of young people living within the parental home since the early 1990s (Cobb-Clark 2008). Moreover, it is clear that this experience has an impact upon the ways in which intergenerational relationships, intimacy, and independence are imagined and negotiated in contemporary times.

Theory and research relating to the experiences of young adults in the Minority World and their experiences of housing (and other) transitions emphasize the processes of individualization, choice, and risk as pathways into adulthood are less predictable than in the past. The effect of this individualized focus is that family and intergenerational relationships have a ghost-like presence in these debates, “referred to in the abstract but seldom the focus of analysis” (Wyn et al. 2012, p. 4). This chapter has demonstrated the need to consider family and intimacy when thinking about young people’s experiences of home leaving and homecomings and to

consider the complex interdependencies that emerge and shift across the life course as the different needs and obligations of families alter in the unfolding of time. As Holdsworth and Morgan (2005, p. 128) maintain, the family is not a unit or experience that is fixed in time and space, and it is certainly not only young people who experience a change when the time comes to leave home. Rather, the experience of home leaving, and indeed return, has implications for the whole network, practically, relationally, and emotionally.

Mason's (2004) research on residential house moves is telling of the ways in which choices and decisions about where to live, and how to organize domestic arrangements, are most commonly made in relation to significant others and not simply based upon individual needs and desires. This challenges some of the ideas put forward in the individualization thesis by illuminating the many and varied ways that people appeal to relational concerns or challenges when constructing narratives of their residential histories. For Wyn, Lantz, and Harris, the centrality of family and intergenerational bonds is not a challenge to theories of individualization but represents a direct consequence of the processes of detraditionalization. They note:

one of the most important implications for the process of individualization, whereby risks, costs and responsibilities for navigating life have become increasingly vested in individuals, is that family support, resources and contact. . . are now more important than ever. (2012, p. 4)

As the patterns and processes underpinning the life course become more fluid and less predictable, family resources become increasingly important in facilitating youth transitions. It is essential then that research considers the interdependency within families and how changes to one member of the network may impact upon others (Elder 1991). The global financial downturn has implications for young people, their connections to home, and older generations (Connidis 2014). This chapter has revealed that the shifts taking place in young adults' housing transitions impact upon notions of independence, adulthood and belonging, and the experience of home for adult children and their parents in situations of co-residence. It is important to appreciate, therefore, that when young adults think about home, home leaving, and/or future homecomings, they do so in relational connection to family and the nature and quality of their intergenerational intimacies.

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Children's Use and Control of Bedroom Space

5

Kate Bacon

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Abstract

Bedroom space has been relatively underresearched in Children's Geographies and Childhood Studies. This chapter draws together a collection of literature from a range of disciplines which has examined aspects of how children (aged 0–18 years) use and control bedroom space. The examples used here will highlight the importance of taking account of both structure and agency when examining how children's identities and relationships are constructed and played out through bedroom space. The chapter begins by examining the broader structural context within which children are provided with bedroom space before moving on to examine the work that children themselves do to create these spaces as meaningful places.

Keywords

Structure · Agency · Twin · Sibling · Bedroom · Power

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1 Introduction

Children's geographers have explored the central role of space and place in the production and construction of childhood. Two central themes have emerged. On the one hand, studies have demonstrated the active role that children and young people have played in producing space (Skelton and Valentine 1998). On the other hand, many studies have pointed to their exclusion from participation in the production of space (Gallagher 2006, p. 162). Although seemingly contradictory, these themes point to the way in which researchers have attempted to grasp the opportunities and constraints that characterize children's lives. Notwithstanding this, Children's Geographies and Childhood Studies more broadly have been criticized for their under-emphasis of structural constraints (Holt 2011). While, as parts of this literature review will demonstrate, this seems to overexaggerate the case, this chapter will argue that studying children and young people's personal relationships and relational processes can not only offer us insight into how children build and establish intimacies and identities but also how seemingly micro events are connected to broader structures (Jamieson and Milne 2012). Amongst other things, this chapter will show how children's use and control of bedroom space are shaped by the gender and generational ordering of society, financial inequalities linked to social class, and broader social processes such as individualism and consumerism.

There is a fairly well-established body of research on teenager's bedrooms in the Sociology of Youth. In contrast, bedroom space is still relatively underresearched in the fields of Children's Geographies and Childhood Studies. Possibly this is not surprising given the comparative neglect of family space in relation to other contexts such as the street, school, neighborhood, and labor market. As Holt (2011, p. 3) notes, "until recently there has been limited dialogue between researchers of the family and critical geographies of childhood, and the experiences of children and young people within family contexts has [with some notable exceptions, been] relatively under-explored."

Within Childhood Studies, the reunion of the child with the family came after researchers had secured children's status as social agents rather than passive receptacles of adult socialization and culture (James and Prout 1996). Typically, comparisons between children's agency at "home" and "school" have pointed to the home as a space where children have greater opportunities to negotiate relationships. Berry Mayall's UK research (1994; 2006) is central here. She has argued that at home, children tend to be seen as people, and parents (typically mothers) encourage their independence and acknowledge and promote their competence. In contrast, the school tends to see children as projects to be worked upon. "Children find themselves treated as group members rather than as individuals, and as objects of socialization rather than as participating people" (1994, p. 124). Mayall (2006), however, is adamant that we need to set this trend against the broader structural backdrop of patriarchy, social class divisions, and the impact of public policies on parenting. Not only are ideas about childhood shaped by powerful men in privileged positions, she argues, but UK policy tends to focus on protection more than participation rights.

Research suggests that within Minority World societies, children's social and physical lives are lived away from the "adult" territories of public space and increasingly close to (or inside) the home (Jamieson and Milne 2012). Inside the home, the bedroom remains one space that children are expected to have to themselves (Mayhew et al. 2004). Cut backs to children's/public services, the privatization of children's leisure facilities (Morrow 2008), and the increasing adult regulation of children's use of public space (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014) raise important questions about how far children value bedroom space as an opportunity for leisure and an escape from adult power and control. So how are children and young people's relationships and identities built up and established in and through this space and to what extent does this space offer opportunities for children to shape and influence everyday social/family life?

The concepts of structure and agency are of central importance. Social structures can be conceptualized as a set of "external" processes and conditions that are woven into the fabric of society. Taking account of the structuring of childhood means examining the "large-scale patterning of the childhood of a given society" (Prout 2005, p. 64). Agency refers to our ability to intervene in social life and thus to shape our own and other people's lives. Thus, identifying children as social agents means accepting that they "do things" but also their capacity to engage with structures and potentially influence events and relationships (Mayall 2001). "Researchers investigating geographies of children, now widely accept that young people have social agency with children perceived as much more than adults-in-waiting..." (Holt 2011, p. 2).

This chapter draws together literature from a range of fields including Psychology, Childhood Studies, Cultural Studies, and Sociology. Some of these researchers may not necessarily identify themselves as "children's geographers" even though they pay attention to the significance of place, space, and social relations. Reflecting the trend in the literature itself, the discussion will focus on the industrialized societies of the Minority World. The chapter starts by exploring research which can highlight the structural contexts within which bedroom space is allocated. It then moves on to discuss how children use and control this space alongside a broader consideration of children's familial relationships.

2 Having a Bedroom

In Britain, from the second-half of the twentieth century onwards, social expectations that children should have their own bedrooms have been associated with the growing child-centeredness of family life (Mayhew et al. 2004). Indeed, it is common for children in Europe to have their own bedrooms (Bovill and Livingstone 2001). In England and Wales specifically the average number of bedrooms per household is currently 2.7 and almost half of all families with dependent children have just one child (ONS 2014). Divorce and separation may mean that some children find that they have their own bedroom in more than one property (Mayhew et al. 2004).

Reflecting this cultural ideal, parents often want their children to have their own bedroom even if they cannot afford to make this a reality by purchasing a large enough property (Munro and Madigan 1999). Parents' economic capital (their access to financial resources) is an important structural factor that shapes children's access to and experience of bedroom space. Drawing on accounts of British middle and working class childhood, Sibley (1995) concludes that children in middle class and small families are more likely to have their own bedrooms than their working class counterparts. Similarly, survey research conducted in Tasmania (Australia) reveals that "Younger students especially from less affluent families in rural and regional areas may not have their own bedroom and have to share with siblings" (Abbott-Chapman and Robertson 2009, p. 425). In England, the introduction of the so-called "bedroom tax" (which charges families claiming housing benefit if they have "spare" bedrooms) means that low-income families may have to sacrifice this ideal or be charged for it: housing benefit is cut by 14% if there is one "spare" bedroom and 25% if there are two. The housing benefit size criteria being applied here allows one room for "single adults aged 16 or over; two children of the same gender aged up to 15; two children of either gender aged up to 9; and any (other) single child" (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2014).

Findings from both large- and small-scale pieces of research examining children's use of bedroom or domestic space reveal how parents' decisions about bedroom allocation reflect norms and values linked to gender and age. In their twelve-nation European survey, Bovill and Livingstone (2001) found that while 56% of 6–7-year-olds had their own rooms, this was higher for older age groups: 69% for 9–10-year-olds; 77% for 12–13-year-olds, and 82% for 15–16-year-olds. Older children were thus more likely to have their own rooms than younger children. In line with this, James (2001) found that only 37 of the 276 15-year-old girls she studied (in Australia) shared a bedroom.

Norms relating to age-status, birth order, generation, and the appropriateness of differently-sexed children sharing a room can all shape parents' decision making too. In their mixed-methods study of family use of domestic space (in the Glasgow area of the UK) Munro and Madigan (1999) found that an oldest child may be given priority leaving the younger children to share. Where the children sharing a room were significantly different in age, the parents expressed a preference to separate them. As one mother in Munro and Madigan's study described:

Matt is only four and Gary is ten so there's six years of a difference which is quite a lot. Matt messes up the place and Gary is left to tidy it up. Matt won't go to sleep so he climbs in with Gary and then they have a carry on. . . (1999, p. 112).

Munro and Madigan's study also suggests that there is a perception that preteen differently-sexed children should not share a room: as one mother in their study put it, "Fiona will be twelve and twelve is really an age when they can't share with a boy" (1999, p. 112).

A small-scale study with twins and their families in the UK (Bacon 2010) has many similar findings. The project explored how twins negotiate their identities as

they move through the life course. Parents, twins, and siblings of twins were interviewed to find out how twins' experiences and identities were contextualized by other family relationships. Parents, especially mothers made key decisions about their children's lives such as how to dress their children, place them in classes at school, and allocate bedrooms. This is not surprising given that adults are "normally in command of more material, social and other resources than children, and thus in a more powerful position to shape the everyday conditions of child-life" (Alanen 1998, p. 3). Although all the parents chose to place their twins together in one bedroom as babies, they often wanted their children to have their own separate rooms as they got older and this was seen as part of the process of twins growing up and becoming independent individuals. Parents also understood the significance of generation and gender. Caroline said that she had placed her twin daughters in a different room to their younger sister "because of the age gap." Placing them together, she explained, would have meant "boyfriends" being in the same space as "dolls." Anthony also explained that if his twins, Ash and Harry, had an older sibling, "there'd be differences in what their tastes are [. . .] and their interests" (See Bacon 2010, p. 74). Parents of the differently-sexed children also explained how their 16-year-old children "ought" to have moved into separate rooms but because one of the twins could not sleep this arrangement had to be abandoned. One of the twins, Olivia, was, however, very aware of the social stigma surrounding this. She explained, "Our friends laugh and get really weird when we say we share a room" (Bacon 2010, p. 76). These findings thus demonstrate how the organization of space may emerge from social relations – linked to age, gender, and generation.

Reduction in family size, growing affluence, the growth of "youth culture," and the youth market of consumer goods have meant that European children's bedrooms have become important spaces of leisure and communication (Bovill and Livingstone 2001). Research reveals the kinds of media that children have access to in their bedrooms. Bovill and Livingstone (2001) found that European children's bedrooms were commonly media-rich environments. Amongst other things, TVs, computers/games machines, and radios were present in children's bedrooms all of which, as we will see later on, may be utilized as tools for identity construction and relationship building. The papers within Neustaedter et al. (2013) edited collection provide a more up-to-date summary of media use in the family more broadly – mobile wireless technologies, such as laptops, i-pads, and mobile phones, are spread throughout the home (and of course they can be transported in and out of the bedroom). Together, these mediums offer multiple and varied opportunities to connect with others including email, text message, phone, video-call, blog, tweet, and Facebook. Research, however, suggests that some children are more likely to have such opportunities than others. For instance, drawing on data from the UK Children Go Online project with 1,500 9–19-year-olds, Livingstone et al. (2005) found that children from middle class backgrounds were more likely to have Internet access in their own bedroom than children from working class backgrounds. It is therefore evident that decisions about bedroom allocation and the technology and objects contained within the bedroom are contextualized by broader social structures and social processes. As such, this section has demonstrated how, in *having* a bedroom,

children live in a space that is not wholly of their own choosing. The following section moves on to examine how children characterize, define, and use this space.

3 Using Bedroom Space

3.1 Displaying Identities and Practicing Relationships

Children's use and control of bedroom space varies according to age, gender, culture, and the extent of media present within it. In their twelve-nation European comparative project, Bovill and Livingstone (2001) found that while teenagers spent more time in their rooms than younger children, girls spent more time in their rooms than boys. Across Europe, having a media-rich bedroom was associated with greater use of the bedroom. However, some media were more heavily utilized in some cultures than others. For instance, use of the TV was higher in the UK than Germany because ownership was high and children's bedtimes later. Taking the UK alone, the research suggests that children under 9 were relatively uninterested in spending time in their bedrooms and preferred family space. The authors argue that while the social process of individualization has meant a shift away from family time spent together watching TV to individualized media lifestyles where media is personally owned and can be used in "private" spaces, private ownership of media increases as children get older. From middle childhood, children, especially girls, value the bedroom as a space for isolation and control of media use (TV viewing, computer use, and playing music/radio) (Livingstone 2010). Bovill and Livingstone (2001) suggest that girls' greater interest in communication may explain why the telephone, radio, and TV took on more significance for girls, while computer-related technologies tended to be more important for boys.

Possibly not surprisingly then, one key finding to emerge from this literature on children's use of bedroom space is that, for teenagers in particular, the bedroom is a space to entertain friends, escape, and display identity. As Livingstone (2010, p. 8) explains:

It provides a convenient location in which personal goods can be gathered and maintained. It provides a means of escape from the interruptions, interference and gaze of others. And it facilitates the routine (re) enactment of a desired identity.

Typically, research about children's so-called "bedroom culture" examines how they consume, display, and utilize media (magazines, TV, stereos, Internet, and other new media) to create and experiment with different versions of identity and make a distinctive culture of their own. This bedroom culture is "very much a Western phenomenon being dependent on a high degree of modernisation, individualisation and wealth" (Bovill and Livingstone 2001, p. 4).

Early research tended to explore more traditional media such as the TV and print magazines. The classic work, often referred to in such discussions, is Angela McRobbie's (McRobbie and Garber 1976; McRobbie 1991) analysis of girls'

subcultures. A former member of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, she wanted to rebalance the male-dominated sphere of cultural studies by exploring how girls made a distinctive culture of their own. Postulating the question “are girls really absent from sub-cultures?” she argued that bedroom culture was one space where girls’ teenage consumer culture operated – “experimenting with make-up, listening to records, reading the mags, sizing up the boyfriends, chatting, jiving...” (McRobbie and Garber 1976, p. 213). Reflecting the timing of her research, she was predominantly interested in the impact of narratives of romance transmitted through pop culture and teenage girls’ magazines of the 1980s like “Jackie.” This prepackaged “teeny-bopper” culture which centered on traditional and idealized notions of romance and marriage was not reliant on girls’ participation in public space but instead was relatively cheap, relied more on creating a culture based on each other, and had limited risks associated with it. As she notes, it only required a bedroom, record player, and permission for a couple of friends to visit. Posters of male pop idols could be gazed on without interruption, male demands for further sexual action, risk of being sexually labeled, or humiliation through being stood up. Through their cultural activities, girls could therefore resist normative gender and class expectations. Instead, they created their own space and built a sense of solidarity and connectedness with each other.

While McRobbie’s feminist work took an important step in challenging the male dominance of research about subculture, she only paid limited attention to the bedroom as an actual physical space. As Lincoln (2005, p. 403) notes, she was more interested in exploring the discursive “codes” present in teen magazines (like Jackie) and how these were lived out by the teenagers. Yet, it is important to explore the bedroom as a physical space since the objects and spatial arrangements are the spaces that identities and relationships are lived in and through. Carol Smart acknowledges this in her exploration of an emerging field of research which she calls “personal life.” Personal life is a broader and more inclusive concept than family or kin which captures a range of relationships from friendship, same-sex relationships, and acquaintanceship to relationships across households and cross cultural relationships. Importantly, it is in demonstrating how to build a sociological perspective on relationships and connectedness that she draws attention to the importance of taking account of possessions, things, and relationality. “Things” she argues “can throw light on social relationships” (Smart 2007, p. 157). They are invested with meanings as parts of relationships and therefore “come to embody to a greater or lesser degree elements of relationships” (Smart 2007, p. 166). The next part of this review thus turns to explore in more detail some empirical studies that have attempted to explore (in a more focused way) the physical dimensions of bedroom space and how identities and friendships are established through it.

Mitchell and Reid-Walsh’s (2002) research focuses on both the physical and cultural dimensions of children’s bedroom space. They argue that children’s bedrooms can be read as “cultural texts” – as they explain, “our focus is on employing strategies for engaging in semiotic readings of children’s bedrooms as popular culture” (2002, p. 114). From this perspective then, bedrooms display and contain objects which in turn can reveal prepackaged, branded, and commercialized

identities. For young children, who they argue, have less control over bedroom design and decor, Pooh, Mickey, and Toy Story can reveal clues about the kinds of childhood we wish for our children. “A carefree childhood of loveable Disney/A.A. Milne characters?” they ask (2002, p. 130). For older children who may have more decision-making power, bedrooms contain messages of individual taste and identity. To see what versions of identity are on offer to these children, Mitchell and Reid-Walsh thus set about analyzing different representations of bedroom space in teen magazines and draw on some accounts provided by female readers too. Here we can see some obvious parallels with McRobbie’s approach. They found that while these magazines reproduce cultural expectations that the teen bedroom should say something about the teen’s identity – “clutter queen”, ‘sentimental sister’, ‘neat freak’, ‘happenin hostess’” (2002, p. 135) – in doing so they also convey middle class ideals of moral conduct namely cleanliness and purity. These in turn, they argue, may be based on the more long-standing discursive connections between tidiness and virtue and messiness and slattern (slut).

Lincoln’s (2004) research offers us more insight into how girls’ friendships are practiced through this space. She draws attention to the physical dimensions of bedroom space by examining how teenage girls “zone” their bedrooms. According to her:

When researching bedroom culture, a zone is a physical and visible arrangement of furniture, technical equipment, beauty products, school books, in fact any item that is “contained” . . . within bedroom space. It is orientated by the social activities that take place within the space, therefore it may not be fixed in physical or cognitive activities; zones can overlap and integrate. (2004, p. 97)

Her ethnographic research (Lincoln 2004, 2005), which also takes into account new developments in information communication technology (such as mobile phones and the Internet) reveals how teenage girls are actively involved in creating their bedrooms as certain kinds of places. She conducted research with teenagers in their bedrooms (McRobbie interviewed her girls at a youth club) using a variety of data collection tools including photographs and diaries. Her findings revealed how the girls’ biographies were displayed on their bedroom walls – posters, postcards, and photographs record their cultural interests, nights out and holidays – and how they actively “zoned” space. The “fashion and beauty/going out” zone is partially reminiscent of McRobbie’s findings. In this zone, the bedroom is a space to experiment with hair, clothes, and make-up. Thus a dressing table may be dedicated to cosmetic products. However, in contrast to McRobbie’s findings, boys may be invited into this space – they will sit and wait while their girlfriends get ready. In this zone girls perform a range of “going out” rituals, alcoholic drinks are consumed and music played to help them “chill out” or “get in the mood” before they go out:

Leila: We come home from college have a sleep, then have a shower. While one’s in the shower, the other’s usually deciding what to wear or drying their hair. We have a few drinks [alcoholic], then try to leave about half an hour just to chill out before we go out. . . (Lincoln 2004, p. 104)

The “sleeping zone/getting in from a night out” may involve a continuation of activities previously engaged in outside the bedroom: girls may recreate the atmosphere of the club by continuing to drink alcohol together, using their mobiles to invite more friends over (Lincoln 2005). As with the “going out zone” the teenagers could create a certain kind of ambience through choosing particular kinds of music. Like other more recent studies exploring bedroom culture, Lincoln (2005) examines the role of music in helping girls to express their individual and collective tastes and to shape the dynamics of space. Lighting was also an important resource for zoning space. “The girls use table lamps, fairy lights, lava lamps, ‘dimmer’ switches and candles to provide a ‘softer light’, which mimics the lighting of the pub or club [and. . .] allows the girls to gossip more freely without embarrassment” (Lincoln 2004, p. 105). In the bedroom, then, “‘gossiping’, ‘chatting’ or ‘talking’ is a popular female activity” (Lincoln 2004, p. 100).

Lincoln’s research allows us some insight into how girls’ friendship rituals and practices of intimacy (Jamieson and Milne 2012) are embedded in and established through space. Together they exchange information and work to perpetually redefine the meaning of bedroom space. More generally her research is also good at explaining how identities are embedded in and displayed through the design, decoration, and ambience of bedroom space – a theme reflected through much of the literature on teenager’s bedrooms. Thus Sibley (1995, p. 122) noted that: “Particularly when a child has been given its own bedroom, then the space may be appropriated, transformed and the boundaries secured by marking that space as its own”. One working class 15-year-old girl in Livingstone’s study explained this well:

I’m usually in my bedroom. . . I think that I like to be by myself really. I don’t know. I suppose it’s just because at the moment I have got all my furniture arranged like in a sitting room area, a study room area and my bedroom and it is just, like, really cool and i just like to go there because I know that that is my room. . . I mean I have decorated it how I want and it’s just like a room I don’t think I will ever move out. (2010, p. 7)

Similarly James (2001) found that girls’ bedrooms typically were a place to display their favorite things and in line with this, were defined as a space to be “themselves.” Both Lincoln (2014) and James (2001) found that such attempts to anchor the “self” in space reflected the transitional nature of children’s identities: bedrooms contained a mixture of items from the “past” and “present.” For instance, special collections/memorabilia from a past childhood may be neatly compartmentalized to allow space to display objects which reflect current interests and hobbies. In other cases, objects may be actively removed from the bedroom. For Lincoln (2014) then, the passage of time makes bedrooms constantly evolving material spaces which leave behind “residual trails.”

3.2 Establishing Privacy in Bedroom Space

While bedrooms may be resources that children can use, both to display their own identities and practice friendships with others, they can also be spaces where they

can retreat from a public gaze and disconnect from others. Privacy is therefore one important key theme which emerges from many discussions about children's use of bedroom space. Children may seek this for a number of reasons. Larsen's (1995) study, framed as it is by psychological perspectives on how children "grow up," uncovers some of the "developmental" benefits. She studied 483 5th–9th graders (boys and girls, all European-Americans) and explored how the bedroom could help to cultivate a "private self." She concluded that, for adolescents, listening to music alone enabled them to create separate experiential spaces for solitude and isolation at a "stage" when they were establishing their own sense of self, regulating their own emotional lives, and partially "shed[ding] the secure and unquestioned sense of self acquired from their families" (1995, p. 536).

Other pieces of research have explored how the bedroom may enable some escape from parental control, family responsibilities, and difficult family relationships or experiences. Thus Baker's (2004) empirical research reveals that behind the closed bedroom door, children may listen to music that parents may not approve of. James (2001) noted that children could retreat to their bedrooms in order to try to escape from their mother's "nagging" and their chores (in the hope they might be distributed to other members of the family). On closer inspection, the research also reveals that children's use of bedroom space may be influenced by the *quality* of their family relationships. In their survey of Year 10, 11/12 students in Tasmania, Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2009) found that it was those children who said they "always" wanted to take time out from people and things that bothered them who were most likely to choose their bedroom or a place in nature as their favorite place. Interviews and focus groups revealed that family rows, parents, siblings, and pressure from school were amongst the things that bothered them. The bedroom offered peace, quiet, and tranquility and facilitated relaxation as well as freedom. As one student put it, "my bedroom is my own space – I can do what I like" (2009, p. 430). So, when there is family conflict children may use the bedrooms as a space to retreat and disconnect from others.

Within this broad theme of family relationships, some research findings point to the important role that bedroom space has for enabling children to deal with particular kinds of family adversity. In their Norwegian study of children's experiences of growing up with mental health distress, Fjone et al. (2009) found that children used their bedroom space to help avoid their parents' displays of aggression or distress. In their Swedish study, Overlien and Hydén (2009) recorded conversations with 15 children aged 12–15 during 29 group therapy sessions and 10 individual interviews. For these children, the bedroom was a space where they could try to distance themselves from the violence both physically and emotionally. For instance, they could turn their music up to try to block out the noise of fighting, read, or try to close their ears. In reality, however, the children knew that these strategies would not always work. The sound would still be heard; the bedroom space still invaded as one girl pointed out: "We all ran to our rooms when we were younger (. . .) but we knew he would come and suddenly open the door and shout terrible things" (2009, p. 484).

These studies about privacy, family relationships, and adversity are important in demonstrating that the bedroom is an important resource used by children to actively

“cope” with family relationships and adversity. Of course we should also appreciate that the privacy and media-rich space of the bedroom may also present certain threats and dangers. For example, Bovill and Livingstone (2001) note that children's use of the Internet means that parents now worry about who their children are speaking with via social media and chat rooms. This “risk” raises questions about how parents should regulate and control their children's use of media at home (Bovill and Livingstone 2001).

3.3 Power Relations

Family relationships frame and shape children's use of bedroom space, not only their choice of whether or not to seek out privacy but also their ability to sustain it. Intergenerational relations may therefore variously enable and constrain children's agency. This theme of adult power and control emerges across a range of studies, including most of those already cited. Possibly not surprisingly, the key relationships which are explored within this context are how parent–child family relationships frame children's use and control of bedroom/domestic space. Some forms of parental regulation include initiating volume control and tidying up. Lincoln (2005) found that while teenagers could initially choose the type of music they listened to, who they listened with, and the volume they listened to it at, parents could try to regulate aspects of this. As Ryan (aged 16) pointed out: “Often my parents will shout down to me to turn my music down cos they say they can hear it ‘thumping’ in the lounge” (2005, p. 410). Similarly, James (2001) found that while children could attempt to control bedroom design, who they shared their company with and their choice of music and related volume control, mothers (in particular) would often “nag” them to tidy up “messy” space. Where mothers do actually “tidy up” their teenager's bedroom, this can be experienced as an invasion of privacy. As one 15-year-old girl explained to Livingstone (2010:8) in her UK research:

Last year I went to Australia and erm, I came back and I nearly had a heart attack because my mum had completely cleaned my room . . . She had completely blitzed my room and I was so angry about it . . . It is my own private space and I really don't like her touching it . . . (Middle class girl, aged 15).

The reach of adult power may vary according to the age of the children in the family and the kind of relationships that parents develop with them. Reflecting broader cultural assumptions that increased age brings increased level of competence, a study with twins showed that parents afforded their children more decision-making power as they get older (Bacon 2010). Clare, mother to 8-year-old twins, was concerned with her sons' preferences for Harry Potter wallpaper.

Clare: well we haven't decorated yet because you said you want Harry Potter on don't you? And I say 'no, we're not having Harry Potter on, we're having grown-up wall paper!' (Bacon 2010, p. 122)

Similarly, Rosa, one of the seven girls (aged between 8 and 11) studied by Baker (2004), reported how her mother had forced her twin brother to take down from the wall the poster of Jennifer Lopez posing naked. This parental directive only had limited impact however as Rosa explained, “he has it in his cupboard instead” (2004, p. 84). Parents’ attempts to regulate space may therefore not always be wholly successful!

In the twin’s research (Bacon 2010) it was the parents of the youngest (and working class) children that erected a clear (and strong) adult–child boundary, hoping to keep their children as (innocent) children for as long as possible by directing and controlling their children’s behavior and limiting their access to “adult” information. In contrast, two parents of older (and middle class) children wanted to be “more friends with them rather than parents” (Mike) and allowed them more decision-making power at home.

As this review has already discussed, adult power also stretches into parental control over economic resources and their decisions about the kind and size of house to buy. The actual size of the bedroom can constrain the amount of socializing time spent there. In their study, Munro and Madigan (1999) found that when the children’s bedrooms were very small and not really big enough for more than one child, other spaces were opened up – some more temporary than others. For instance, a loft space may be converted into a play area or a “family” living room time-zoned so that children have priority during the early evening and adults later on. However, where possible, and especially for older children, the expectation was that their friends be taken upstairs to play rather than intrude on adult space. Lincoln (2004) and Livingstone (2010) found that the presence or absence of parents in the family home could influence the spaces that teenagers used. When their parents were out, they would make more use of “family” spaces such as the living room or kitchen. When they returned, they would once again retreat to their bedrooms. Parents may therefore directly or indirectly shape children’s use of space at home and, through purchasing various props and regulating how space is used, help to shape the kinds of places that children create in their bedrooms. As Jess and Massey (1995, p. 134) explain, “It is people themselves who make places but not always in circumstances of their own choosing.”

Research examining children’s access to public space is relevant to this discussion since, as writers like McRobbie and Livingstone (2010) have argued, children’s access to public space may shape their use of bedroom space or domestic space more broadly. In her early study of 12–16-year-old working class girls from Yorkshire, Griffiths (1988) found that parental fears of danger, especially in the winter months when the nights drew in, could serve to restrict girls’ access to public space pushing them further back into the family home. Although the older girls enjoyed “dosing out” on the streets and had more opportunities to do this in the summer months, in winter the girls vanished from the streets leaving the boys’ presence to dominate. More contemporary research, however, suggests that simple generalized statements about children’s use of public space based on age or gender are too simplistic and superficial. For instance, Valentine (1997) has shown that such expectations of sex-typed behavior are changing. In a reversal of traditional stereotypes, parents

saw their 8–11-year-old daughters to be more responsible, rational, and mature than similar aged boys. They had more common sense and “nous” than boys and were therefore seen to be more competent at negotiating public space than boys. Parents were not always in agreement though and often fathers had a more traditional perspective than mothers, who tended to contextualize their decisions by paying attention to their daughter’s personal characteristics.

As this section on adult–child relationships demonstrates, the bulk of research which explores children’s use of bedroom/domestic space has tended to focus on how children’s agency may be enabled and constrained by parent–child family relationships. Less research has been conducted on how siblings shape each other’s use of space and social relationships and even less so with twins specifically. Indeed, one assumption that underpins many of these studies is that bedroom space is an individually owned (rather than shared) space. As Lincoln (2004, p. 96) notes:

It is a room that provides respite from the public world, from the demands of peers, siblings and parents, in which unmediated activities such as sleeping, reading books and magazines, daydreaming and “chilling out” take place.

However, some children *do* share bedrooms. As we have already seen, this may be more common for children whose parents have lower incomes. One useful study of sibling relationships which does explore the significance of bedroom space, including shared bedroom space, is Edwards et al.’s research (2006 also see Edwards et al. 2005). Here we see how bedroom space and the “things” within it are resources which children actively utilize to “do” or practice their sibling relationships. For some children, sharing a bedroom could cause conflict, while for others it was just part of the way things were. For some jointly owning possessions was a basis for establishing connectedness, and for others it was a source of dispute and a means of marking out their emotional separation from their siblings. Evidencing Smart’s (2007) earlier claims then, objects could symbolically mark out degrees of emotional closeness. Conflict over ownership of space and objects meant that siblings sometimes competed for power and control over space. However, power was not neatly tied in with “birth order status.” Rather siblings could be deemed older or younger depending on the kinds of roles they performed (Edwards et al. 2006).

Similar themes emerged from the study with child twins (Bacon 2010). Many twins suggested that “sharing” was a defining characteristic of life as a twin and all the twins had some experience of sharing a room. For the youngest twins aged 8, spending time together at home was one of the good things about being a twin and indeed this was actively encouraged by their parents. These twins explained how they would play on the play station together, play with lego, and develop clubs. In contrast, many of the older teenage twins who were still sharing a room at the time of interview often felt frustrated. Reflecting this sentiment, when asked to describe what it was like to be a twin, Hannah (aged 15) drew a picture of herself pulling her hair out. She explained that conflict and arguments were common features of her relationships with her twin sister Charlotte.

Some of these older (female) twins named and claimed space and objects in order to mark out territory as their own. Beds, as the most basic personal space, could be especially important in marking out whose “side” was whose and used to create different “zones” (Lincoln 2004). For instance, Emma and Ruth placed their beds either side of the “big divide” (an alcove). Possessions were sometimes used as symbols of separation – as Hannah explained, “Charlotte’s TV’s on her side and I’ve got the CD player on my side” (Bacon 2010, p. 134). This process of naming and claiming objects, therefore, reflected their frustrations over sharing a bedroom and the emotional and physical separation they sought. It is therefore argued that twins may be valuable human resources for each other since they offer the opportunity to interdependently establish dimensions of distinction and individuality.

Sharing space and objects could encroach on twins’ sense of autonomy and ability to make self-determined choices: As Liam explained:

Liam: [...] I’d like be watching TV he’d ‘I want to watch something else’ like that, and then there’d be like er, I’d be like reading a book and I’ll have the light on and he goes ‘I want to go to sleep, turn the light off’. And it was just silly things like that and you think ‘I need my own room really’ [...]. (Bacon 2010, p. 131)

In this example, Dan’s ability to generate the right environment for sleep demands some cooperation.

When children share a room, there may be limited space for privacy. This conclusion is borne out in other research findings relating to siblings. For instance, from her study of 90 5–17-year-old children in Central Scotland, Punch (2008) found that due to their shared history, experiences, and upbringing, sibs may struggle to control the kinds of information that their fellow siblings have of them. Compounding this, siblings also have less ability than parents to restrict access to their own space. The difference between twin and sibling relationships and experiences may be one of degree (Bacon 2010). Because twins, unlike siblings, grow up amidst cultural expectations and stereotypes which tend to undermine their individuality and capacity for autonomous thought and action (“twins” are expected to “look the same,” be “close,” and spend time together) sharing a room may be especially frustrating for them.

Frustrated by having to share a bedroom at home, Hannah spent time apart from her twin sister Charlotte when socializing with friends outside of the family home. At home, she occasionally sat in the bathroom to establish isolation: as she explained, “there’s a lock on [the door] and no one can get in” (Bacon 2010, p. 141). Hannah had a younger sister too, but she explained that she and her twin sister Charlotte would tell her to leave their bedroom if they had friends to visit because “she just starts acting cocky.” At 3 years their junior Ellie carries the stigma of being “childish.” In contrast to Hannah and Charlotte, Ellie has a room of her own but feels isolated from her twin sisters as a consequence of this. As she explains:

Well like, my sist- like Hannah and Charlotte have got each other, share a bedroom and that. But like when I’m feeling a bit left out, my mum like chats with me and she says we’re just like twins. And like when my sisters are having a go at me, then my mum will have a go at them and she’ll back me up. (Bacon 2010, p. 139)

This example clearly shows how space (and parental decisions over bedroom allocation) can help to mold social relationships.

Research on sibling relationships reminds us that children's agency may be shaped by the relationships they have with other children too – power is not only a feature of intergenerational relationships but also of intragenerational relationships. In her comparison of adult–child and sibling relations in Scotland, Punch (2005) notes that while children may accept that parents have legitimate authority over them because they have responsibility for them and identify them as caretakers, power is more contested and disputed amongst siblings who may use bargaining and physical force to get what they want. As was the case in her study, research with twins showed that power did not always rest with same person (Bacon 2010). Notwithstanding this, sometimes the twins' narratives depicted one twin as the chief instigator of change. For example, Sally identified her sister Rachel and Rebecca identified her twin sister Andrea as the person that instigated the move to live more independent lives (Bacon 2010, p. 149). In some cases then, power imbalances may mean that some twins end up following the changes instigated by their fellow twin. Conversely, however, twins may need to rely on each other for changes like “independence” to be effectively socially established and sustained.

One particularly important dimension of children's intragenerational power relationships is gender, and some studies on sibling relationships have revealed the extent to which these relationships reveal gender inequalities. For instance, Edwards et al. (2005) have noted that brother–sister relationships tend to work on male terms. While brothers tend to establish with each other through doing activities together, girls tend to do this through talking. In brother–sister relationships, however, doing things together takes precedence over talking. Thus they conclude that “children ‘do’ gender in their relationships with other children” (Edwards et al. 2005, p. 500).

McNamee's (1998, 1999) analysis concentrated specifically on children's use of computer games at home. She found that when girls shared a computer with their brother, this usually meant that the computer was placed in his bedroom and girl's access was more heavily restricted as a result. More recent research also supports these findings. In their study of 23 teenage girls' uses of music, Werner (2009) found that brothers limited their sister's access to media technologies and that new technology was given to boys. In contrast, sister relationships had no such limitations.

In contrast to these findings, there is also evidence to suggest that (in a similar vein to McRobbie's conclusions) bedroom space may also be a useful resource for resisting patriarchy. In her Australian study of 16-year-old girls' use of bedroom space, James (2001) found that this space offered girls seclusion from critical audiences (especially comments from boys about their physical appearance and athletic competence). It was a place to hide public displays of emotions (so no one would see they were upset), and it was experienced as a safe place. Girls therefore actively chose to retreat to this “safe” and protective space. However, we should not simply assume that this reflects the girls' agency. Indeed, James herself asks if these are “real” choices or just paths of least resistance? She concludes that if their reasons for taking these courses of action were really results of the gender ordering (and inequalities) rooted in society then these choices were at best limited:

Although the girls believed that they freely chose active or passive, solitary or shared recreation, they seemed unaware that their choices were limited by factors over which they had little control. (2001, p. 86)

4 Relationships, Structure, and Agency

This final section discusses some relevant and important theoretical tools for helping conceptualize children's sibling and family relationships and the interplay between structure and agency. Of particular importance to a consideration of sibling and parent-child relationships is the significance of "generation" and "intergenerationality." Vanderbeck (2007, p. 205) notes that "Intergenerational relationships and the generational ordering of society are inherently geographical phenomenon." Hence, some spaces may be classified as "children's spaces" or "adult's spaces." Children and adults may also have different degrees of access to particular spaces on the grounds of their age (Hopkins and Pain 2007). While the concept of "generational ordering" identifies how society is organized and ordered into two main groups ("children" and "adults") the concept of "generationality" helps to explore the process through which people become constructed and positioned as "children" and "adults" (Alanen 2001). These concepts are of central importance within Childhood Studies and Children's Geographies (for an example see Alanen and Mayall 2001).

The empirical data cited here suggests that not all parents will construct these generational categories in the same ways. The adult-child boundary may vary in its level of intensity; while some parents have a strong concept of how their adult role distinguishes them from "children", others may wish to establish a more "equal" relationship where this intergenerational power imbalance is played down. Children's identities and relationships are produced through these interactions.

Relationships do not just take place inside space. In this scenario, space is a mere container for action. Instead, this review has demonstrated that relationships are embedded in space. They can be produced through space – so space can alter the nature and form of social relationships. Relationships can also alter the form and feeling of physical space. As this indicates, relationships must be established and practiced. David Morgan (1996) promoted the notion of "family practices" to demonstrate how families were created and lived through human action rather than structural institutions/"things." Reflecting this sentiment, Edwards et al. (2006, p. 9) argue that we should conceptualize sibling relationships as "sibling practices." This moves us away from thinking about sibling relationships as fixed entities and instead focuses on how they are constructed and attributed with meaning by sisters and brothers themselves.

As demonstrated above, children can and do intervene to shape their own lives and the lives of others, but in order to best capture this process, we need to think about social action as relational (incorporating interdependencies) and embodied. First, the relationships that children have with their parents, peers, and siblings and the identities they construct depend on others. Space may be opened up and shut

down as children disconnect and (re)connect with others. Even privacy, separation, and disconnection have to be socially established. Siblings and twins require the presence of each other when they name and claim objects, agree and dispute how space should be classified and used, and identify themselves in relation to each other. Attributing children with agency then does not mean that children have to be independent autonomous individuals.

Recently, researchers have started to develop a more systematic and sustained consideration of the nature of human agency and, in particular, drawn attention to how some modernist definitions of agency may ultimately exclude some groups of children and young people who do not live up to this impossible ideal. In response to these debates, researchers within Childhood Studies and Children's Geographies have started to emphasize the codependence, interdependence, and the reciprocity of human action (Tisdall and Punch 2012; Bacon 2012). Thus in their study of sibling relationships Edwards et al. (2006, p. 2) argue that: "Their social identities are continually formed, embedded, and also constrained, in and through their relationships with their siblings" (Edwards et al. 2006, p. 59). Similarly, when setting out a sociological approach to the study of "personal life" Smart argues that:

[It] does not presume that there is an autonomous individual who makes free choices and exercises unfettered agency. . . it is conceptualized as always already part of the social. This is because the very possibility of personal life is predicated upon a degree of self-reflection and also connectedness with others. (2007, p. 28)

This chapter has shown that through their identity-making and place-making, children interact with and sometimes rely on other people and objects to intervene in and shape their own and other people's lives. While a range of family/parental expectations frame and potentially shape children's experiences (bedrooms should be tidy, music volume set at a reasonable level, "inappropriate" posters taken down, chores completed, friends taken upstairs, and so on), children do not necessarily simply adhere to these. Rather a retreat to the bedroom may enable children to avoid chores or a bedroom poster may be relocated to a more private area of bedroom space.

Agency is also embodied – we live in and experience the world through our bodies. Indeed some of the literature cited here emphasizes that children's use of bedroom space is a sentient experience that involves seeing, looking, touching, creating, and listening (for example, Overlien and Hydén 2009; Lincoln 2005). What happens inside the bedroom (for example playing music) can shape what happens outside of it (for example as music invades other people's space and sentient experiences and also potentially shapes parents' reactions). Indeed, this review has demonstrated that children's embodied experience of bedroom space may be connected to a whole range of other spaces, from the night club and living room to the Internet and global consumer culture. The child's bedroom is "a site of reception for commercial messages and a location for the display and use of consumer goods" (Livingstone 2010, p. 9). We should therefore be wary of making superficial distinctions between so-called public and private spaces and between "home" and neighborhood because these spaces can and do overlap.

Various authors within Childhood Studies and Children's Geographies have developed models for helping conceptualize the interplay between structure and agency. James and Prout's (1995) "grid-group" model of "hierarchy and boundary" recognized that where group membership and social hierarchies are strong, agency may be weak. Similarly, Klocker's (2007) notions of "thick" and "thin" agency reveal that children may have more or less capacity to transform their own or other people's lives through their action depending on the grip of structural constraints. She explains:

... 'thin' agency refers to decisions and everyday actions that are carried out within highly restrictive contexts, characterised by few viable alternatives. 'Thick' agency is having the latitude to act within a broad range of options. It is possible for a person's agency to be 'thickened' or 'thinned' over time and space, and across their various relationships. (2007, p. 85)

Klocker's distinction is especially useful for helping us get an instant sense of the density and variability of agency. For instance, children's agency may be potentially thickened if parents afford children meaningful decision-making power and if siblings cooperate with and agree to the organization, use, and reclassification of "shared" space. Agency may be thinned if, through the process of generationing, parents establish rigid and hierarchical generational relations, siblings dominate and overpower their other siblings, and if other customary practices linked to gender limit the range of opportunities available to children.

5 Conclusion

Children, like adults, are both the authors and products of the social world; social life is both structured by them and for them. Research about children's bedrooms indicates that children's use of bedroom space has to be contextualized by a range of broader social and cultural processes. Consumerism, individualism, globalization, patriarchy, and the generational ordering of society all shape what happens in this seemingly very "micro" and local space. Institutionalized norms and social divisions linked to gender, age, birth order, and social class also help to structure and contextualize children's experiences and use of bedroom space. Notwithstanding this, children can and do shape their own lives and the lives of other people, not necessarily in isolation but through their relationship with other people and objects. Their agency may be thickened and thinned according to the opportunities and constraints which characterize their lives.

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Negotiating Sibling Relationships and Birth Order Hierarchies

6

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Abstract

This chapter argues that the birth order is socially constructed and shows how birth order hierarchies are negotiated in everyday interactions between siblings. It explores the relative opportunities and constraints of children's birth order positions within families. The chapter indicates that both children and parents recognize the existence of age and birth order hierarchies and that this may influence how siblings behave as well as how they are treated by family members. However, the ways in which age and birth order hierarchies are played out in children's everyday lives are dynamic and do not follow rigid rules. The benefits and limitations of being in any birth order position are negotiated, contested, and accepted in a multitude of ways across different sibling groups. The chapter draws on the perspectives of older, middle, and younger siblings in order to demonstrate the many tensions and complexities which surround the perceived strengths and weaknesses of different locations in the birth order.

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1 Introduction

Until recently most research on sibling relationships and birth order has been conducted in psychology (e.g., Dunn 1984; Lamb and Sutton-Smith 1982; Stocker et al. 1989). For example, Dunn's work for over two decades has explored the psychological impact of sibling relations on child development and states that: "Evidence is clear for sibling influence in childhood on the development of social and emotional understanding, and on adjustment and wellbeing" (Dunn 2008, p. 26). There has also been some social work research which explores children's sibling relations (sibship) in terms of sibling care (Kosonen 1996), family support (Sanders 2004), and child protection issues (Mullender 1999), but there has been a paucity of sociological or geographical research on sibling relationships. This has begun to be addressed since the early 2000s (see Brannen et al. 2000; Edwards et al. 2005, 2006; Mauthner 2002, 2005; Punch 2008a, b; Weller 2013), but there continues to be limited recognition of birth order as a social variable. During childhood, in particular, birth order can have an important influence on children's everyday lives in a similar way to other social variables such as gender, age, ethnicity, or disability (Punch 2001). This chapter contributes to the growing field by exploring children's own perspectives of the relative opportunities and constraints of their position in the birth order.

Research on birth order tends to focus on the impact that birth order has on children's futures, considering how it may shape their personalities (Berthoud 1996; Sulloway 1996) as well as influence their successes and failures as adults (Conley 2004; Leman 2002). Psychological literature has tended to perceive siblings in relation to the "roles" and "expectations" of their birth order position (Boer and Dunn 1992; McGuire et al. 2000; Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg 1970). However, there is a lack of geographical or sociological studies on birth order (Edwards et al. 2006; Evans 2012). This chapter highlights the ways in which the birth order is socially constructed and shows how certain traits can be related to different birth order positions (see also Brannen et al. 2000). It illustrates that birth order can be experienced at times as a constraint on sibling behavior and at other times as a resource that can be utilized in a dynamic and creative manner. Thus, although birth order is important in shaping children's experiences of sibship, relative benefits have to be actively maintained, and limitations of each position in the sibling order are not passively accepted and are often contested.

2 Social Research on Sibling Relations

Punch and Vanderbeck (this volume) note that Childhood Studies has tended to focus more on intergenerational rather than intragenerational relations. Davies (2015) argues that this is also the case for sociology which has had a tendency to

overlook the important role of siblings in processes of socialization. Her work shows how sibling relationships have a marked impact on the ways in which social identities and sense of self are developed in relation to others. She asserts that “comparing” is central to sibling relations and:

This attention to the impact of sibling similarities and differences upon processes of self-identification offers clues as to how being and having a sibling can influence the ways in which young people form ideas about who they are and who they might become as a person. (Davies 2015, p. 682)

Not only are siblings influential in the formation of identity, but they can also play a major role in care giving which is often overlooked. Weller (2013) argues that most of the literature on children and care focuses on the importance of vertical parent-child connections and that there is a lack of attention given to care in lateral relationships (see also Mauthner 2005; McIntosh and Punch 2009). One of the projects of “Timescapes” (a qualitative longitudinal initiative exploring relationships in the UK), *Your Space! Siblings & Friends*, examines the meanings of children’s prescribed (sibling) and chosen (friendship) relationships (see Edwards and Weller 2014). Using data from this project, Weller shows how sibling caring practices and relations shift within and across different spaces: “shaped by aspects of identity (age, class, culture, gender), values (familial and education-oriented) and challenging events (episodes of crisis)” (Weller 2013, p. 165). In particular, her work indicates the role of change and continuity in relation to caring practices including reciprocity, relationality, and interdependencies. She also emphasizes the need to consider sibling’s supportive roles outwith the family context, such as in relation to school work or bullying. Others have also found that siblings play a key role in “building and conferring” social capital (Morrow 1999), particularly in the school context (Gillies and Lucey 2006; Hadfield et al. 2006).

In the Majority World, it is relatively more common for older siblings to look after and care for their younger siblings (Punch 2001; Rabain-Jamin et al. 2003). Evan’s (2010) research with sibling-headed households affected by HIV/AIDS in East Africa indicates how children act as parents/guardians for their younger siblings and that the caring roles are gendered. Female heads of household tend to undertake the domestic care work, whereas male heads of household are more likely to engage in paid work, delegating caring to a younger sister. Similarly, Payne’s (2012) research with child-headed households in Zambia shows that although sibling relationships are “a connection you can’t get away from” (Gillies and Lucey 2006, p. 486), the nature of sibling support (financial, practical, and emotional) changes according to household composition, pivotal events and circumstances, and the evolving nature of sibling ambitions and participation in household activities over time.

Gulløv et al.’s study (Gulløv et al. 2015) of Danish siblings aged 6–20 shows how children’s active engagement in creating and shaping their sibling relations impacts upon wider family dynamics. They use the concept of friction to explore the changing emotions in relation to commitment and tensions within sibling relationships, arguing

that different sibling relations may display regular, intense, or downplayed frictions which reflect the emotional dynamics that can change over time. Gulløv et al. demonstrate that “Tensions and tenderness are practised and handled differently and have different impacts on sibling relationships” (Gulløv et al. 2015, p. 517) as well as having consequences for parent-child relations.

Recently, several studies have shown that an intragenerational analysis of sibling relations challenges the traditional assumptions that parents are the most influential actors regarding children’s identities, care networks, and family dynamics. Furthermore, Edwards and Weller (2014) argue that siblings are important in gender socialization and parents should not be assumed as pivotal, with children as passive, in this process. They highlight how “gender is embedded in brothers’ and sisters’ everyday, located interactions and constructed, negotiated and contested over time, with both changes and continuities” (Edwards and Weller 2014, p. 197). They also show how gendered identities are embedded in and constructed through sibships in different locations, thereby emphasizing the importance of considering both time and space when exploring sibling relations. Similarly, Edwards et al. (2005) discussed the gendered nature of sibship practices where sisters were more likely to engage in talking compared with brothers who tended to undertake activities together.

Bacon’s (2010, 2012) sociological research on twinship in the UK reveals the ways in which twins perform and negotiate their identities. She examines how twins’ identities are socially produced and that their relationships are constructed amidst stereotypes of sameness which may make the experience of twinship different (in degree) from sibship. Her work draws out the importance of body and spatial materiality, as she argues that an appreciation of materiality (the fleshiness of the body, physical space, and material objects) alongside structural constraints (such as power inequalities of the generational order) impacts upon twins’ negotiation of identity as well as the ways that they are also socially constructed by others (see also Bacon, this volume).

While there has been a recent increase in social research regarding children’s sibling relationships, there have been very few studies which explore the social (rather than psychological) impacts of birth order. The limited literature on birth order as a social variable is more likely to be from Majority World contexts (for an exception, see Brannen et al. 2000) where families, particularly in rural areas, tend to be larger in order to cope with the labor-intensive requirements of largely subsistence economies. For example, Punch (2001) argues that when examining children’s contributions to household labor, it is insufficient to only consider child-adult relations and gender differences. Her research on Bolivian rural households indicates that while family labor is distributed according to gender and generation, the allocation of *children’s* work is determined also by age, birth order, and sibling composition. It is often assumed that a gender analysis of the division of adult household labor is transferable to children, but this overlooks the hierarchies within children’s work according to competence, physical ability, and age. Similarly, White and Brinkerhoff (1981) found that the greater workload on rural farms in Nebraska resulted in a practical need to complete the tasks according to age and ability

regardless of gender norms. Adagala (1991) discovered that on plantations in Kenya, children's work would sometimes be divided more on the basis of age than gender. Evans's (2012) research with sibling heads of households in Tanzania and Uganda also indicated that age and sibling order were more significant than gender when young male carers lacked sisters who were old enough to take on caring work. Hence, such studies show that factors such as age and birth order can become more important than gender.

Sibling composition and birth order have not only been neglected in research on household divisions of labor but also in sociological and geographical studies of family relations which tend to focus on the relationship between spouses or between parents and children. Research from the Majority World (Evans 2010; Payne 2012) reveals the need to explore further the effects of birth order and sibling composition not only in relation to household divisions of labor in the Minority World but also regarding other aspects of social life, such as children's informal networks and access to household resources.

3 Scottish Study of Sibling Relationships and Birth Order

Given the limited social research on birth order, this chapter draws extensively on a qualitative study with a sample of 30 families with 3 children between the ages of 5 and 17 in central Scotland (Punch 2008a, b). In-depth individual and sibling group interviews were conducted with 90 children from these families of mixed socio-economic backgrounds (Punch 2007). The children were all full siblings, mostly living with both of their biological parents except for three single mother households. Hence, the sample was based on shared biological parents and coresidence, and it is worth remembering that the dynamics between stepsiblings and half-siblings may be different from the interactions described in this chapter. In this study, the sample was drawn from an initial exploratory phase of essay-based research in local schools as well as by snowballing and was formed to explore children's own experiences of birth order and sibship in families with three children. All of the interviews took place in the children's homes and included task-based methods in an attempt to minimize unequal power relations between the adult researcher and child participants (Punch 2002).

In the group interviews, siblings were asked to brainstorm what they perceived to be the benefits and limitations of being the oldest, middle, and youngest. They created a spider diagram with the spider's body indicating which position they were discussing and each of the spider legs highlighting relative opportunities and constraints of being older, younger, or in the middle. The visual diagram was used to explore the issues more fully. In the follow-up individual interviews, the children were asked a general question regarding how they felt about their location in the birth order and what they perceived to be the advantages and disadvantages of their position. This chapter explores the findings of each position in turn and links the discussion of the contingent nature of birth order hierarchies to the wider geographical and sociological literature on sibling relations.

4 Being the Oldest Sibling

The oldest siblings taking part in the Scottish sibling research were between 10 and 16 years of age. The majority of them revealed that there are both benefits and constraints attached to their position as the eldest sibling (Punch 2008a): “You get things before them but everything gets blamed on you” (Julianne 10, oldest). Some felt that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages, and only two said that they would rather not be the oldest as they would like to get advice from an older sibling. Their position at the top of the birth order hierarchy gave certain advantages in relation to different aspects of power. Only a few children actually used the word “power” themselves:

Sam: What else is good about being the oldest?

James: That you know you’ve got power over them, or at least I’ve got power over Stuart.

Sam: When you say that, how do you mean exactly?

James: I tell them what to do.

Sam: And will they do it?

James: Stuart probably will, Becky might.

Sam: Have you got any examples?

James: Well, to get things for me. Well, they do what I want them to do, and they sometimes obey. (James 10, oldest, Becky 8, Stuart 6)

When they directly used the term power, it tended to reflect an ability to get their siblings to do what they asked, and this is in line with Dowding’s definition of power as “getting what you want” (Dowding 1996, p. 50). It also echoes the way that Edwards and Weller use power in their research on siblings’ gendered identities where: “Rather than an attribute attached to an individual sister or brother in a sibling relationship, power is understood as embedded in located relationships, subject to negotiation and contestation” (Edwards and Weller 2014, p. 188). Most of the oldest siblings in Punch’s (2008a) study expressed notions of relational power in a range of ways including their capacity to influence their younger siblings, their bigger size resulting in physical power over their siblings, their linguistic power and greater life experience, and the possibility for enhanced social status.

Edwards et al. (2006, p. 100) noted that “older siblings invoked a boundary between mature, rational and authoritative conduct on their own part, and immature, reckless and inappropriate behaviour by their younger sisters and brothers.” Thus older siblings not only exercise power but feel superior to younger siblings. Sibling interactions may involve complex processes of negotiation and bargaining, but their power struggles may also include physical force (Punch 2005): “If they really annoy me I can just push them away or batter them but I don’t have to worry about that from them” (Simon 14, oldest). Some older siblings liked to be able to take advantage of their greater linguistic experience by using language to have the edge over their younger brothers and sisters particularly during arguments:

I suppose you can laugh at them for being like smaller, younger. You know, I mean you can like sort of fool them sometimes with complex words, ‘cos I mean, well, you can look smug, being on higher maths now. (Steven 15, oldest)

Others used their wider knowledge of the social world in a more positive manner by recognizing that their younger siblings could learn from them and this enhanced their own sense of self-esteem. Another common trait which was mentioned regularly in relation to being the oldest was the increased sense of status that is achieved through being the first sibling to undertake certain activities: “If there’s an age limit then you get to do things first” (Rhoda 12, oldest). This reflects some of the rivalry that can occur between siblings. Some oldest children indicated that this can lead to greater attention which may increase their sense of importance within the family context: “I think it’s good because, mainly because I haven’t got like anyone above me so I feel like I’m kind of important around here” (Tony 15, oldest).

Many of the siblings’ discussions on the advantages of being the oldest revolved around the greater independence which they enjoyed: “you just get to stay up later than them, and while they’re in bed, you’re still awake. So you could get to do stuff that they wouldn’t” (Ray 10, oldest). Interestingly, not all suggested that being the first to have particular experiences is necessarily positive:

But you always have to go first, you always have to. You’re always the first to do something and then they all follow you. And then if you really want something and you fight so hard to get it and then they just get it automatically, you’ve got to do all the work to get something and then they just get it. It’s really, really annoying. (Janice 13, oldest)

In general “being the first” to do things was tended to be perceived as a positive feature, yet it could also place more pressure on the oldest child. For some older siblings, always having to be first could be difficult, particularly when it was not just a social activity like watching a film or staying up later than their younger siblings. Janice’s quotation above also raises another key issue around children’s sense of fairness which several other older siblings mentioned (see also Gulløv et al. 2015). Similarly, Brannen et al. (2000) in their London study of families and care asserted that, in spite of parents frequently reinforcing hierarchies of age and birth order, both children and parents tended to subscribe to an “equality” or “fairness norm” where siblings expected to be treated the same. Punch (2008a) found that the downside of “being the first” to get certain privileges often meant that younger siblings began achieving these same benefits at an earlier age than their older siblings had. Older siblings were often frustrated by the injustice of this which is also partially linked to sibling rivalry over who gets to do what and when:

Samuel: Sometimes it’s annoying ‘cos like things I didn’t get to do until I was say 11, they get to do when they were younger. I sometimes find that really annoying. And you can start saying “well I didn’t get to do that when I was their age” and they’ll [parents] say “well you’re not him are you?” And I find that so annoying.

Sam: What things?

Samuel: I don’t know, maybe things like sitting in the front seat in the car. I didn’t get to sit there when I was 10 or something, but they do. It might just be like me not getting to do something they did, very unfair, annoying.

Sam: Why do you think your parents let them?

Samuel: I think it’s because they let the oldest do it and they see “oh it’s not so bad really, they can do it” (Samuel 16, oldest)

Like Samuel, Raul also recognized that it could be a rational decision for parents to change limits placed on children in terms of what they can and cannot do: “Cos I think I was kind of the first child they were seeing how it would work out so now there’s more brothers they became more lenient” (Raul 14, oldest). However, although Samuel indicated that he did not like seeing his younger siblings do things before he was allowed to, he recognized that his birth order position could be satisfying as he experienced more freedom and autonomy than they did: “Being the oldest you do get to do things that they don’t, ‘cos then they get annoyed – it’s like revenge which is good. Like you can stay home on your own all day, but they can’t do that” (Samuel 16, oldest). Thus, “being first” can have both advantages and disadvantages. Most older siblings considered it as beneficial, but some perceived it more negatively, and sometimes it was experienced both positively and negatively by the same oldest sibling, according to what kind of activity they were experiencing first.

Older siblings’ enhanced social status at the top of the birth order hierarchy, largely as a result of their increased autonomy, tended to lead to greater levels of responsibility (see also Brannen et al. 2000). Like many of the defining characteristics of being the oldest sibling, more responsibility involved both benefits and limitations. When oldest children referred to having more responsibility, it tended to be in relation to sibling care, which some enjoyed, and at times it involved doing more household chores. Edwards et al. (2006, p. 69) emphasize that sibling caring practices are often gendered, whereby brothers invoke “more masculine and paternal images of care as physical protection from threat and violence rather than the more maternal and feminine caring” described by sisters.

Some siblings in Punch’s study (Punch 2008a) recognized that by going somewhere together, they could enable their younger siblings to take part in certain social activities which they otherwise would not be allowed. Generally most older siblings liked this aspect of their role, but some pointed out that it could be irritating if looking after their siblings restricted their own movements:

Samuel: ...but I get very annoyed because I can’t go out or see friends or play golf or anything. I have to stay in the house and I don’t like it.

Sam: So do you have to look after them sometimes?

Samuel: Sometimes

Sam: What’s it like?

Samuel: They’re no trouble in themselves, it’s just things I want to do like, I might feel like going to play pool with friends or something, and I can’t ‘cos I can’t leave them. (Samuel 16, oldest)

The clearest downside to being responsible was that parents tended to expect the oldest sibling to set a good example and behave more “maturely.” This meant that when they did not behave in such ways, they felt that they were much more likely to be disciplined compared with their younger siblings: “Like Ann and Dawn would get away with things that I just wouldn’t get away with. . . I’d get into more trouble than they would,” (Ray 10, oldest). Older siblings commented that getting into more trouble was particularly frustrating when parents almost automatically blamed them without trying to investigate who had provoked or caused the incident:

Because you get more responsibilities, especially with them, if it goes wrong, you get into trouble. . . Me and Gordon had an argument and he threw a couple of stones on the road and one of them hit the neighbours window and I don't think it broke or anything, but he came in and he was crying and I got into big trouble for winding him up but it wasn't even my fault. (Jeni 13, oldest)

5 Being the Middle Sibling

All the middle children in the sibling study were between 8 and 15 years old. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the interview responses regarding being the middle sibling were more diverse compared with the more tightly defined benefits and limitations attached to being the youngest or oldest sibling. Punch (2008a) found that this was because the middle sibling was both an older and a younger sibling, thereby resulting in a wider range of advantages and disadvantages in relation to each of these roles: "It's quite good 'cos you get to like do more stuff and you're not that young to be like chucked around" (Hugh 11, middle).

In most of the psychological literature on birth order, it is assumed that the middle child is most likely to suffer (Berthoud 1996; Conley 2004). Leman (2002) suggests this is because they are perceived to be stuck in the middle, receiving the least attention because they are neither the first nor the last to do things. In contrast, in the Scottish sibling study, Punch found that rather than seeing it as experiencing the bad things of being the oldest and the youngest, middle children tended to refer to their position more in terms of the good things: "I think it's quite good being in the middle 'cos you're not the oldest and you're not the youngest, you're in between" (John 14, middle). As well as liking the flexibility of being able to switch between being an older or younger sibling, the middle child is closer in age to both of the other siblings which can enhance feelings of closeness:

There's not such much of an age difference between older and younger – it's about two years, but if I was the youngest it would be about four years to the oldest. And I probably wouldn't feel as close to them. (John 14, middle)

The majority of middle siblings were either positive about their birth order location (two fifths) or felt that there were both benefits and limitations attached to their role (two fifths). Only a few (one fifth) were more negative about their middle position, of which only two described it as very difficult being "stuck" in the middle:

Quite boring actually because you're not old enough to boss people around and you're not young enough to get some sympathy so you're like just sat in the middle (Erica 10, middle)

Only Tim and Erica referred to being in the middle as having the worst of both worlds, whereas most other middle siblings tended to highlight the positive aspects of being both younger and older. As with the responses from the oldest and youngest siblings, the middle siblings recognized that an age and status hierarchy surrounds the birth order positions: "The younger one can't be the bully because they're small and if they bully you they know they won't get a reaction they'll just get violence"

(Barry 9, middle). The birth order hierarchy thus reflects notions of power in terms of both physical and social power (Punch 2005). Middle siblings can acquire some social status in relation to their younger siblings by taking on traditional characteristics of the older sibling role:

Tim: Well, the good thing about it is that you have the most experience of brotherhood. Cos George only has two little brothers and Andy has two big brothers, and I have one little brother and one big brother.

Sam: So why's that better?

Tim: Because you've got someone to ask questions and then you've got someone you can sort of look down on and they look up to you and ask you questions... it makes you feel more grown up. (Tim 9, middle)

Similar to the experiences of older siblings, many middle siblings enjoyed passing on knowledge to their younger brother or sister (see also Rabain-Jamin et al. 2003). However, the key difference compared with the oldest sibling is that middle siblings can teach their younger siblings while also receiving advice from their older brother or sister.

Daniel's older than you so he knows older stuff more than you. He teaches me and I teach Sylvia and like Sylvia's like "I'll teach my wee cousins!" I had to teach her how to look after her babyborn 'cos she got that and I showed her how to put nappies on. So like we just help each other. (Judith 11, middle)

Middle siblings were able to benefit from experiencing both a teaching and learning role. Children could feel a sense of importance when taking over the caring role and looking after a younger sibling:

It's good because now that Henrietta's in secondary I can tell Elliot what to do without Henrietta being in the way... Like Henrietta would always get to tell Elliot to put his shoes on the right feet and tell him off and everything, now I get to tell him if he has his shoes on the wrong feet. (Nigel 9, middle)

Edwards et al. (2006) in their UK study of siblings also found that middle children regularly shifted between being in a younger or older role, being both a receiver and giver of care and protection. Looking after their younger sibling enables middle siblings to distance themselves from the role of being cared for, increasing their sense of power and responsibility. The enhanced status from being an older sibling is partly as a result of the way childhood is socially constructed in British society. There are many restrictions placed on children because of their age, and childhood tends to be perceived as a less independent and less powerful stage of the life course (Hockey and James 2003). Hence it is not surprising that children are keen to push age-based boundaries around what they are allowed to do, so that they can gain greater autonomy over certain aspects of their lives. As many rules surrounding what children can do are directly linked to their chronological age rather than individual competence (Mayall 2002), older siblings are generally allowed to do certain activities before their younger siblings. For example, this

may refer to safety regulations on fairground rides or laws in relation to watching films at the cinema. In turn, these graded levels of autonomy tend to get translated into different degrees of privilege for older and younger siblings in relation to pocket money, bedtimes, and independent geographical mobility. Thus parental rules within family homes tend to reflect how the life course is socially constructed and notions of age-appropriate behavior.

Parenting practices of setting different bedtimes, pocket money levels, film restrictions, and returning home times reinforce the status and age hierarchy of the birth order. Some middle and younger siblings found this to be frustrating at times, but they also acknowledged that they could be allowed to do more because of their older siblings. A key advantage of being a middle sibling is being able to engage in both older and younger activities: "It's quite good being the middle one because I'm not too young to go do stuff but I'm not too old to do stuff" (Nigel 9, middle). Thus, rather than being the "odd one out" and the most excluded, as many psychological birth order books suggest, Punch (2008a) illustrates that many middle children perceive their position as being the most included.

As we have seen, the age and status hierarchy is reinforced by privileges which parents bestow on different siblings according to their age and birth order position. This chain of difference can also emerge in relation to material goods, such as toys being passed down from an older to a younger sibling.

Well you still get new clothes. If you're the youngest you don't usually get new clothes unless you're really short of them and none are going to grow into you. If you're the oldest you get lots of new clothes, and I get a mixture. (Christian 8, middle)

The middle position reveals both advantages and disadvantages as the middle child is in a receiving and giving position. Nevertheless, for some middle children, there was frustration in rarely being the first (or last) to do things, reflecting that the extreme ends of the birth order hierarchy tended to benefit from the extra attention attached to being the oldest or youngest. In particular, middle siblings talked about the lesser attention they receive compared with their older sibling who tends to be the first to undertake particular transitions, such as going to secondary school:

Well I think that 'cos Susan's like older and she's going into new things they're spending more time with her than me. 'Cos like she's going into [a new school] ... Well like they'll spend more time over it, like say like you know getting the uniform, making sure she's OK and stuff like that. But 'cos like Susan's been there so she can tell me what it's like and what you have to do, what you have to bring, so there won't be as much time spent with me. (Robin 9, middle)

Robin indicated that sometimes older siblings replaced parents' teaching role as they knew more about certain childhood experiences. He went on to explain that there could also be positive aspects to not being first: "You don't have to go head first into things and that's what's good about Susan being first so that she knows what's going on. And like you don't have to take the first step into new things" (Robin 9, middle).

Younger siblings can learn from their older brother or sister's experiences (Rabain-Jamin et al. 2003), and middle siblings are more likely to be accompanied during their school years by either their older or younger sibling. However, not all children liked being at the same school as their siblings. One disadvantage of not being the first sibling to attend school is that younger siblings may become labeled by their older sibling's reputation: "People tend to judge you from your older brother" (Josh 13, middle). Middle children may receive less attention compared with the oldest and youngest siblings within a family, but there can be advantages attached to not being the first child and learning from your older sibling:

I can take up on points that my brother makes. 'Cos I can get tips off my brother 'cos he's been through things, he's sort of set the path and he can give me tips and stuff. And I'm not the youngest, I'm not the wee brat in the family. (Jack 15, middle)

Similarly Nicola recognized that being in the middle tended to result in a middle amount of "getting into trouble" from parents in relation to sibling arguments and fights: "But quite often you sometimes don't get into trouble for things 'cos you're smaller and younger. Also I often get into more trouble, getting angry with Joanna [the youngest]" (Nicola 14, middle). Thus, all of the children in Punch's study (Punch 2008a) showed a recognition of the key features of other sibling roles and the relative benefits and limitations attached to them. As we have seen, many of the characteristics of each position could have both upsides and downsides. However, middle children demonstrated a wider range of advantages and disadvantages in relation to their birth order location as their role consisted of being both an older and younger sibling. They tended to refer to their middle position in a positive way thus challenging the adult negative assumptions about being "stuck in the middle."

6 Being the Youngest Sibling

The youngest children in the sibling study were between the ages of 5 and 12. Most of them were clear that there were definite advantages and disadvantages attached to their position in the sibling order, including having less power and less autonomy but receiving more attention in comparison with older siblings (Punch 2008a). While having less social and physical power may be largely negative, the advantage is that parents tended to intervene on their behalf, and they would get in less trouble than their older brothers and sisters. Similarly, having less autonomy may be frustrating for many youngest siblings, but the positive side would be that they would have less responsibility, would be looked after, and often ended up doing things at an earlier age than their older siblings. Generally receiving more attention within their family was perceived positively by the youngest siblings, but the downside was that it could be difficult to move away from the role of being perceived as the "baby" in the family and paradoxically this greater attention sometimes led to holding a lesser social status with their older siblings. Each of these will now be discussed in more detail.

The biggest disadvantage to being the youngest sibling was clearly outlined by the majority of youngest children as being bossed around by their older siblings:

It's quite good sometimes and quite bad other times. Well you've got people telling you what to do and you have to do it because you're the youngest and you have to do things that older people say. (Douglas 9, youngest)

The extent to which youngest siblings complied with their older siblings' demands varied greatly, but it was clear that older siblings tended to boss their younger siblings around. Older siblings are perceived to have more "power" than younger siblings, and they try to exercise this power in a range of ways, but particularly by telling their younger brothers and sisters what to do. As will be discussed in the following section, older siblings' "power" is often contested, subverted, resisted, negotiated, as well as accepted at times; nevertheless, the older sibling role is linked to greater levels of social and physical power whether or not this is played out in practice.

Tom indicated his frustration at his oldest sister bossing him about:

Well it's a wee bit actually good 'cos you don't have to set up things like water slides, but the bad thing, you see, Susan always thinks we are her slaves so we have to switch the telly off, put the channel on, put it on, close the door, get stuff, I really hate doing that. (Tom 5, youngest)

He went on to explain that he often felt that he should comply because his older siblings threatened him with not being able to use their games if he did not do as they asked. Younger siblings are not only manipulated by threats of withdrawing access to older siblings' resources but are also at a disadvantage because they are generally physically smaller and not as strong as their older siblings:

I wish I was the biggest 'cos when I'm small, well Robina's older than me and Julianne's older than me, they'll be bad to me and I can't be bad to them 'cos I'm smaller than them and they'll just kick me, hit me and just sort of like that. ... Well like I can't be bad to them 'cos they'll just probably hurt me. (Yasmine 6, youngest)

Many youngest siblings were aware that compared with their older siblings, they were at a disadvantage in terms of their physical size and strength. At times they tried to fight back, but they were rarely successful in both physical struggles as well as battles fought through language (see also Edwards et al. 2006):

Because I know less than them and I want to know more than them. Cos they go like 7.85 and I don't know what the point's for. I don't understand it, I know it's like adding but... (Sylvia 6, youngest)

The relative lack of power of the youngest siblings could be counteracted by securing greater support from parents. On the whole, parents intervened more in sibling fights or arguments in order to protect the youngest: "Because like maybe

they'd say 'stop picking on her and because she's the youngest' and that, and 'she's only little so don't be nasty to her'," (Bridget 9, youngest). Younger siblings are very aware that they are more likely to "get away with more" in terms of receiving punishments from parents compared with their older brothers and sisters who are "meant to be more mature."

Another constraint regarding being the youngest is their relative lack of autonomy resulting in frustration to not being able to do the same activities as their older siblings: "I can't run as fast and I can't cycle fast" (Julian 6, youngest). This is linked to age and size restrictions as well as to notions of age-appropriate behavior:

Duncan: Every year we go to a carnival and then this year I had to wait until next year until I can go on lots more rides, because I'm not tall enough. There's a description at the place for safety and I'm not tall enough.

Sam: How do you feel when they go on?

Duncan: Annoyed. Though there is this really good one that I'm allowed to go on... Sometimes there's this absolutely brilliant chute and Christian and Michael are too old to go on it. (Duncan 6, youngest)

You get easy homework when they get really hard stuff so you're just finished and they're still sitting there doing all their weird stuff like what E equals and everything like that and just how to create sentences using these words and things. So I'm like playing with my friends and they're sort of sitting there doing homework. So if they were in the kitchen doing their homework I'd play in the garden so that they could see me. (Martin 11, youngest).

Youngest siblings often found themselves watching their older siblings engage in activities which they would also like to participate in but were unable to because of their smaller size or age-based rules. However, there were other things which older children could be too big for: "It's good, I like being the smallest. ... Because you get to do more things like you get to do things that are more for small people" (Julian 6, youngest).

Many children also noted that their parents are less likely to allow younger siblings to be as geographically mobile compared with their older siblings. Such restrictions on their independence could be difficult to accept, although younger siblings did benefit and experience greater autonomy if their older siblings accompanied them. In addition, several youngest children recognized that they tended to end up doing activities earlier than their older siblings had been able to because they are benefiting by following the paths already trodden by their older brothers and sisters:

Douglas: Sometimes it can be all right because you get to do things that they wouldn't. I get to stay up later and things like that... well no I mean I get to stay up later than they would at my age.

Sam: Why do you think that is?

Douglas: Well because mum says that with the first two you think you have to do everything right but when you get to the third it's quite boring so you just let them do anything really. (Douglas 9, youngest)

Many older siblings complained that their younger siblings have an easier time compared to when they were that age. This could be in relation to having greater

freedom such as having a later bedtime or being allowed to watch a greater range of programs on television than they had at the same age. Youngest children tended to be aware that their parents were more lenient with their child-rearing rules over time and this eased some of the frustrations of not being able to engage in the same things as their older siblings.

Another advantage of being the youngest is that they can learn from their older siblings' experiences: they can try to avoid their mistakes and are more likely to know what to expect as they get older. Often following in their siblings footsteps can be both positive and negative:

I think, although sometimes people think being the youngest is easiest I find it quite hard because everybody's older and they know, I don't really mind sometimes but they know you before I know them... The good thing is that their friends might look out for me and make sure that I might not be getting bullied, so being known a wee bit does have advantages. (Mandy 11, youngest)

Mandy did not like inheriting her older brothers' reputation at school, but she did get some comfort for being looked out for by her brothers and their friends.

While, on the one hand, it could be frustrating for youngest siblings to watch their older siblings doing interesting things which they would also like to be allowed to do, on the other hand, some youngest siblings commented that their birth order position enabled them to have more fun than their older siblings. This was explained mainly because of having less responsibility which was related to their younger age and size translating into fewer responsibilities of sibling care, housework, and homework:

The thing that's good about it is because I like being the smallest sometimes because well sometimes they help me and I don't have to help them usually because they're older than me. (Sylvia 6, youngest)

As Martin's comments indicated, youngest siblings could make the most of this type of situation in order to get their own back on their older siblings for the times when they had tried to exercise power over them.

Receiving the most attention was frequently mentioned as the best thing about being the youngest sibling, such as getting extra treats and being made a fuss of particularly by relatives or parents:

It's fun. Because you're the youngest you get all the sympathy. (Beatrice 7, youngest)
It's quite good because like you get pampered quite a lot. . . . Like when mum's making a mix up, say it was a box of sweets, like sometimes she sneaks some for me. (Kathryn 9, youngest)

While being in the youngest position entailed receiving most attention from parents and other relatives, this did not always translate to their older siblings who sometimes perceived their younger siblings as having less social status. Edwards et al. (2006, p. 51) explain that this process of older siblings distancing themselves

and excluding younger siblings from their social group would be “in order to shore up the construction of a new and tenuous ‘grown-up’ identity.”

7 Contesting the Age and Birth Order Hierarchies

This chapter has highlighted that different locations in the birth order are socially constructed in particular ways and that, to a certain extent, they are perceived to have distinct characteristics. Each birth order position has relative advantages and disadvantages attached to it, but in practice the ways in which these emerge and are managed depend on a range of factors, including individual competencies and preferences, gender, age gaps, sibling composition, and parental intervention. Thus the ways in which age and birth order hierarchies are played out in children’s everyday lives are dynamic and do not follow rigid rules. Each birth order location is readily compared with other positions by children themselves as well as through comparisons made by others, such as parents, relatives, and teachers (Davies 2015). The empirical data presented in the chapter illustrate a variety of positive and negative emotions, rivalries, and expectations resulting from the opportunities and constraints of birth order hierarchies. Davies argues that:

These anxieties and pressures are examples of how practices of comparing and the construction of the self in relation to one’s sibling(s) can fuel the ambivalences and feelings of both closeness and distance that often characterize sibling relationships. (Davies 2015, p. 686)

Throughout this chapter, examples of sibling interactions have pointed to the contingent nature of the birth order hierarchy. In their research on family responsibilities, Finch and Mason (1993) argued that recognized roles, expectations, and notions of reciprocity are worked out rather than static in intergenerational family relationships. Similarly the hierarchies of power and birth order also emerge and are played out in everyday interactions, such as older siblings’ demands being regularly resisted or negotiated by younger siblings. Thus, processes of negotiation within intragenerational sibling relationships are also more important than normative rules. This chapter has emphasized that while children have a clear understanding of the conventional expectations, roles, and power hierarchies in relation to birth order, they also acknowledge and demonstrate that in practice, the roles and power of their birth order locations are not fixed but can be negotiated and transformed. Similarly, Mauthner (2002) uses the *shifting positions* discourse in her research on sistering where role reversals result in a shift between the “big sister” role of carer and the “little sister” position of being cared for.

Compared with the child-parent relationship, sibling relations involve greater power struggles and increased resistance. It can be useful to draw on the work of Goffman to explain why the power siblings attempt to wield over each other is less effective and that “ultimately children are more likely to cooperate with or cede to parental power” (Punch 2005, p. 185). Goffman refers to differences in backstage

and frontstage performances, and Punch (2005) suggests that interaction with siblings consists of a backstage performance, whereas with parents, a greater degree of frontstage performance may be required. Children are more likely to manage their presentation of self with parents than with siblings because what is perceived as acceptable behavior between siblings is perhaps not appropriate with parents. The intergenerational relationship means that parents have more legitimate capacity to exercise power of children because of their role as caregiver as well as their adult status. In the intragenerational relationship, power tends to be more reciprocal and contested between siblings.

Thus the ambivalent love/hate nature of sibship (Sanders 2004) is played out in the backstage conditions of shared knowledge, time and space. On the one hand, since siblings share much time and space together as well as knowledge of each other, this combination means that sibship is likely to be an intimate, close relationship, forming a bond between them. On the other hand, because siblings share almost too much time together in a relatively small space and know much about each other's bad habits, the sharing of time, space and knowledge can create conflicts. Hence, sibship tends to be a dynamic relationship which can switch almost simultaneously between being a positive and negative experience. (Punch 2008b, p. 342)

Many have emphasized the ambivalences of being and having a sibling, which is often characterized as an intensely conflictual and supportive experience (Brannen et al. 2000; Dunn 2008; Edwards et al. 2006; Gillies and Lucey 2006; Gulløv et al. 2015; Hadfield et al. 2006; Sanders 2004). These features of intimacy and conflict shared within boundaries of time and space lead to children's sibling interactions being more like backstage performances as daily living together means that maintaining a frontstage performance is not feasible. However, Punch points out that as they engage in backstage familiarity, this can also lead to increased irritation because "the boredom of backstage daily living can encourage children to take advantage of their familiarity, pushing the boundaries of socially appropriate behaviour" (Punch 2008b, p. 341).

The social construction of the birth order relates to the nature of power and social status. Oldest siblings have a head start in terms of social and physical power compared with their younger siblings. Hence younger siblings employ a range of tactics in order to counteract the power of older siblings. For example, they may play up to their role as the "baby" in the family, using this stance to encourage parents to discipline their older sibling who "should know better." They may also use the greater attention from parents and relatives in order to gloat to their older siblings, especially when they are aware that they are allowed to do some things at an earlier age compared with their older siblings. Such tactics can be perceived by older siblings as particularly irritating (see also Davies and Christensen, this volume). Thus "being annoying" can be used as a key weapon in sibling power struggles by the younger siblings. Consequently, youngest children may perceive that receiving the most attention and being spoilt is a beneficial feature of their birth order location, whereas older siblings are more likely to perceive it negatively. Similarly, the oldest siblings are likely to perceive their potential ability to boss their younger siblings

around as a positive feature of their birth order position, whereas their younger siblings rarely consider this as a beneficial characteristic. Therefore the perceived benefits of a particular birth order location may be considered negatively by those in other birth order positions.

Particular expectations and roles are linked to different birth order positions, but they are not fixed, and in practice, the ways these emerge in everyday interactions are fluid and dynamic (Brannen et al. 2000). McIntosh and Punch (2009) argue that strategic interaction between siblings is a key characteristic of sibships as children regularly do “deals,” “barter,” and negotiate with each other. This realm of interaction among siblings involves key features such as a degree of calculation and self-interest as well as understandings of reciprocity, equivalence, and fairness. Birth order and age hierarchies do not automatically reflect the flows of unequal power between older and younger siblings (see also Edwards et al. 2006). Sibling negotiations involve common currencies of exchange, such as goods (sweets, toys, or use of computer games) or services and favors (carrying out chores or keeping secrets) or money. Both older and younger siblings use such items to persuade a sibling to do something for them as a way of repaying them for their time or labor (McIntosh and Punch 2009).

This chapter has shown that both children and parents recognize the existence of age and birth order hierarchies and that this may influence how siblings behave as well as how they are treated by family members. However, this will vary according to children’s particular competencies, resources available for negotiation, and parenting practices. It may also depend on the sibling composition in relation to gender and age gaps. For example, an older girl and an older boy, whose middle siblings were close in age, indicated that there was not much difference in their roles because of the smaller age gap, but several other oldest siblings suggested that maybe there *should not* such a difference because of the small age gap between themselves and the next sibling. However, their parents often treated them differently:

I always get blamed for stuff, like for fighting I get blamed for it because I’m the oldest and I should know better. . . I think it’s like really annoying because it’s like even though you are older it’s not like you’re that much older. And if it was like Elliot and me, I mean, I should know better ‘cos I am older but, you know, Nigel and me it’s like two years so it’s like two years is just not that much is it? (Henrietta 11, oldest)

Gender compositions of sibling groups also shaped the ways that older and younger siblings could be perceived. For example, being the only boy or only girl in a family could be perceived both challenging and advantageous:

I think it’s slightly unfair that she gets more choices than us, like all she needs to do with our dad is just turn her little blue eyes on him and she gets whatever she wants. (Barry 9, middle)

Some only male or only female children acknowledged that they may receive some additional attention from parents but they were also likely to be “ganged up on” by the other two same-sex siblings. Hence, age gaps and gender are sometimes important and other times less so. Edwards et al. also argued that “the conventional

caring and protective sibling practices associated with birth order and age hierarchy, and their accompanying power dynamics, could be disrupted and challenged” (Edwards et al. 2006, p. 76). They provided some examples from minority ethnic sibling groups where the flow of care between siblings was reversed, especially when children were experiencing bullying at school or when they were ill (see also Weller 2013). Thus the status of the birth order hierarchy experienced “moments of disruption or transgression” (Edwards et al. 2006, p. 74). Hence, the recognizable traits of birth order will vary both across and within families. It is also worth bearing in mind that birth order is one social variable that impacts upon children’s sibships but other factors will also be important such as age, gender, sibling composition, age gaps, class, ethnicity, parenting practices and parental intervention, and access to other economic and social resources. In addition, Edwards and Weller (2014) remind us that it is appropriate to use a spatial and temporal lens to capture the dynamics and shifts which illustrate the changes and continuities of sibship over time and space.

8 Conclusions

Sibling interactions involve a mixture of conflict, negotiation, and compromise (Gulløv et al. 2015; Punch 2008b), highlighting the dynamic ways in which age, status, and birth order are played out in everyday sibships. Until recently the status hierarchy of the birth order has been perceived as ascribed and fixed rather than socially constructed. This chapter has illustrated the importance of social context for shaping our understandings of the sibling order (Edwards et al. 2006). Both opportunities and constraints are associated with different locations in the birth order during childhood. In the Scottish sibling study, no birth order position was clearly considered to be more beneficial than others (Punch 2008a). The majority of siblings perceived that there were both pros and cons about their own position and that there were clear benefits and limitations to being the oldest and youngest sibling. For example, there were some definite advantages linked to being the youngest sibling: receiving the most attention, having the fewest responsibilities, being cared for by older siblings, and getting away with more with their parents. The positive features were counterbalanced by a similar range of disadvantages: being bossed about, having relatively less social and physical power, less independence, and feeling excluded at times. Being the oldest was generally recognized as a relatively more powerful birth order position, including broader knowledge and life experience, greater size and physical strength, more responsibility, and an enhanced status. These tended to be coupled with a range of disadvantages: more disciplining from parents, pressure to set a good example, having to care for younger siblings, and often being the first child in the family to undergo certain transitions.

The advantages and disadvantages linked to the middle position are relative to the fact that middle children can take on an older and younger role (Edwards et al. 2006). Interestingly most of the middle children in Punch’s study (Punch 2008a) did not perceive themselves as being the most hard done by, suffering from their sandwiched position. Instead they focused on the advantages of being both an older and a

younger sibling; having the “best of both worlds.” This challenges the adult psychological literature on birth order which claims that this position is the most difficult as such children are “stuck in the middle” (Berthoud 1996; Conley 2004). Furthermore, this chapter acknowledges that some traits of birth order positions can be perceived positively by some siblings and negatively by others and some features involve both advantages and disadvantages for the same sibling.

This chapter has demonstrated that issues of power, status, and birth order hierarchies are integral to children’s experiences of sibling relations. For example, it has been shown that younger siblings use particular tactics to compensate for their limited physical power and authority compared with their older siblings. Meanwhile, older siblings are aware that being at the top of the sibling hierarchy does not automatically allow them to wield authority over their younger sisters and brothers. The potential benefits of their position have to be worked out and negotiated in practice. Thus, older siblings also engage in strategic interaction involving bribes and bartering with their younger siblings (McIntosh and Punch 2009). Bacon argues that this “shows not only how sibling power relations cannot easily be mapped onto age hierarchies but also how siblings rely on each other for securing their status as the more powerful sibling” (Bacon 2012, p. 308).

As Punch (2008a, p. 48) points out, “the characteristics of the different sibling order positions are diverse and complex: they may be enabling or constraining or both, but they are not fixed. . . age and birth order hierarchies are flexible and dynamic, often subject to negotiation, compromise and resistance as well as acceptance and compliance.” The birth order is a social construction and should be considered as a social variable alongside age and gender. In the same way that “sibship is an ever-changing social phenomenon” which can be “questioned and challenged as well as enforced and strengthened” (Gulløv et al. 2015, pp. 516–517) so, too, is birth order. While birth order is important in shaping children’s sibling relations, the relative advantages and disadvantages of each position have to be managed in their everyday interactions with each other.

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Digital Technologies, Children's Learning, and the Affective Dimensions of Family Relationships in the Home

7

Natalia Kucirkova and Mona Sakr

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Abstract

This chapter considers how children's use of digital technologies at home shapes family relationships, notably those of parents and young children growing up in some Minority World families, typically characterized by an increasing access to and prevalence of digital technologies in their everyday lives. The chapter reviews literature on digital technologies in the context of families, with a particular focus on touchscreen technologies. The chapter uses a number of examples to illustrate the wider implications of technology use on family dynamics. It offers an exploration of how the physical design of touchscreens, and in particular the different touch points through which the device can be accessed simultaneously or sequentially by different individuals, can influence the affective flows between children and different individuals in families (parents, grandparents) as they interact together. The review of previous research into affective dimensions of technology use at home is theoretically guided by Goffman's (1972) consideration of participation frameworks and ecological huddles, as well as by the more recent insights of Goodwin (2000) as to how affect plays out through embodied interaction in the context of a family setting. Vygotsky's (1967, 1978) notion of sociocultural learning and the contextual nature of learning are used as a framework in the review of studies focused on child's learning and adult-child interaction with touchscreens. The chapter provides insights into the learning opportunities of touchscreens in family contexts in relation to two key affordances of touchscreens: touch manipulation and personalization. It considers the verbal as well as nonverbal modes of communication in examples of interaction occurring around touchscreens in the home. Recommendations for future research are provided along with the suggestion that children's learning and the affect flows, which emerge in interactions involving digital technologies, reflect the nature of the technologies' affordances situated in the wider sociotechnical context in which interactions are unfolding.

Keywords

Touchscreens · Affordances · Tablets · Affect · Affect flows · Family · Intergenerational relationships · Home

1 Introduction

Within less than a decade, young children's access to digital technologies has exponentially increased. This has implications for a number of areas in a child's life, including family dynamics and family relationships. National survey data show that tablets and iPads are the key device used by children aged 0–8 growing up in the UK, the USA, Europe, Canada, and Australia (e.g., Bergström and Höglund 2014 in Sweden; Book Trust, 2016 in the UK and Madden et al. 2013, in the USA). This chapter focuses on children growing up in these countries and will therefore foreground the use of tablets and iPads, acknowledging that these devices are part of the

wider technology landscape that includes smartphones, Leapsters, Kindles, digital cameras, digitized toys, and television. The chapter covers selected research evidence on tablets in the context of family relationships and provides an overview of theoretical frameworks that can help us to interpret this evidence. Two examples of interaction from the authors' own empirical research provide a snapshot of the currently complex research and practice landscape concerning touchscreens' use in the home.

The chapter builds on previous work concerned with family practices and children's use of technologies. In the UK, Plowman et al. (2010) studied children's use of technologies at home in a series of studies (e.g., Plowman et al. 2008, 2010). The researchers conducted a survey of 346 families in Scotland and followed the use of technologies in families of 3- and 4-year-olds in 24 case studies. They noted several tensions in parents' attitudes toward their children's use of technologies early in life but, overall, found a number of positive, shared, and interactive parent-child engagements mediated by the technology. On the other hand, Livingstone (2009) and Livingstone and Bober (2004)'s research shows that not all young children experience positive family practices which would support their effective and creative use of technologies at home. Indeed, although typically not reported in studies, many young children use technologies passively and unimaginatively. What is clear is that the usage of technologies at home has increased exponentially since early 2010s, and this has profound implications for children's passive as well as active use and family positive and less effective practices connected to technology. This chapter focuses on the growing importance of touchscreens in the dynamics of family life, use of which has been documented by a number of national surveys, anecdotal evidence, and detailed case studies conducted in children's homes (e.g., Ólafsson et al. 2013; Danby et al. 2013). However, given the relatively short existence of touchscreens on the market and in family life, rigorous research and longitudinal studies are, as yet, not available. This chapter reviews the currently available evidence regarding the use of touchscreens in families of young children aged 2–8 years. The chapter includes large survey-based studies providing a broader basis of understanding general patterns of use (e.g., Kucirkova and Littleton 2016), as well as small case studies, providing a granular look at the interaction patterns between young children and their caregivers (e.g., Sakr and Kucirkova 2016). Attention is paid to data from the USA and UK families, as reported in Anglo-American research journals, offering suggestions for how research can develop in the future. The purpose of the chapter is to assist students, researchers, and scholars interested in finding innovative and pertinent work in this area relating to the complex relationships between children, families, and new technologies.

Since early 2010s, family lives have been marked by an increased availability and affordability of touchscreens, prior to which technologies tended to be located in a static position. Tablets are different from PCs and televisions in a variety of ways, but most notably in their personalization possibilities, touch manipulation, and the mobility and flexibility they offer in the software they make available (through "apps"). Regulating children's time spent with these devices has become an important task for parents/caregivers who often find it difficult to optimize their children's

engagement with digital and non-digital resources (Book Trust 2015). There is growing evidence of intergenerational tension in relation to the use of tablets within families (Steiner-Adair and Barker 2013) and behavioral issues arising when children's and adults' perspectives on the frequency and duration of their use differ (Holloway et al. 2013). Another tension relates to the quality of children's apps, which, although advertised as "educational," are often of little educational value. Indeed, Vaala et al. (2015) reviewed 50 most popular paid and free apps in the education sections of iTunes, Google Play, and Amazon apps, rated them in terms of the quality of their learning content, and found that language- and literacy-focused apps are among the most popular for young children. These, however, typically target basic reading skills, such as phonological awareness and letter knowledge, but not higher-order reading skills which build the content knowledge and vocabulary required to understand complex topics.

1.1 Tablets and iPads: Key Features

Tablets are portable, lightweight touchscreen devices which can run a number of applications (so-called apps). Publicly available sales data show that between 2010 and 2016, the top 5 tablet makers have been Apple Inc (iPads), Samsung Electronics Co (Galaxy tablets), Amazon Inc (Kindle Fire), ASUSTeK Computer Inc. (Transformer line), and Barnes & Noble Inc. (Nook Tablet). According to national survey data, with children under the age of 8 years in the UK, tablet devices and smartphones are the most popular technology at home (Kucirkova and Littleton 2016). For simplicity, this chapter refers to tablets and iPads in this review with two collective terms "tablets" and "touchscreens."

Tablets have some key characteristics that are different from previous technologies: they are accessible through touch and they are lightweight and portable and can be adjusted to an individual's needs and preferences. In addition, downloadable apps actively involve the player in deciding the activities they wish to engage with through the tablet. We refer to these features as "touch manipulation" and "personalization" for simplicity, but also to keep this review comprehensively focused on the design features of tablets (touch) as well as their usability (personalization). We also highlight that when compared to previous children's media (see Kucirkova 2013), these two features are particularly distinctive and developed in the use of touchscreens.

1.2 Touch Manipulation

Touch is a central feature enabling children and their family members to effectively participate in a touchscreen-mediated activity. Tablets prioritize the use of touch for manipulation, enabling users to engage with the screen using their finger or a stylo pen. Functionality in games, digital books, and activities (e.g., taking pictures) is enabled through particular touch actions, such as tapping, swiping, and dragging. The possibility to manipulate devices via touch enhances children's emotional

engagement with digital books (Kucirkova et al. 2016) and can facilitate access and engagement among children with physical difficulties (e.g., children with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, or multiple sclerosis) who find it difficult to manipulate other mainstream technologies (Kucirkova et al. 2014b; Flewitt et al. 2014). Flewitt et al. (2014) showed how gesture-based interactions and sensory experiences of touch can enable young learners with moderate to complex physical and/or cognitive disability to engage in fun, independent, and inclusive classroom-based literacy activities. Crescenzi et al. (2014) examined children's touch repertoires in seven nursery-aged children in a London nursery. By comparing these children's finger paintings on paper and on the iPad (with three painting apps: Doodle Buddy app, Coloring Zoo, Fingerprint Magic), the researchers found the following dimensions of touch to be different between the tablet and paper conditions, tap, press, straight stroke, circular stroke, and scratch, as well as particular qualities of the touch, including direction, scale/size, speed of touch, duration, and pressure. These findings will be important for future research investigating the role of touch in parent-child interactions with touchscreens at home.

1.3 Personalization

Personalization is one way of encouraging the active interaction of both parent and child with the tablet. Personalization is often subsumed in the definition of interactivity, aka features which enable children's active participation in manipulating the device. While interactivity can simply involve tapping a hotspot to set in motion a story character, personalization provides a deeper level of interactivity. For instance, with digital books, parents or children can personalize their stories by inserting their own personal data into them (e.g., adding a picture, voice-over, or text). Indeed, the difference between basic e-books (available on desktop PCs and laptops) and digital interactive books available on iPad is that the latter is often personalizable and can thereby offer personalized reading experiences (Kucirkova 2013). Unlike simple e-books, digital books accessible on tablets allow seamless, fast, and easy personalization in textual, visual, and audio representation.

The ergonomic features of tablets – the prioritization of touch for manipulation, the lightweight and portable nature of the device, and the capacity for personalization – have all fed into the growth in their appeal to young children. This growing interest has been demonstrated through national and large-scale surveys of tablet use among children, reviewed next.

2 Children's Use of Touchscreens at Home: How Often and How Much

Ofcom, UK's independent regulator and competition authority for the communications industries, carries out annual surveys to map the national use of a range of media. In 2015, the results showed that the proportion of 3–4-year-old children who

use a tablet has risen to over half (53%) from 39% in 2014 and 75% for five to 15-year-olds (from 64% in 2014). The increased use of tablets by UK children is documented across all age groups, but the biggest rise has been among 5–7-year-olds. Ofcom (2015) has also noted an increased ownership of tablets by young children, reporting that 15% (compared to 11% in 2014) of 3–4-year-olds and 40% (compared to 34% in 2014) of 5–15-year-olds own their own tablet. Children use tablets for a variety of activities, including going online, playing games, watching TV, or reading digital books (Ofcom 2015).

This tendency is mirrored in the USA, Australia, and Canada. For example, in the USA, the Pew Research Center found that almost half (45%) of Americans own a tablet computer and that the ownership varies depending on education: 62% of college graduates have a tablet, compared with 35% of those with a high school diploma and 19% who have not completed high school. For younger children, Common Sense Media survey in 2013 found that tablet ownership among 0–8-year-olds is 5 times higher (8–40%) than it was in 2011.

In Canada, Media Technology Monitor (2014) reported that more than 42% of Anglophone Canadians own a tablet. An international survey by AVG Technologies, which included Canadian children, reported that 40% of Canadian 3–5-year-olds knew how to navigate a tablet or smartphone, thus indicating that young Canadian children are using touchscreens on a regular basis. In Australia, a national survey recorded similar trends: Roy Morgan Research's Young Australians Survey found that 53% of children aged 6–13 years own and use a tablet in 2013 (up from 33% in 2012).

Survey data can tell us about overall consumption, ownership, and accessibility patterns, as reported by children's parents and caregivers, but they cannot provide insights into how children are using tablets and how families are navigating and negotiating the use of tablets in the home. For that, we need to look at studies where researchers study closely why and how children engage with touchscreens in diverse families.

3 Children's Use of Touchscreens at Home: The Hows and Whys

One possible factor associated with tablet use at home is the availability of socio-emotional resources in the home through family relationships. Pempek and McDaniel (2015) analyzed data from an online survey of 358 US mothers of 12–48-month-old children in relation to children's tablet use at home and the mothers' self-reported well-being. They found that children's tablet use was more frequent in families where mothers reported poorer well-being. Mothers who did not feel well or happy were more likely to allow their children use touchscreens, a phenomenon often reduced to the catchphrase that tablets serve as "electronic babysitters." Of course, these findings raise questions about causality; it is unclear whether the use of tablets in the home is a response to negative emotional dynamics

and a lack of time and socio-emotional resources on the part of parents or if tablet use may in fact be contributing to decreases in self-reported well-being.

The perceived phenomenon of using technology to compensate for a lack of human interaction is not new and has been reported with previous media (e.g., in the popularity of television, see Keamey and Gore 1996). What is new in relation to tablets is the extent to which they offer children an interactive and personalized form of engagement that can potentially offer emotionally rich experiences. While with previous media children's learning was construed as more or less passive, with most tablet educational apps, children are expected to interact with the medium. For instance, they can become authors of the content and take ownership of the experience, or even have a conversation with a story character through the speech recognition software embedded in some apps (e.g., Talking Ben The Dog™). Turkle (2011, 2015) argues that through such new socio-emotional experiences with technology, we may "expect more from the technology and less from each other" (subtitle of the book). What is certain is that through more interactive engagement, children have access to immediate socio-emotional rewards from their technological devices. For example, through caring for digital pets, children can experience having a positive effect on another creature and the emotional rewards that are associated with this experience.

In the project Family Story Play, trialed by Raffle et al. (2010), researchers explored the new interaction possibilities of children and their grandparents around digital books via Skype. The project was designed to "improve communication across generations and over a distance" (p. 1583) and involved the use of a paper book, a sensor-enhanced frame, a puppet, and a video chat. The researchers found that such digital and non-digital scaffolds improved the intergenerational communication between the children and their grandparents and provided a new way of sharing digital books at distance. Building on this, the Kindoma initiative (<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/kindoma-video-calls-for-kids-with-interactivity#/>), which is currently in development, highlights the potential of story-sharing between family members who are far away from one another. Kindoma capitalizes on the importance of pointing during shared reading, for forging a connection between children and parents/carers sharing a book. Through video chat, a child and a parent (or grandparent or another child connected to the tablet from another tablet) talk to one another through Kindoma and can see in real time where each other is pointing and interact based on the direction of the pointing. Through the creation of this shared reference point, the technology helps to facilitate a secure environment with positive affect, despite the distance between those interacting.

However, although potentially supportive of affective engagement, whether digital interactivity benefits children's learning is a matter for debate. The educational value of interactive engagements around digital books has been closely studied and heavily discussed in research (e.g., Vaala et al. 2015). The interactive nature of the digital stories can disrupt the learning experience, meaning that children miss out on the opportunity to learn new concepts (e.g., such as new vocabulary) embedded in the story. Kirkorian et al. (in press) compared toddlers' learning with interactive and noninteractive videos on iPads and found the former is

more conducive to children's learning of new words. This is especially the case with interactive videos that display natural human behavior and are live streamed (see Roseberry et al. 2014).

While interactive videos might be more beneficial than static books, this is not the case with digital books shared by parents and children on touchscreens. In fact, here the effect is reversed. In a meta-analysis, Takacs et al. (2015) looked in detail at the specific kinds of interactive features available for enhanced digital books (such as those available for touchscreens) and simple e-books (those available on PCs) or paper-based books and found that less interactive books are associated with more learning through richer conversations between the parent and the child. When comparing these three different media, multimedia features (which include animated pictures, music, and sound effects) were found to be beneficial for children's story comprehension and expressive vocabulary, while interactive features (such as hotspots, games, and dictionaries) were not.

As well as engaging with fictional content and games through tablets, children use tablets to communicate with their friends. They access social gaming sites (e.g., Club Penguin) as well as social networking sites (including Twitter and Facebook), although these are more relevant for teens and older children (Ólafsson et al. 2013). Tablets also enable children to engage with family members who are distant, through apps such as Skype and Facetime, that connect people who are geographically separate (e.g., Kelly 2013).

In addition to documenting how children use tablets in different ways at home, research studies have indicated that tablets are shifting the roles that young children assume in relation to their learning and creativity. For example, there has been a suggestion arising from previous research that tablet use at home enables children to be codesigners and co-constructors of knowledge in ways that they do not typically experience when interacting with other resources and technologies in the home. Wong (2015) and Laidlaw et al. (2015) looked at the provision of technology, including tablets in six Canadian and four Australian families of 3–5-year-olds. The families lived in rural as well as urban areas and the researchers used several ethnographic techniques (participant observations, informal interviews, field notes, and conversations with the children) to ascertain how children's everyday activities with technologies at home were shaping their role in the family. The findings indicated that the iPad allowed children to assume production and design responsibilities from a very young age. The researchers used the example of a young boy, Andrew, who used YouTube instructions to put together Lego in a particular way, but highlighted how his parents encouraged and supported such learning.

As mentioned in relation to the Family Story Play project, the use of touchscreens has implications for the quality and nature of family relationships. Thus far, studies have been mostly concerned with parent–child relationships and specific activities, such as shared reading of digital books (e.g., Krcmar and Cingel 2014), with the focus on child's outcomes. Research on intergenerational relationships is missing (but see Heydon forthcoming) (In Rachel Heydon's most recent research project concerned with multimodal literacies in intergenerational curricula, Heydon indicated that the use of touchscreens can support a diverse range of multimodal literacy

learning opportunities, such as playing songs on YouTube, which can bring together elders and children. It would be interesting to see how this could be related to family life and children–grandparent relationships.).

The next section considers the following questions: How does the use of touchscreens feed into family relationships and how can we theorize the varied engagements and learning benefits children have with touchscreens? Vygotskian perspectives on socially mediated learning and Goodwin's theories of affect and embodied interaction can help us explain and explore the issues of family relationships in relation to children's use of touchscreens (and technology more generally).

4 Children's Use of Touchscreens at Home: Theoretical Insights

4.1 Vygotsky's Approach to Learning: Valuing the Social, Cultural, and Physical Context

Vygotsky's theory is widely considered "the most comprehensive approach to the mechanisms of child development" (Karpov 2003, p. 138). In his writings, Vygotsky explained several aspects of children's learning and emphasized the importance of social relations that surround and enable the learning experience, as well as physical and cultural tools that are used as part of the learning process. A Vygotskian perspective offers a robust theoretical framework for recognizing the contextual nature of learning and the importance of both real human interactions and physical objects in scaffolding children's understanding. In relating this to children's learning through interactions with tablets in the context of the families, it is clear that we need to take into account not only what children access on the device and how this features in their learning but also how these interactions are part of a wider network of social influences and relationships.

Vygotsky argued that children do not learn in isolation. Rather, there is a web of interconnections between the child, objects and adults, who mediate children's learning. The social aspect of learning has been highlighted by a wealth of research, with a general consensus that "social relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships" (Berk and Winsler 1995, p. 12). In other words, it is through the interplay of environments and contextual factors that children learn. To illustrate how young children learn with and from others, Vygotsky introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is the space where children's capacities can be developed, but are not yet functioning fully independently. Through interactions with others, children can carry out the capacities that occupy this space, and over time, they can learn to do things independently.

As well as highlighting the importance of social interactions, Vygotsky (1987) suggested the importance of cultural objects and ideas in children's learning. He conceptualized two types of learning tools: symbolic and concrete learning tools. Symbolic tools are abstract aspects of our thinking and knowledge (e.g., literature

and art), while concrete learning tools constitute systems and objects that we use for our thinking and knowledge creation (e.g., clocks; Vygotsky, 1967). Both kinds of tools are crucial in assisting the learning process as they help learners negotiate and process mental concepts (Hausfather 1996). This principle has later become axiomatic to distributed cognition theories (see, e.g., Salomon 1992; Dillenbourg 1996) in which knowledge is stored and distributed through a network of objects. From this perspective, our learning and mathematical thought, for example, cannot be disentangled from the tools that one uses to complete mathematical processes (e.g., a calculator or abacus).

Children's interactions with tablets in the context of social relationships in the home can be conceptualized as offering a ZPD to children's learning. When children cocreate digital books on the iPad, for example, the iPads help them achieve more than they could do independently. Their learning is enabled both through the more knowledgeable others in the home and through what the technology affords. At the same time, if children are merely passively consuming predesigned digital content without the support of others who would provide appropriate prompts and guiding questions, then children are unlikely to make learning progress within their ZPD.

Kucirkova et al. (2014a) examined the talk between two mother-daughter dyads as they shared a self-created story with an iPad app called *Our Story*. The researchers used a Vygotskian lens to understand the learning processes facilitated by the iPad app. It was found that in this context, the iPad app became the tool which not only mediated but also transparently captured the learning process. As a result of the app's ability for recording and immediately sharing personalized multimedia content, the touchscreen facilitated not only the creation of a final product but also captured its development in a dynamic way. Although the design of the app facilitated the learning process, the shared dialogue between the mother and the daughter was another essential facet of the learning experience. Without the child-adult interaction, the learning would not have unfolded in the same way or to the same extent. This research offers an example of how a Vygotskian approach can be used to focus our attention on both the technological tools that are available to children and the social interactions that scaffold and support the use of these tools. The research and Vygotsky's approach show that there is not a one-way causal path between the use of touchscreens and children's learning. The next section acknowledges the complex interplay of child, adult mediator, and the technology variables, which together can disrupt or enhance child outcomes.

4.2 Goodwin's Theory: Embodied Interaction and Participation Frameworks

A Vygotskian approach to learning suggests that we need to place value and focus attention on the social, cultural, and physical interactions that comprise learning processes. In observing learning, this highlights that we need an approach that enables us to analyze how the networked nature of children's learning plays out in specific interactions. Research in the field of conversation analysis enables us to

consider social, cultural, and physical mediation through visible facets of activity, which are considered in this chapter. This is particularly the case when this type of analysis adopts a focus on the multimodality of embodied interaction, that is, the wide range of communicative modes that are drawn into interactions including speech, bodily orientation and posture, movement, gesture, and facial expression. The work of Marjorie Harness Goodwin and Charles Goodwin has been influential in facilitating the links between more abstract theories of how learning occurs and how interactions unfold through the interplay of bodies and affect.

Goodwin (2000) approaches affect as something that “plays out” through embodied interaction. In a study of everyday family interactions, Goodwin argued that the trajectories of an interaction can lead to “affective alignments” (p. 516) which are moments of visible togetherness between family members. These affective alignments become visible through how participants organize themselves in relation to each other and the surrounding space. For example, participants who feel affectively aligned to one another are likely to move closer to each other or to use touch gently to affirm each other's presence. On the other hand, affective “disalignment” can occur in moments of family tension and these become familiar through a lack of eye contact, or the use of gesture or touch, which appears to be attempting to control others' involvement in the space. For example, when a parent wants a child to carry out a chore around the house, they may adopt a light and playful verbal tone, but their movement through the space may simultaneously suggest constraint and that the child has little no choice about whether or not to comply.

Stemming from the same theoretical orientation, Goodwin (2007) focused on a father and a daughter during an episode of doing homework together and demonstrated how affective alignments and disalignments were made visible through the organization of the father's and daughter's body in the space and in relation to the physical presence of the homework. Goodwin describes this organization of bodies and space as a “participation framework,” building on Goffman's (1972) earlier notion of the “ecological huddle.” Both ideas refer to how attention can be shared between participants in an interaction and be physically located on a physical entity that relates to the learning that is going on. In other research studies, Goodwin argues that situations of successful learning and apprenticeship typically occur when particular physical tools become the focus of shared attention with eye contact moves between the participants and the object of interest, giving rise to a triangular network of interactions: “the participants create a public, visible locus of the organisation of shared attention and action” (Goodwin 2007, p. 58). On the other hand, moments of affective disalignment become visible through the loss of this three-point network, either through the participants disengaging their gaze from the object of importance or failing to interrupt this gaze with the object with moments of eye contact with the other participant.

The research of Goodwin (2000, 2007) is helpful for making sense of observations of children using tablets in the context of family relationships in the home. It suggests that we can understand these learning processes and interactions by observing and analyzing how the bodies of the child and of other family members are organized in the space of the home and in relation to the technological device. To

identify moments of heightened learning potential, we would look for physical indicators (particularly gaze, gesture, and body orientation) of interconnectedness between the two participants and the device. To identify moments when learning or positive affect is in jeopardy, we could look for signs of physical disconnection between the participants or between one of the participants and the device.

In the next section, two vignettes from the authors' own research illustrate how a Vygotskian lens and a focus on participation frameworks can enable insights about children's interactions with tablets in the context of family relationships. The vignettes outline moments from an episode of interaction between a 3-year-old child and her father at home, as they engaged in a shared activity of taking photographs around the child's grandparents' house using an iPad. Other data from this study were published in Kucirkova and Sakr, 2015 and Sakr and Kucirkova, 2016.

The observations are of the second author's 3-year-old niece and her brother (the father). When the study was conducted, the child did not have any siblings. She attended an inner-city London nursery each weekday between 8 am and 5.30 pm. At the end of the nursery day, the girl was collected by her father who would take her home or to her grandparents' house (where this study was carried out). At the time of the study, the girl was the only child of the family. Her father was 35 years-old at the time of the study and worked as a journalist. The father and his daughter frequently engaged in shared activities when at home, but this has never included taking photographs together. While the father saw himself as a competent photographer, who often took photographs on his phone and camera in relaxed social situations, the child had not taken photographs of her own before and was not very familiar with iPads.

The observations were made using a handheld video camera across two episodes of interaction. Both episodes occurred on a different weekday evening, after the child had finished at nursery and the father had finished work. The video data were transcribed with a focus on various modes of communication in addition to speech. This made it possible to see affective alignments and misalignments according to the suggestions of Goodwin (2000, 2007) about how these visibly manifest. Annotations on the transcript recorded comments as to when these were occurring and what they in turn suggested about the key features of the device and how the social interaction between the child and the father was mediating the learning that occurred during the activity.

5 Vignette One

The father is holding the iPad and the child is leaning in toward the iPad. The father asks, "shall we tap it?", and the child replies in a whisper, "yeh." The father presses a button on the iPad that flips the camera so that it is looking at them, ready to take a selfie. He says: "that's me and you, shall we take a photo?" The child responds again in a whisper, "yeh." The father says "press the button then" and the child presses the button, taking the photograph.

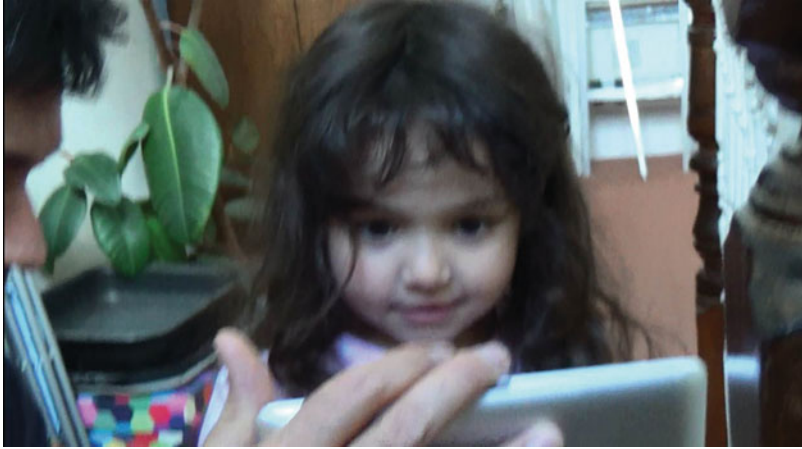


Fig. 1 Child exploring the iPad camera

5.1 Evidence of Affective Alignment/Disalignment (Links to Goodwin's Theory)

The vignette above describes a moment of affective alignment, in which there is a successful participation framework constructed between the child, the father, and the tablet. The child and the father have a clear shared focus of attention on the iPad and are both physically engaged in interacting with the iPad – the father through holding the device, and the child through touch manipulation. As well as a connection with the iPad, the child and the father sustain a clear connection with each other in this moment. This is demonstrated through the verbal dialogue but also through the father's gaze, which moves back and forth between the iPad and the child (Fig. 1).

5.2 Key Features of the Device

The vignette suggests the importance of touch as a way for children and their family members to establish a locus of shared attention since in this situation, both the child and the father interacted with the iPad through touch. The father invited the child's touch as a way of engaging her actively in the creative task of taking a photograph. Another feature of the device which comes to the fore in this moment is the personalization potentials of tablets and the apps that they make them available. In the case of photography, taking selfies is an instant way to forge a connection with the device and also to reinforce the social relationships that are occurring around the device. In this case, by taking a photograph of themselves together, the child and the father were strengthening their bond with one another and this was enabled through the device. Although portability is considered in previous research to be a key feature of children's interactions with tablets

(see, e.g., Hutchison et al. 2012; Kucirkova 2014), it is interesting to note that in this situation the father has decided to hold the iPad while encouraging the child to engage through touch. This is partly indicative of the apprenticeship-style interaction that is being engaged in, with the father clearly in control of the device and presenting himself as the “more knowledgeable other” in relation to iPad photography. However, other interactions over the course of the observed episode also suggest that this may have been a result of the parent’s fear that the child would drop and break the iPad if she was allowed to hold it by herself. This suggests that although we may think about an iPad as portable from an adult’s perspective, children may not have the same experience.

5.3 Features of the Social Interaction (Links to Vygotsky’s Theory)

As noted above, the father positions himself in this interaction as “the more knowledgeable other.” This is clear from the way that he offers prompts and guiding questions as part of the interaction and invites the child’s interaction with the device. As the observed episode unfolds, the father increasingly allows the child to interact independently with the tablet. As such, the parent extends the learning within the child’s zone of proximal development: The father and his daughter begin the episode by simultaneously manipulating and engaging with the device, but as they progress on their photographic journey of the house, the child is given more autonomy in physically handling and interacting with the device.

6 Vignette Two

The child is holding the tablet and pointing the camera at a bag in the hallway. The father stands back and asks “what is it?” The child responds (“Mona’s bag”) but is already walking away and repositioning the camera ready to take another photograph, this time of the telephone on the hallway floor. The father asks the question “what’s down there?” and then follows this quickly with a directive statement: “wait to take it.” The father walks toward the front room and holds the door handle. He says to the child “shall we go in the front room?” but she does not respond. Instead, the child repositions the camera, still focusing on the telephone on the hallway floor and takes several more photographs of this object. The father laughs while watching his daughter and repeats his prompt: “shall we go in the front room and see what we can see?” He begins to open the door to the front room. His gaze continues to rest on the child, while she is looking only at the iPad screen and continuing to take photographs of the objects in her immediate vicinity (Fig. 2).

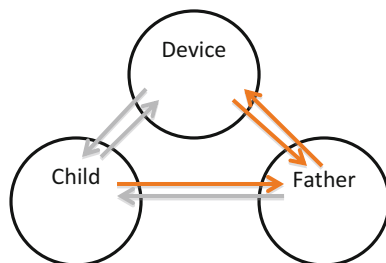


Fig. 2 Father and child taking pictures around the house

6.1 Evidence of Affective Alignment/Disalignment (Links to Goodwin's Theory)

The vignette above describes a moment of affective disalignment (Goodwin 2000), in which the participation framework between the child, the father, and the tablet breaks down. This relates back to Goffman's (1972) consideration of participation frameworks, which are created as "ecological huddles" in which attention is shared between participants and meaning is made together. The ecological huddle is an observable phenomenon in which bodies come together and construct a shared physical reference point. In this vignette, the ecological huddle is disrupted. The child and the father begin their journey through the house with a shared attention (as shown in the previous vignette), but as the child grows in confidence and independence in her interactions with the tablet, the joint focus is lost. This can be seen through the way that the father's prompts and questions are almost completely ignored by the child. The father is indicating through his body movement a desire to move in a particular direction as part of the photographic exploration, with the child's body orientation and positioning of the tablet are in a different direction and follow a distinct pace. The father's gaze rests solidly on the child, while the child's gaze rests entirely on the device. As a result, there is a rupture in the three-way interconnectedness described by Goodwin (2007) as a successful participation framework (see Fig. 3). While the connection between the child and the device is effective (shown through gray arrows), the connection between the father and the device is no longer established (shown through red arrows). While

Fig. 3 The study participation network



the father is interested in the child's activity, the interest is not shared by the child who is engaged in independent exploration.

6.2 Key Features of the Device

As with the first vignette, this moment suggests the importance of touch in enabling family members to develop a focus for shared attention and establish an effective participation framework. Without the father's simultaneous touch, he is no longer physically involved in the activity of taking photographs and this creates a situation in which the child pursues the task independently without engaging with her father. The child and the father appear to have different ideas about what constitutes an interesting photograph in this context. While the father is keen to move forward in the photographic exploration, the child remains interested in the objects in the hallway and in the visual effects that she can create through carefully repositioning herself in relation to these objects. The dissonance between the father and the child in this respect relates to the personalization feature of tablets, which enables the primary user (in this case, the child) to engage with content that she can directly change and play with. The possibility to create contents of her choice is of particular interest to the child and might be of less interest to others surrounding or involved in the interaction.

6.3 Features of the Social Interaction (Links to Vygotsky's Theory)

By this point of the observed episode, the father is no longer constructed as "the more knowledgeable other." He supported the child at the beginning of the episode with her initial experiences of taking photographs and has then stood back to enable her to try out this experience for herself. While he scaffolds the interaction by offering prompts and questions designed to help her to take "better" photographs (e.g., "wait to take it," "stand still before you take it," "don't go too close"), these are largely ignored by the child, who pursues her own interests and ideas. On the one hand, we could construct this as an example of the child learning through independent practice; on the other hand, we could suggest that the child is no longer in the ZPD as a result of the rupture in a connection between herself and the more knowledgeable other of her father.

7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ways in which children's use of digital technologies can shape family relationships and feed into unfolding interactions in the home, with a particular focus on touchscreens and their use in Minority World families in the UK and USA. Examples from larger quantitative studies as well as vignettes from the authors' own work were used to explore how these technologies can play a role in the affective dynamics in the family, as well as children's learning and cognitive growth. Goodwin's (2000) and Vygotsky's (1967, 1978) seminal theories shaped the interpretation of studies reviewed in the chapter and framed our analysis of interactions in relation to the key affordances of touchscreens (touch manipulation and personalization). The review is constrained by the type of technology reviewed (tablets and iPads), children's age (0–8 years), and the fact that the children participating in the studies grew up in the Minority World. It is therefore not an exhaustive review but illustrates the range of family issues related to children's use of digital technologies. This last section provides recommendations for future research and practice in this area.

7.1 Recommendations for Future Research

The chapter concurs with the view that “childhood is a hybrid of both culture and nature. It demands multi- and interdisciplinary analysis and the creation of a theoretical language that can merge these different concerns” (James and Prout 2015, p. xiii). The content of this chapter creates some of the “theoretical language” necessary for understanding the impact touchscreens can have on family dynamics. For the authors' own research, a theoretical “amalgam” of Goodwin and Vygotsky enabled the authors to draw conclusions from a variety of research studies and build conclusions concerning the diverse ways in which touchscreens impact on a child's experience and interactions in the family.

It is recommended that future research pursues a theoretically grounded work with insights from sociocultural and individual approaches to understand the effects of touchscreens and technologies more widely in children's lives. While this chapter focuses on some classic theorists, there are several contemporary writers who could be more widely used to theorize children's use of touchscreens at home. For instance, Vanderbeck (2008) reminds us of the different interpretations of children's emotions within research and theory and similarly, contemporary developmental theories (e.g., Overton and Lerner 2014) show the dynamic relationship between a child's personal characteristics and the environment in which they grow up. Taken together, they highlight the fact that different theories put forward particular forms of knowledge, and these, in turn, frame our interpretation of research findings in a given area. Theoretical richness, mixed methodologies, and interdisciplinary research are important for all areas of research, but for a new area of research, such as the use of touchscreens with young children, they are essential.

7.2 Recommendations for Practice

A child's holistic development (i.e., their affective, as well as social, aesthetic and cognitive development) is an important area of study and is crucial for practice and policy-relevant work concerning touchscreens and young children. This chapter considers research from a range of disciplinary perspectives (including sociology, anthropology, ethnomethodology, the arts, psychology, and education) and the insights they have to offer in understanding children's holistic development. Awareness of research from a diverse range of disciplines can facilitate practitioners' and parents' decision-making around the use of touchscreens with their children in the different contexts they work in.

The use of technologies with children, particularly young children under the age of two, has historically been framed as a polarized discourse, with, on the one hand, some organizations (e.g., American Academy of Pediatrics) recommending an outright ban on passive screen time for infants and, on the other hand, other organizations (e.g., Fred Roger's Centre) encouraging parents' joint viewing and co-use of technologies with their children regardless of age. American Academy of Pediatrics draws on evidence from research on TV, which shows developmental and health-related harm from excessive and passive TV watching by infants and toddlers. This is not disputed by other early childhood organizations and advocates. However, their approach and recommendations for parents are more in line with the modern family life and unlike AAP's recommendations, are not based on a precautionary principle. What both approaches agree on is that natural play and interaction with real humans are essential for children's holistic development and should not be replaced by technology-mediated play. The goal of this chapter was not to resolve or support one or the other side of the debate. Rather, the aim was to exemplify the interplay of factors (such as touch manipulation and personalization) that feed into touchscreens' use in families and that influence the complex parenting decisions caregivers and parents need to make in the twenty-first century.

To conclude, it is important to emphasize that for children growing up in the twenty-first century in the Minority World, tablets are not only a common feature of everyday childhoods but also an opportunity to experience learning, art, and entertainment with their friends and families. It is in the context of these dynamics and their relationship to the child that scholars and practitioners need to build both the knowledge and practice base concerning their optimal use.

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Abstract

This chapter considers the debates around childhood obesity and focuses on UK public health campaigns, such as Change4Life, aimed at children and their parents. It aims to broaden the childhood obesity debate commonly discussed in the UK public health literature by using childhood studies to critique everyday assumptions that seem to be made about children in public health policy. The chapter considers views and perspectives of children, thereby challenging assumptions that children are “passive vessels” to be filled, suggesting instead that children play an active part in everyday family feeding practices. The family as a context for the negotiation of everyday food practices is explored and the dichotomous relationship of parent and child considered. Reflections are also offered on the fluidity and complexity of family structures and the importance that food plays within the context of everyday family life and how food provisioning

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impacts on intergenerational relationships within the family. The chapter finishes by exploring perceptions of “proper” or “real” food and its perceived importance for children. While the health literature assumes that children are simply recipients of parental feeding, this chapter highlights research that shows that children also construct their own understandings about the healthiness of food and that they are active participants in negotiating family food practices. Through exploring studies situated within contemporary childhood and families research, the chapter affords a much more nuanced picture of everyday family food practices and children’s roles in those practices than is often presented in childhood obesity discourses.

Keywords

Children · Parents · Family practices · Food · Eating · Health · Obesity

1 Introduction

Family food practices have come under intense scrutiny in the context of popular debate and policy concern with high levels of childhood obesity in the majority and, increasingly, the minority world (World Health Organisation (WHO) 2012). Globally, over 170 million children (aged less than 18 years) are now estimated to be overweight (WHO 2012, p. 13). Concern focuses on both the serious consequences for children’s present-time physical and emotional health as well as forecasted increased morbidity (including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancers, and osteoarthritis) and mortality as overweight and obese children become overweight and obese adults (Chinthapalli 2012). The WHO proclaims that:

Due to the rapid increases in obesity prevalence and the serious public health consequences, obesity is commonly considered one of the most serious public health challenges of the early 21st century. (WHO 2012, p. 13)

In the UK, the rapid expansion of food banks, testament to a growing number of families facing food insecurity and poverty, also places everyday food practices firmly in the spotlight. Taking a practice-based approach (Warde 2005) focuses attention on the routine and often mundane or taken-for-granted nature of food in everyday life (Jackson 2009; Punch et al. 2011). It hones in on the ways in which “social structures like ‘the family’ are reproduced through the endless repetition of routine activities” like cooking and eating (Jackson 2009, p. 5) and explores how everyday rituals around food overlap and interrelate with other aspects of social life including caring and health-relevant practices. Within this, then, food is afforded not only nutritional but also symbolic value as it is recognized as “something that can stand for thoughts, feelings and relationships” (Punch et al. 2011, p. 1). The ways in which both parents and children understand, influence, contribute to, and participate in family food negotiations, in the ebb and flow of everyday life, take center stage.

This chapter begins by discussing how parents and children have been positioned in childhood obesity discourses within both the research and policy context.

Though the chapter focuses on the UK context, parallels may be drawn with the public health landscape elsewhere and, in particular, with other contemporary initiatives such as the “Go for 2 and 5” campaign in Australia and the “Let’s Move” campaign in the USA among others. Following this, contrasting understandings, drawing on the social studies of childhood, are outlined and their relevance to children’s health-relevant practices, including food, are explored. Children are then considered in the context of families with an emphasis on the everyday interactions that make up family life. The next section explores the ways in which these insights from the social science literature have helped to produce a more nuanced picture of the complexity of everyday family food practices than that which is seen in contemporary childhood obesity discourses. Both parents’ and children’s subject positions in everyday family food practices are considered and competing explanations for different levels of participation by children within family food negotiations discussed. The importance of food as a means of building and maintaining important relationships is also explored through recent studies focusing on children within families and children living in residential homes. In this way, food becomes an important resource for demonstrating love and care. However, the way in which food can become both a source of tension and a means of asserting control is also highlighted. This is considered particularly in relation to tensions between parents and grandparents regarding the suitability of food provided to children. Notions of “proper” food are discussed and the chapter demonstrates that it is not just parents who are aware of and engage with these notions but children too. Indeed, the review highlights children’s awareness of the perceived healthiness of different foods as well as their sophisticated understanding of how financial resources may relate to opportunities to eat healthily. In this way, the chapter does not provide an exhaustive review of literature concerning families and food but rather reviews a selected body of literature, informed by insights from the social science, which helps to unpick and create a more nuanced understanding of everyday family food practices.

2 Family Food in the Spotlight

Despite evidence that both adults and children fail to meet current nutritional guidelines, it is children’s diets which have come under the closest scrutiny and indeed received the most criticism. Curtis et al. (2011) neatly summarize the situation: “Criticisms of British children’s eating practices are so widespread as to be commonplace, almost every-day occurrences” (p. 65). Further, they highlight the inconsistency and incongruity of contemporary childhood obesity discourses which position children as actively rejecting “sensible” eating choices while simultaneously portraying them as passive “victims of irresponsible parenting practices” (2011, p. 65).

In support of the idea that children actively reject sensible eating choices, numerous studies have drawn attention to children’s preference for unhealthy, socially acceptable food (Warren et al. 2008). Children’s mischievous strategies for getting their own way, including pestering (Martens et al. 2004) are all emphasized in the obesity literature.

The task of providing healthy food and encouraging children to eat healthily is thus portrayed as a significant challenge for parents particularly in the context of contemporary debates surrounding the notion of “good” parenting. Stewart et al. (2006) suggest that, on the one hand, good parenting is increasingly associated with offering “greater freedom, autonomy and choice for children” (p. 334). In relation to family food practices, this would equate to increasing choice and ensuring that mealtimes are enjoyable as well as functional. However, research shows that children who are offered extensive food choices are less likely to adhere to recommended nutritional intakes (DIUS 2005), which goes against this idea. On the other hand, parental strategies such as offering food-based rewards for carrying out certain activities or chores (like tidying a bedroom) or for eating certain foods (like cake for cabbage) have also been shown to have negative consequences. Such strategies may actually increase children’s preference for the food used as a reward while simultaneously decreasing their preference for the other food (Hursti 1999). In this way, achieving the right balance of control and choice in the family food environment is portrayed as highly problematic.

Parents’ personal food biographies and behaviors and their social backgrounds are also implicated in the childhood obesity debate. Curtis et al. (2011a) highlight that parental behavior has consistently been identified as having the greatest influence on children’s eating practices. However, Curtis et al. (2011a) also emphasize that since it is women who generally take on primary responsibility for family food provision (James et al. 2009), it is women who are viewed as having the most significant influence on the development of children’s eating habits and the creation of family food environments (Hood et al. 2000).

Parents, particularly mothers, are perceived as important role models for their children’s developing preferences, practices, and weight status (Hood et al. 2000). Indeed, research demonstrates that an increase in the availability of fruit and vegetables in the home only translates to children eating more fruit and vegetables when parents also eat these foods in the home environment (van der Horst et al. 2007). Parents, therefore, are portrayed as key players in terms of provision, regulation, and modeling and this is clearly reflected in the UK’s £75 million Change4Life campaign, launched in January 2009. Honing in on the Change4Life campaign offers a pertinent case study for reflecting upon how family food practices figure in the contemporary obesity discourses.

The Change4Life campaign’s overarching aim is to “reduce the percentage of obese children to 2000 levels by 2020” (Department of Health 2009, p. 5), with its progress evaluated through the National Child Measurement Programme, delivered through schools. The programme’s three key objectives are to encourage target groups to:

1. Be aware of the risk of accumulating dangerous levels of fat in their bodies and understand the health risks associated with this condition.
2. Reduce overall calorie intake and develop healthier eating habits. In particular by:
 - Cutting down on foods and drinks high in added sugar
 - Cutting down on foods high in fat, particularly saturated fat

- Reducing frequency of snacking in favor of regular balanced meals
 - Eating more fruit and vegetables (increase 5-a-day habit)
3. Increase exercise by engaging in regular physical activity, with particular emphasis “on parent/child activities and by avoiding prolonged periods of inactivity or sedentary behaviour” (DH 2008a, p. 3).

The expressed focus on “long-term prevention” and working against the “conveyor belt” of excess weight in childhood leading to adult overweight or obesity is provided as justification for directing their efforts toward families (DH 2008a). The central message of the campaign is “eat well, move more and live longer.” The marketing activities employed aim to “drive, coax, encourage and support” people to do this (DH 2009, p. 3) by inspiring “a societal movement through which government, the NHS, local authorities, businesses, charities, schools, families and community leaders” can all help to improve children’s diets and physical activity levels (Department of health and Department for Children, School and families 2010, p. 7).

Curtis et al.’s (2011a) critique of the simultaneous framing of children as both active agents and passive vessels in current obesity discourses is certainly evident in the Change4life literature. Although the programme’s declared focus is on families, parents are deemed responsible for “instigating healthier behaviours amongst their children that will serve them well as they grow up” (DH 2008a). Parents are thus the real focus, a point made explicit in this statement: “we are particularly targeting parents with younger children (0–11) and those who are pregnant or attempting to become pregnant” (DH 2008a). Children are portrayed as passively copying those around them and soaking up health information like sponges. There is no reference to children’s active interpretation of people’s behaviors or indeed how children may take decisions, which are different from those around them. The phrase “Here are a couple of tips for getting some [fruit and vegetables] into them” (DH 2009, p. 4), for example, has connotations of feeding a baby or coercing a toddler. In this framing, children are impassive objects to be fed not active beings that can opt for or even enjoy eating fruit and vegetables.

In the few instances where children’s active participation in family food practices is highlighted, this is largely limited to negative health behaviors. In the same leaflet, for example, the warning “Don’t let them skip breakfast” implies that, left to their own devices, children would take the opportunity to miss a meal and subvert parental control. This is perhaps also motivated by a desire to divert blame away from parents and to avoid disengaging (or disgruntling) those parents who are seen to be reluctant to engage with public health messages and professional advice. In this instance, children’s agency is emphasized and children are portrayed as actively shaping (or rather actively *trying* to shape) their own diet albeit in an undesirable way.

A more nuanced approach, however, is evident in the campaign’s recognition that parents “have to work *with* their kids, not *against* them” in the Principles and Guidelines for the Government and National Health Service (NHS) (DH 2008a, emphasis added). The importance attached to working with children is also reflected in the aim to make all campaign typography, logos, and language “child friendly” and an alphabet of active cartoon characters is used for the logo, with bright colors

and “snappy” and “memorable” language. For example, “children eating to their appetite, via appropriate control of serving size” is rephrased as “me size meals” (DH 2008a). Other promotional material such as the “Time for Change” poster seems designed to appeal to both children and parents. Catchy phrases such as “Give peas a chance!” and “It’s just mind over batter!” with amusing cartoons could stimulate children’s interest but the associations with “Give peace a chance” and “It’s just mind over matter” may be more for the benefit of parents (DH 2008b).

The Change4Life literature also identifies “at-risk” families, “clusters of families who are most at risk of becoming overweight” (DH, 2008a, p. 5), predominantly those families living on a low income (DH and DCSF 2010, p. 13). So these families, identified in preliminary research for the campaign, are “particularly those with low socio-economic status, (for whom) concerns about a poor diet and low activity levels were not a high priority” (DH 2008c, p. 12). In sharp contrast, the only healthy cluster identified is described as “affluent, older parents” (DH and DCSF 2008, p. 42) who take food very seriously. They are interested in organic, environmentally friendly and Fairtrade products” (DH 2009, p. 49). Colls and Evans (2010) emphasize the classed overtones in this description but also highlight the Department of health (DH’s) articulated awareness that “health is tied to the notion of middle class lifestyles” (DH and DCSF 2008, p. 12). Thus family food practices are portrayed as being inextricably linked to socioeconomic position or social class.

Fairbrother et al. (2012) highlight that there is a wealth of research demonstrating that “people in lower socioeconomic groups have less healthy diets in terms of fruit, vegetable and fat intake” (p. 528). Despite evidence that structural factors like cost, accessibility, and availability of foods are key to this inequality, however, public health policy has tended to depict eating healthily as a lifestyle choice and has focused on improving knowledge and awareness of the benefits of eating healthily (Attree 2006). The recent exponential rise in the number of food banks in the UK (Lambie-Mumford et al. 2014) also attests to the reality of food insecurity and food poverty for many households. Lambie-Mumford et al. (2014) argue that food bank usage represents just the tip of the iceberg in relation to food insecurity as they highlight that turning to food aid is a “strategy of last resort” when families have exhausted all other avenues like “cutting back and changing eating and shopping habits, juggling budgets, turning to family and friends” (p. 7). While a number of studies have explored parents’ experiences of trying to juggle food budgets to make ends meet, until recently, children’s perspectives on the relationship between family finances and family food practices have been neglected. This contrasts with a growing body of research which emphasizes children’s active role in making sense of and participating in their everyday lives (Corsaro 2003).

3 Positioning Children

Adults are recognized as having greater power than children (Matthews 2007). Children are subject to separate laws and a separate United Nations convention of rights, they lack certain civil and political rights, they are considered dependents

within the family, and their needs rather than their rights are emphasized in social policy. As such, children have traditionally been viewed as objects or “sociological projects” (Christensen 2004; Mayall 1998) or portrayed as empty vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge from and by adults. It was hence seen as an adult responsibility to socialize children and to teach them to be culturally aware (Parsons 1956). It is this assumed unawareness of children that placed children in a secondary and disadvantaged category where they were seen as lacking in the necessary rationality to make sense of the world (Piaget 1955).

The Social Studies of Childhood in contrast considers children as actively constructing their own lives. Recognition of children as social actors requires and validates researching children in their own right and a growing body of literature “explores the sense that children make of their worlds” and “provides evidence that children actively construct them” (Matthews 2007 p. 324). Research emphasizing children’s position as social actors provides evidence for children participating in and creating their own peer cultures (Corsaro 2003) but also how they participate in social life more broadly (Buckingham 2000). These studies show that children are not merely passive recipients of socialization but active and reflective. In relation to health research, however, adult or “adultist” perspectives have dominated research agendas with three main consequences (Christensen 2004). First, there has been an emphasis on the role of adults to the exclusion of other multiple factors which may be important in shaping child health. Second, renewed interest in the lifecourse perspective has led to an epidemiological concern with child health solely as a predictor of population health. Third, there has been a focus on objective measures of child health and a neglect of the underlying processes and complexities, including children’s own contributions to their health.

Children’s narratives demonstrate that child-adult relationships and adults’ understandings of childhood and children are key “structuring features” of their everyday lives. Further, different settings, such as the school and the home, offer different opportunities for children’s agency. In the field of health research, this is hardly considered. Mayall (1998), however, found that at home child-adult relationships were flexible and contingent but at school, adult ideas of childhood and children were more rigidly defined and upheld, which allowed children less space to exercise their own agency. It is important to consider differences in the lived experiences of children at different stages of childhood. For instance, although Mayall (1998) argues that primary school-aged children had more opportunities to look after their own health within the home, James et al. (2009) found that secondary school-aged children were able to exercise greater control over their food choices in school, where food choices were more easily edited and selected. Of course these choices are also constrained by what food is offered and how much money children have; in addition to the different stages of childhood, James and Prout (1997) strongly critiqued the tendency to homogenize children. Instead they emphasized the heterogeneity of contemporary childhoods both within society and also within the different settings in which children carry out their everyday lives (Matthews 2007). The importance of looking at different settings in which children carry out their lives was also highlighted by Mayall’s (1998) study, which showed

how the home and school environment contrasted in terms of children's agency within them.

Since adults have significant power over children, children's agency in everyday life is therefore enabled, constrained, and expressed very much through their relationships with key adults. Hence, framing children as active participants is not without its risks. By asking children to pledge to change their diet (DH and DCSF 2010), for example, the Change4Life campaign risks neglecting children's context and opportunities for physical activity and access to more healthy foods as defined in the campaign. In this way, while the new paradigm can help those involved in public health policy to consider children's potential agency in making "healthy choices," it must also acknowledge that these choices are constrained or restricted by differential access to resources or indeed different opportunities to exert their agency, depending upon their relationships with parents or carers.

4 Doing Family

The emphasis on children's relationships, particularly familial relationships, has important implications for contemporary debates around children's health and wellbeing. Morgan's (1996) notion of "family practices" has been particularly influential in helping to move away from a fixed idea of "the family" toward describing families in terms of what goes on within and what is worked out through the interactions of family members. Morgan (2011) identifies five key features of the family practices approach. Firstly, the notion of family practices conveys "a sense of the active" (p. 6). The focus is on how individuals go about "doing" family rather than the more passive idea of "being" family. Second and related to this is the idea of the "everyday" (p. 6). The taken-for-granted activities of daily living and the life events which figure in the lifecourse of the majority of the population are the very essence of the everyday process of "doing" family. Morgan's third emphasis is on "fluidity" (p. 7). Who counts as family and what counts as family practices may change depending upon the circumstance and who asks the question. This marks a significant shift away from the idea of a static and bound family unit. Fourthly, history and biography are also implicated. Morgan emphasizes that family practices may be influenced by contemporary legal, economic, and cultural constraints and ideas; they do not start from a blank slate. Finally, and this point is only emphasized in Morgan's updated work, *Rethinking Family Practices* (2011), the notion of family practices carries with it a sense of reflexivity. This is both on the part of the researcher (how the researcher shapes what they are observing) and also the research participant (how they reflect on their participation in "doing" family).

This emphasis on "doing family" rather than "being" family provides a way into understanding the diversity of contemporary family groupings and the different ways in which families may change over the lifecourse. Smart et al. (2001) highlight how increased geographical mobility and migration, divorce, separation, and repartnering mean that the idea of a singular and static family is no longer possible and children and parents may spend their time in several different households. Silva and Smart

(1999) warn, however, that although family practices are changing, particularly viewed in terms of a person's lifecourse, the actual amount of change within and across families has often been exaggerated in popular and policy discourse. They refute the idea promulgated in the individualization thesis (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002) that family ties are being weakened and assert that families still play a crucial part in "the intimate life of and connections between individuals" (p. 5). Williams (2004) supports this and argues that families still matter to people. She asserts that social changes, rather than weakening family links, mean that individuals must become "energetic moral actors, embedded in webs of valued personal relationships, working to sustain the commitments that matter to them" (p. 41). This focus on the active, purposeful participation of family members within and potentially across different households, rather than a focus on biological relatedness or marriage ties, makes most sense when we focus on families as "doing" rather than "being." Silva and Smart (1999) summarize this neatly:

In this context of fluid and changing definitions of families, a basic core remains which refers to the sharing of resources, caring, responsibilities and obligations. What a family is appears to be intrinsically related to what it does (p. 6)

Morgan's (1996) notion of a "doing" family also resonates with the ways in which children make sense of and define families. Morrow (1998), for example, found that children had an "accepting, inclusive" understanding of family and who counted as family members. Children's views of family life included a diversity of family practices and structures and did not focus on blood ties or the nuclear norm (p. vi). For children, regardless of their gender, ethnic background, and location, the key characteristics of family were love, care, mutual respect, and support – they focused on "what families do for children in terms of provision of material and emotional support" (Morrow 1998, p. 28). This coheres with other studies which have found that children focus on the quality of relationships (Brannen et al. 2000; Smart et al. 2001). O'Brien et al. (1996); for example, note that children who perceived that their absent fathers no longer provided adequate love or care were likely to exclude them from their definition of who counted as family. Mason and Tipper (2008, p. 441) point to other studies which have shown that children and young people are reflective and creative in how they define family and how they view family membership, which may include members of their household, pets, a variety of relatives (both living and dead) and, sometimes, those living in different households (Brannen et al. 2000; Morrow 1998; O'Brien et al. 1996). That children feel able to negotiate and redefine who counts as family arguably reflects a sociolegal and cultural context where their ideas and perspectives are welcomed albeit to different extents and it is recognized that these ideas and perspectives may be different to those of adults (Mason and Tipper 2008, p. 457). This coheres with Alanen's (2001) understanding of generations at a micro and macro level.

The focus on fluidity in terms of what actually counts as family practices (as well as who counts as family) is also particularly relevant for health research. Christensen (2004) notes: "Health practices are woven into the everyday life of families as they

try and establish sustainable routines” (p. 381). This echoes Morgan’s point that family practices may overlap with other practices like class and gendered practices. Health practices might also be included here too. Indeed, Morgan talks about using “family” as an adjective rather than a noun, one lens among many by which to “describe and explore a set of social activities” (p. 5). He also highlights that the way in which practices are defined depends upon both the perspective of the participant and that of the researcher. The key to defining practices as family practices is the understanding that the practice is carried out with reference to another family member. However, the argument is circular since family members will be defined as such because practices are directed toward them. James et al. (2009) neatly articulate this reciprocal, relational nature of Morgan’s notion of family practices:

A view that envisages family as an ongoing and dynamic set of social relationships that are actively ‘lived’, rather than as a set of roles that are simply inhabited. (p. 36)

James et al. (2009) draw on Morgan’s notion of family practices and assert that families are nevertheless “constituted structurally in terms of the relational identities of parents and children” (p. 37). Similarly, Smart et al. (2001) successfully argue that within this new formulation children can be “actively engaged in negotiating their own family practices” and reflective about their role in this (p. 18). In other words, a family practices approach in which the emphasis is on how family members connect with and commit to each other, opens up the possibility of children actively participating in, contributing to, and influencing family life including health practices. In this respect, Alanen’s (2001) concept of generation aids focus on the relational nature of childhood and how the power differentials between adults and children are played out in everyday family life. She argues that “the two generational categories of children and adults are recurrently produced. . . through relations of connection, and interaction, of interdependence” (Alanen 2001, p. 21). This contrasts sharply with more simplistic notions of children as dependent upon their parents, which is often implied in contemporary child health debates.

James et al. (2009) also draw on the work of Zeiher (2001) who, in her study of the division of domestic labor in German families, characterizes children’s relationships with family members as simultaneously “dependent, independent and interdependent” (p. 37). For Zeiher, how children are positioned (or how they position themselves) within their families is fundamental to the everyday process of “doing” family. She also points to how wider societal trends have influenced children’s positioning within and participation in the day-to-day process of doing family. On the one hand, children have increasingly been viewed as autonomous social actors but, on the other, the expansion of compulsory education means that they are now socially and economically dependent upon their parents for longer. She argues that these trends have resulted in three different patterns of family interaction and, with these, the production of different child identities. In some families, childhood is viewed as a project and every opportunity must be seized to further children’s development and education. Although to some extent scaffolded by their parents, these children’s engagement in leisure and extracurricular activities provides

a space for them to establish their identities beyond the family context. In other families, parents' care and constant presence extends to all areas of children's lives, leaving them little space in which to carve out identities beyond the family. A final pattern sees children taking on domestic responsibilities within the family, which Zeiher views as helping to foster a more "egalitarian, interdependent relationship" with their parents (James et al. 2009, p. 38). James et al. (2009) highlight that both Alanen and Zeiher's work demonstrates that different family practices, informed by different understandings (among parents and children) of what it is to be a child may promote or limit the extent to which children participate in the "making and doing of family" (p. 38).

Morrow (1998) found strong variation in how much children felt that they were listened to within families and some children were acutely aware of the potentially problematic nature of decision-making within families (p. vii). In a similar vein, Rigg and Pryor (2007), in their study with 9–13-year-old children in New Zealand, found that children were "willing and able to articulate themselves" within the family context but this did not necessarily translate into a desire to take on decision-making responsibilities. Children made a clear distinction between participation and responsibility. Again this complicates the simple dichotomizing of the parent-child relationship in health messages which position the child as being wholly dependent or, conversely, entirely responsible for their own eating practices.

Finch's (2007) notion of "family display" also helps to take these debates about "doing" one step further. Building upon Morgan's family practices approach, Finch argues that:

Display is the process by which individuals and groups of individuals, convey to each other and to relevant audiences that certain of their actions do constitute 'doing family things' and thereby confirm that these relationships are 'family' relationships. (Finch 2007, p. 67)

James and Curtis (2010), drawing upon their study exploring child-adult relations through the lens of food, argue that both children's and parents' narratives of family life and eating practices work as tools of family display. They provide, for example, a revealing pen portrait of Sheila, a mother who is at pains to display her own family's health practices by contrasting them with those of another family eating in close proximity at an eat-as-much-as-you-like pizza restaurant. While Sheila condemns the other family's greedy practices at the restaurant and alludes to their ample body shapes (presumably as evidence of their overindulgent tendencies), she is keen to emphasize that her family really enjoy the salad option and only consume a small amount of pizza. Here then, Sheila is making sense of and displaying her own family's practices by contrasting them with those of another family. Emphasizing their departure from what she perceives to be healthy eating serves to reinforce her family's more balanced approach to eating. Importantly, however, the authors also reflect on the relevance of the situated nature of the interview context within a broader context of widespread concern with rising levels of childhood obesity. They argue that narratives like Sheila must, therefore, be regarded as "heightened forms of display and also as particular snapshots in time" (p. 1175).

5 Food, Eating, and Everyday Family Life

In her seminal work *Feeding the Family*, DeVault (1991) anticipates Morgan's (1996) "family practices" approach as she argues that, rather than being about a collection of individuals, it is through everyday activities like eating together that families are constructed (p. 15). Morgan correspondingly argues that exploring the everyday negotiations around food and eating is likely to reveal both "the fluidity of contemporary family relations as well as the durability of some family practices and structures" (Jackson 2009, p. 5). In this way, exploring family food practices provides a way into understanding more about how both parents and children influence, contribute to, and participate in "doing" family. Such an approach can help us to move beyond what Curtis et al. (2011a) define as the "hierarchical, unidirectional understanding of intergenerational relations" which they perceive to dominate the literature related to childhood obesity (p. 429) and help to generate more nuanced understandings of the complexities of family food negotiations.

In relation to roles and subject positions, in their study with 11- and 12-year-old children from socioeconomically and ethnically diverse schools, James et al. (2009) found that mothers still do much of the family feeding. Despite claims that families are becoming more equal, mothers did the majority of the food shopping, preparation, and accommodating for differences in preferences. Although there were families in which fathers were more instrumental in contribution to feeding practices, in these families food cooked by fathers was presented as being something "a bit special" or else "helping out" with the children when particular circumstances arose. Without exception, when asked who their favorite family cook was, all children concluded, "mum."

In relation to children's participation, however, the picture appears to be more complex within the social science literature than that presented in public health discourses. Within this, two main explanations have emerged to account for differences in children's participation in everyday family food practices. First, the extent to which children participate has been linked to families' socioeconomic background. Backett-Milburn et al. (2011) for example, in a study with young teenagers found very different views among what they defined as working class and middle class parents and teenagers with regard to teenagers' participation in family food practices. They took social class to mean: "... a hierarchical (and unequal) framework of relationships which arise from the social organisation of labour, education, wealth and income" (p. 78). For the purposes of their study, the authors used parental occupation as a proxy for social class. Working class parents described how their teenagers increasingly made their own food choices at home and often ate different food at a different time and place to their parents. In explaining these practices, they referred to limited food budgets and the importance of not wasting food. This resonates with Dobson's (1994) study which found that, in a bid to avoid waste, mothers on a low income provided food which they knew their children liked. Although in Backett-Milburn et al.'s (2011) study working class parents did talk about trying to provide healthy food at home, they reflected that teenagers' eating

behaviors ranked low down in their “hierarchy of worries” about teenage health-relevant behaviors including poor school performance, drugs, and engaging in relationships with a “bad crowd” (p. 81).

The middle class parents, in contrast, described the high priority they placed on “molding eating practices.” They described different strategies like controlling portion sizes, ensuring their children consumed an ample intake of fruit and vegetables by hiding them in soups or stews and actively supervising and regulating their teenagers’ diets. In this way, eating practices were portrayed as a “family project” (Backett-Milburn et al. 2011, p. 82). Both sets of parents, however, talked about the increasing challenge of influencing children’s food intake through the teenage years. In contrast to the differences in their parents’ narratives, the teenagers from both working and middle class families thought that they had little control at home (mothers were portrayed as exerting the most control) and surprisingly few admitted to trying to “bend rules” or change parental provisioning. However, whereas the middle class teenagers generally approved of the food provided and prepared for themselves and the rest of the family, the working class teenagers talked more about preparing food themselves and their narratives indicated a greater autonomy with regard to where and what they ate, echoing other studies in which the most economically disadvantaged groups of children report the most freedom (Backett-Milburn et al. 2011). In Backett-Milburn et al.’s (2011) study, then, socioeconomic position is shown to be highly significant in young people’s participation in family food practices.

In contrast to this emphasis on socioeconomic position, the extent to which children participate has also been linked to different configurations of child-adult relations within the family, which cut across families from diverse social backgrounds. James et al. (2009), also working with children from socioeconomically contrasting backgrounds, argue that different kinds of participation by children as family members reflect the “different generational hierarchies” operating in families, regardless of their socioeconomic background. They describe three families: those of Maisie, Roy, and Gemma. In Maisie’s family, children are perceived as having equal status to the adults and so their food preferences, along with those of their parents, are taken into account when preparing family meals. Although both parents are strict vegetarians, Maisie’s mother is keen to clarify that both children understand that they can eat meat if they choose to do so. Further, both parents and also Maisie’s brother help out with cooking and in this way the authors argue that “family food practices appear to collapse the generational order” (James et al. 2009, p. 40). In Roy’s family, in contrast, all family members eat “children’s food” such as chips, burgers, and pizza (p. 43). The authors argue that this reflects “an indulged and prolonged encouragement of Roy’s ‘childness’” by his parents and that this is echoed in the fact that in Roy’s family children are not expected to help out around the home. In Gemma’s family, current food practices are shown to be the result of frequent arguments between adults and children as Gemma’s mother describes how she now restricts what she cooks to the food that Gemma likes. The authors argue that Gemma therefore corresponds to Zeiher’s (2001) identification of a child that has gained “semi-independent status” (p. 40). The very different family food practices

adopted by each of these families, the authors argue, reflect the families' very different conceptualizations of children as family participants. These different understandings promote different intergenerational relationships within families and therefore facilitate different levels of participation by children.

6 Nourishing Bodies and Nourishing Relationships

Although food consumption fulfills a basic human need, research has also examined the meanings which become bound up with food preparation and food consumption. Punch and McIntosh consider the significance of "simple acts" and rituals around food preparation and reflect upon the care that is embedded and reflected within the notion of "doing" food (Punch and McIntosh 2014, p. 73). Furthermore, a number of authors have highlighted the importance of food practices in building and solidifying personal relationships (Knight et al. 2015; Curtis et al. 2009). Within this understanding about food and feeding practices, Murcott's (1983) theory of "caring" is realized. As well as being a family practice where socialization happens, food is a critical part of everyday living and essentially sustains life. Since parents are charged with feeding children, food can also become a contested issue among families and one where children's views and preferences are often taken seriously. As James et al. (2009) show:

Most of the time we try and fit into it so that people will like it. For example, last night there was onion gravy and we know that Billy likes not to have onions so you just scoop the gravy out without the onions. So we try and compromise wherever possible. (Mother in James et al. 2009, p. 44)

Provisioning food to children, while sustaining and nurturing growing bodies, also takes on a symbolic meaning around the provision of psychological care and nurture (DeVault 1991). In recognizing the importance of food in developing and maintaining familial relationships, recent work has also explored the food practices and perspectives of children and young people living away from their families. Research by Dorrer et al. (2011) highlights the importance of food provisioning for young people living in children's residential units in Scotland. The authors suggest that in the absence of family, food can be used symbolically as a token of love and an offer of support and concern. In turn, care workers felt that relationships within the home became entwined and took on greater resemblance to familial relationships:

It feels more informal, it feels more relaxed. It feels like you're sharing with each other around the table. It feels like they are one big, happy family. (Care worker in Dorrer et al. 2011, p. 26)

While the sharing and giving of food can become symbolic as an offer of care and concern, so too can it become implicit of rejection. Emond et al.'s (2014) work with

children in residential care illustrates how food and feeding becomes the spotlight in which other tensions are played out and that food was used by young people as a means of displaying control when they felt that they had little else that they could change in their lives:

Abbey had a really bad Saturday night . . . so she went to her room. And the next thing she asked for a glass of juice so I thought ‘oh go and give her a glass of juice’ and came up with a glass of juice and she said . . . ‘you have fresh orange?’ I says no.’ Well what have you got?’ Well I’ve got diluting blackcurrant. ‘I don’t like that.’ I’ve got apple juice. ‘I don’t like that.’ Well I says, I’ve got diluting orange. ‘I don’t like that, I don’t like f***ing anything you’ve got’ and she threw the glass at me and just missed me . . . it didn’t really matter what I brought her up, she would have thrown a glass anyway, she was just so, so angry. (Care worker in Emond et al. 2014, p. 12)

Research by James et al. (2009) and Fairbrother (2013) also found that food was a cause of tension within family relationships too, especially between parents and grandparents with regard to children’s health and eating practices. Curtis et al. (2009) and Knight et al. (2015) draw attention to parental concern that grandparents offered more “treats” and sweet foods than parents would like (Curtis et al. 2009; Knight et al. 2015). Knight et al. (2015), for example, depict the tensions between mother and mother-in-law:

I don’t know what my mother-in-law gives them. She pops into the sweet shop quite a lot. We’ve had a few conversations about that.... I don’t like them having sweets every time they’re collected . . . there’s certain sweets I won’t let them have (mother, child aged eight, South European, two-parent family in Knight et al. 2015).

Just as parents in Knight et al.’s (2015) study focused in on the undesirability of sweets, a number of authors have noted that particular types of food have been constructed in ways which define them as either “good” or “bad” food. “Good” or “proper” or “real” food is depicted as “natural” or “fresh” (Charles and Kerr 1988). “Improper” food, in contrast, is presented as that which is processed and packaged, laden with sugar and/or salt, often portrayed as snack food such as sausage rolls, pizza, chips, or sweets. Curtis et al. (2011a) argue that while “proper” food is depicted as something which children would be unlikely to choose to eat themselves, “snack” food is often synonymous with “children’s food”. It is perhaps no coincidence that this food is food which is deemed to be also “treat” food and considered unsuitable for everyday consumption:

I tend to like we’ve got a little boy coming tomorrow and I tend to do more children friendly food when somebody’s coming over. But the rest of the time we tend to eat more sort of adult type meals but if there’s a friend coming over then I will try and make it a bit more child friendly. . . kind of like sausages. . . maybe pizza or something if somebody’s coming over really whereas we don’t tend, we, we tend to eat more sort of like pasta bakes and lasagne and stuff like that. Or chillis and stuff if it’s. But I wouldn’t, I’d, it would depend on the child really but it would be more child friendly food if we were having somebody over. . . I would be a lot more patient about that [] I wouldn’t impose like I would make my kids do. (Mother’s quote from Curtis et al. 2011b, p. 70)

However, research has also shown that value judgments about food are not just limited to parents. Children have something to say about the suitability of different foods and different amounts of foods. For example, in the study by Curtis et al. (2011b), children, regardless of their socioeconomic background, were equally able to identify factors which made food unsuitable for everyday eating. Alicia compares “food-as-it-should-be” with food “out of a packet”:

if someone puts something in front of me then ‘cause by looking at it you can tell. If it’s out of a packet or if it’s like (pause) just not (pause) right and [...] well you can, you can tell like if it’s like mass production can’t you because there’s like everything always looks the same [...] and [...] you got one from the shop and just put ‘em both in a cup you can tell which one’s better for you because it’s not got all the colourings in and all the ‘e numbers’ and stuff.’ (Young person in Curtis et al. 2011b, p. 71)

Furthermore, as well as demonstrating their awareness of the healthiness of different foods and different amounts of foods, research by Fairbrother et al. (2012) shows that children and young people are acutely aware of the parameters which are assigned to food and budget within their household. Fairbrother et al. (2012), working with 9- and 10-year-old children from socioeconomically contrasting neighborhoods in the north of England, found that children were acutely aware of their own family financial resources and how this impacted upon food purchases. Many of the disadvantaged children talked about “struggling” to make ends meet. They had to balance the need to save money with a desire to eat healthily. Daniel, for example, explains that his mum has to get the “cheapest, goodest stuff she can” (p. 531). Children were very aware that parents were juggling competing demands for money (such as buying school uniforms and saving up for special occasions) and that money to spend on food was limited. The authors give the example of Rosalyn:

Rosalyn	Yeah and like, if you’ve brought erm, what’s it called, an amount of money. What if you like buy things and then when you get to the tills it’s too much and you really need it like if you needed milk but you needed other things too and then like when you got to tills it were expensive and you didn’t have enough money?
Interviewer	Yeah. Does it, has it ever happened to you or your family?
Rosalyn	Yeah and it wasn’t fair. (A young person in Fairbrother et al. 2012, p. 531).

In contrast, although many of the socioeconomically advantaged children recognized that cost was an important factor for their parents, they realized that it did not constrain purchases. They thought their parents opted for healthy but good value products, including buying basic ingredients rather than ready-made food. They also thought quality took precedence for their parents. They definitely perceived a clear hierarchy of supermarkets in terms of expense, quality, and target markets. They also reflected upon their relative privilege, “we’re so lucky to get this food” (p. 532).

Children from both disadvantaged and advantaged areas proposed many strategies to facilitate eating healthily on a budget, some of which reflected what happened

in their own families. They talked about choosing the supermarket or shopping day based on cost and special offers, “growing your own” and buying local, seasonal produce. The reality, however, worked out very differently in the two areas (p. 532). The more socioeconomically disadvantaged children referred to having to travel to the market for cheap fruit, shopping at a local shop where bills could be paid at a later date, and even relying on leftovers from a nearby greengrocers where a family friend worked. They made frequent, spontaneous references to financial constraints and the importance of cost. In contrast, the more affluent children tended only to mention prices or budgets when asked. Children from both schools then demonstrated an nuanced awareness of their family’s financial resources and how this impacted upon everyday family food practices.

7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the complexity of everyday family food practices and the subject positions that adults and children occupy within everyday family life. Within this, food practices are negotiated and used as a means of building and constructing social relationships. The chapter has indicated how food provisioning becomes an important way of displaying care and concern but can therefore also become a site of contestation. In this way, food becomes much more than a nutritional resource and instead becomes bound up with the very “doing” of family. Within this framing, children have the potential to be active in everyday negotiations around food and, whereas health research has assumed that children are unable and unwilling to make sensible eating choices, this chapter instead shows that children are more aware of the healthiness of food than is generally assumed. The extent to which children are permitted, or wish, to participate in family food negotiations vary both between and within families. Therefore, the fact that campaigns such as Change4Life are geared around the role of parents’ shaping of children’s eating practices is helpful in some way, it should also be considered that children’s eating practices are always constrained by the provision which is made available to them. Children themselves have demonstrated their awareness of the impact of family finances on opportunities to eat healthily, for example, therefore it is important that public health interventions work cohesively with families to ensure that young people are supported and given access to appropriate foods to enable them to make healthy choices.

In summary, this review has demonstrated that families are important but inherently complex sites for the delivery of health promotion geared toward reducing childhood obesity. Attention must be paid to the ways in which food is embedded within and negotiated across a complex network of intergenerational relationships, which is not conducive to simplistic health promotion messages. Children must be given guidance and education through which they can shape their own eating practices since young people are often active in selecting and consuming foods according to their own preferences. However, it is important to resist the responsabilisation of children and young people who do not manage their eating in a way that would be preferred by public health professionals. Young people should not be held

accountable for the consequences of poor education and inadequate access to “healthy” food items. As Morrow (1998) highlights, children are often acutely aware of the problematic nature of decision-making within families (p.vii) and have a nuanced view about the differences between participation and responsibility, sometimes preferring not to take on the latter. Tisdall and Punch (2012) also make a clear distinction between participation and responsibility and draw upon Hartas’s (2008) assertion that young people feel the pressure of responsibility keenly. With this in mind, they argue that children’s agency concept should be “contested and scrutinized” as a concept (Tisdall and Punch 2012, p. 256). The challenge of tackling childhood obesity clearly brings the complex question of children’s agency and their participation within family negotiations and decision-making into sharp relief. It is clear that different understandings of children’s agency (among children themselves as well as parents and within public health policy discourse) promote different intergenerational relationships within families and therefore facilitate different levels of participation by children in everyday food practices.

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Health Risks in the Home: Children and Young People's Accounts

9

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Abstract

Depending on definition and academic discipline, home can refer to a place, a space, a feeling, or certain practices. House and home are often conflated, but the physical dwelling is only one dimension. Home can be shorthand for an ideal and comfortable haven but is also recognized, by feminist researchers, for example, as a place where gender and age represent key dimensions for how members of a household view the meaning of home (Saunders and Williams 1988). Home is therefore understood as a multidimensional concept (see Mallet 2004 for a review). In this chapter, we discuss where children and young people localize risks, as well as how they manage risks in different settings with reference to the home in particular. Following a brief review of children and young people's understandings and management of risk in different settings, this chapter draws on two case studies involving health risks in everyday life. The case studies

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involve children and young people from Scotland who live with parents who smoke and those from Sweden who have a food allergy. These cases are then discussed in relation to the wider literature to illuminate issues such as gender, spatial risk management, and child–parent relations within the home.

Keywords

Risk · Health · Everyday life · Secondhand smoke · Food allergy · Child agency

1 Risk in Different Settings

Historically and culturally, the ideas of home and family have been closely related: a safe and secure retreat for the nuclear family. Feminist scholars have problematized this discourse of the home with reference to the role of women and domestic abuse (Mallet 2004), but in most literature pertaining to children and risk, the home as a place of risk remains largely unexplored. Instead, research on children’s experiences of place, space, and risk has focused primarily on risk in public rather than private spaces (e.g., Harden 2000; van der Brugt 2015).

An emerging body of literature demonstrates that children are not passive victims of risk but actively engage in their own risk management and take risks (Green 1997; Harden 2000; van der Brugt 2015). For example, Christensen and Mikkelsen (2008) point out that the focus is often on children as risk-takers with limited recognition of children as risk-managers. Risk, they argue, tends to be seen as something negative that children should be protected from both in media and biomedical discourses (see also Hunt 2003). At the same time, there is an understanding that children should not be overprotected as children will face risks, and to manage risk is part of child development (Jenkins 2006; Lee et al. 2010). Opportunities to engage rather than completely avoid risk are therefore seen to be important for children and young people (Boholm 2003; Christensen and Mikkelsen 2008).

Children’s risk accounts show that risk can be understood as a resource to create appropriate identities, to forge boundaries between peer groups (Green 1997) and identify with and against places as a way of showing how they want to be perceived (van der Brugt 2008). Furthermore, children expect parents to limit their access to public space to protect them from dangers outside home but also to negotiate with them about their freedom of movement (Harden 2000). Children separate “acceptable” and “unacceptable” risks (van der Brugt 2015). They strive to strike a balance between risk willingness and protecting themselves when managing risk in their everyday life (Christensen and Mikkelsen 2008). In addition to biomedical risk discourses, children may also draw on wider discourses about childhood, such as childhood vulnerability, age, and responsibility in their responses to risk (see Harden and Backett-Milburn 2008).

When discussing children and young people’s accounts of how they managed the risk entailed in their potential exposure to secondhand smoke and food allergens, this

chapter draws on a sociocultural concept of risk. This perspective views risk as socially constructed and dependent on context (Boholm 2003; Tulloch and Lupton 2003; Pidgeon et al. 2008; Henwood et al. 2008). Rather than an inherent property of things, the relational aspects of risks are emphasized. Risk understandings are shaped by locally defined values and concerns, open to negotiation (Boholm 2003), and risk practices are deeply moralized and subject to judgment (Hunt 2003).

This chapter presents two case studies to illuminate children and young people's accounts of risk in the home as opposed to other settings and links these with the wider literature. For children who are involuntarily exposed to health risks in their environment, such as secondhand smoke (SHS) and allergens, risk management is to an extent necessary, particularly for children with allergies, but autonomy is constrained, particularly for children whose parents smoke in the home.

2 Case Studies of Health Risks in Everyday Life

Exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) and food allergies are public health issues that affect a large proportion of the population, including children and young people. Globally, 40% of children are exposed to SHS in their homes, and up to 12% of the child population in the Minority World, depending on definition, is affected by food allergies (Burks et al. 2012). SHS poses a particular risk to children as they have less mature immune systems and faster breathing rates than adults. It is associated with a range of childhood illnesses, including bronchitis, asthma, middle ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome (Royal College of Physicians 2010). Food allergies most commonly entail allergies to milk, eggs, and nuts (Arias et al. 2009). Allergic reactions to food occur shortly after exposure with symptoms varying from mild oral itching to the life-threatening reaction anaphylaxis.

Children whose parents smoke, and children who are allergic to certain foods, encounter these health risks every day. Both risks may lead to serious health effects if not managed, and the management requires the assistance of parents and others. Protective strategies to allergens and SHS both entail avoidance and restrictions. The risks associated with exposure are also examples of concrete and familiar risk firmly embedded in the practices of everyday family life and involving trust. Familiarity and trust are central to this process and interrelated as “they can both be used as ways of managing the uncertainty of the future” (Alaszewski and Coxon 2009: 204). Both SHS and allergy risk management throw light on the pivotal role the setting, especially the home, plays in children's constructions of risk.

SHS exposure and food allergies also differ in a number of ways; differences which offer a certain analytical purchase are explored in this chapter. While there are some short-term and immediate risks associated with SHS exposure, the main adverse effects on children's health occur over time. With the event of smokefree legislation in many Minority World countries such as Scotland, SHS is now mainly encountered and managed in the home. Awareness of SHS health risks has increased with legislation and the associated mass media campaigns; however, previous work has shown there is still considerable variety and uncertainty in how best to manage

the risk (e.g., Robinson et al. 2011). A discrepancy exists between expert advice of smokefree homes to protect child health and parents' protective practices which often entail restricting smoking to certain rooms or occasions (when children are not present) (Rowa-Dewar et al. 2014a, b, 2015). While a general awareness of SHS as a health risk that children ought to be protected from is evident, smoking restrictions are often dynamic and fluid and vary widely *between* families and are subject to negotiations *within* families as family members may have different ideas of how to restrict smoking to protect children (Phillips et al. 2007; Poland et al. 2009; Robinson et al. 2011).

With the exception of the study discussed in this chapter, children and young people's accounts of SHS have been the focus of only three previous studies at the time of writing (Michell 1989; Woods et al. 2005; Glover et al. 2013). While these studies demonstrate children and young people's awareness of SHS as risk to health and their dislike of exposure, children's responses or attempts to manage such risk were not explored.

In contrast to SHS exposure, food allergies often affect children immediately on exposure, and awareness of the risk is therefore often high for both parents and children. The home is also often considered a relatively safe zone, while settings such as schools and restaurants entail risks (Fenton et al. 2011; Gallagher et al. 2012; Stjerna et al. 2014). Unlike SHS, the prevalence of food allergy has also increased since the early 1990s (Gupta et al. 2003). When children grow up and start to live more independent lives at school and with peers, this may involve a period of increased risk of allergic reactions and an increased child anxiety. Indeed, children as young as seven are aware of, and concerned about, the risks involved in a serious allergic reaction (Klinnert and Robinson 2008). Social activities in settings other than their own home, such as going on holiday, to a party, or a restaurant, can be a source of concern for children with food allergies (Avery et al. 2003; Eigenmann et al. 2006; Gallagher et al. 2012).

Previous research has explored children and young peoples' experiences of allergic reactions and their strategies to live with the risk of anaphylaxis in adolescence (Akeson et al. 2007; Gallagher et al. 2011, 2012), their views on school as an area for food allergy risk management (Fenton et al. 2011), and their strategies to manage food allergy risk in daily life (DunnGalvin et al. 2009). Less is known about children and young people's management of their allergy in interactions with others in a variety of social contexts and specifically the home. Qualitative empirical studies have thus begun to illuminate children and young people's understandings and experiences of food allergy and to a lesser extent of SHS. This chapter builds on previous work by the authors which examined children and young people's responses to SHS and food allergy risks with a focus on the home as a place where these risks are managed to a large extent.

The Scottish SHS study explored how children and young people, 10–15 years old, with parents or other close family members who smoke view and experience SHS exposure in the home and car (Rowa-Dewar et al. 2014a, b). (The data drawn on in this paper involves eight focus groups, three individual interviews and four paired interviews in 2007–2009 with 38 participants, 27 girls and 11 boys aged

10–15.) Participants were asked about their views and experiences of parents and other family members' smoking in the home and children and young people's own roles (if any) in negotiations around smoking.

The Swedish food allergy study explored how young people, 11–18 years old, with food allergy live with, understand, and manage their allergy within different social arenas such as the family, the school, and among peers (Stjerna 2015). (The data drawn on in this paper involves ten individual interviews, three focus groups and one paired interview in 2012–2013 with twenty participants aged 11–18 years, thirteen girls and seven boys.) They had various food allergies and were either allergic to a single food or to multiple foods. (Four of the participants were lactose and/or gluten intolerant.) Most participants had been prescribed an adrenaline autoinjector to be administered immediately in case of a severe allergic reaction (Simons 2010). The participants were asked about the everyday management of their allergy at home, school, and other places. Both studies include individual interviews, paired interviews, and focus groups interviews.

As previously outlined, research on children and risk has mostly focused on risk beyond the home. In this chapter, we reverse the focus of these studies by exploring children's risk accounts in the home as the home is where some children are most at risk, and children spend most of their time at home in the care of their parents. Between the ages of 10–18, however, many children and young people live at home with their parents but spend increasing amounts of time and encounter risk and receive risk information in settings other than the home and with people other than their parents such as in school and with teachers. An increased understanding of risk and responsibility for one's own health may therefore contribute to a transition in responsibility for health risks from parents to children. As noted, SHS and food allergies pose different types of risk "objects," and participants may view their own and others awareness and responsibility for managing it differently. Despite these differences, children and young people who are exposed to SHS and who have a food allergy live with a heightened risk in their everyday lives. Drawing on these two cases, this chapter explores children's and young people's accounts of where they localize risk in different settings, specifically the home and their situated agency in the ways they manage these risk in their everyday life.

3 Safe at Home?

If families do not guard against such risks, children and young people who are allergic or whose parents smoke would potentially be a significant risk in their own homes. Food allergy risks are immediate and may be severe and awareness among family members is therefore high. Participants in the allergy study primarily located their risk outside of their homes. Despite the home being the main source of SHS exposure for children whose parents smoke, most participants interviewed in the SHS study presented their homes as safe in a similar way.

When homes were presented as safe, the many protective practices parents engaged in were drawn upon as evidence. Significantly, homes were presented as

safe, not always free, from SHS or allergens. Most children with smoking parents said their parents restricted their smoking to certain places and/or at certain times. Indeed, some participants described their homes as smokefree, if restrictions were in place even if smoking took place in some places at some times in their homes. Some initially said their parents did not smoke in their homes, to then report that they smoked in a peripheral space, peripheral to the house and more easily ventilated such as the kitchen or peripheral to family life such as the utility room or study (Rowa-Dewar et al. 2014a, b). Children's own roles in managing the risk of exposure to SHS involved both verbal and nonverbal spatial acts including distancing themselves from parents and others who smoked.

Similarly, for children with food allergies, (and to parents of children allergic to food in a previous study, Stjerna et al. 2014), homes are also presented as a relative "safe zone" where allergy risk can be controlled by parents and where their family members adjust to their needs and protect them:

You go home and then you get something to eat, that mum makes or me and Isabella [sister] usually help quite a bit then or Dad, Dad makes food too [laughter] ehm. . .well. . .and that works well, we eat, we make everything with my milk [oatmilk] everything, we make everything so I can have it, if it's not for example like, what example will I give? Well, something like maybe a gnoccidish we make with some stuff in it, then they want cheese on it for example and then I get my own, but we always make a lasagne that I can have. (Joanna, allergy study)

As for children whose parents smoke in the home, protective practices also entails family members distancing themselves from each other within the home. For example, Alva, states that while they have a relatively allergen-free home, family members who consume anything containing the allergen need to keep their distance from her:

And at home all of us are pretty dairy free, as dad is also allergic, but not as much as me, so because of that most of the food we make at home is dairy free, so it doesn't affect me that much but then if mum or my sister or my little brother are having cheese or something, then they have to keep away from me, so I can't sit next to them, so that's a bit of a shame maybe. (Alva, allergy study)

Safety at home appears to be taken for granted: "*it's not so much at home you know [that I need to worry about my allergy] because, yeah you know, mum and dad know, they take, it's not like they would say 'let's not bother about that' [laughs]*" (Clara). But even if the home is regarded as safe zone, some of the young people emphasize that you have to be vigilant there too (see also Stjerna 2015).

In one of the focus groups, the children discuss whether the home *can* be viewed as a safe zone.

MLS: *When do you need to think about being allergic, in what situations?*

Anna: *When you're at friends places, in shops, when you're not at home basically*

Isabella: *Yeah you have to think about it at home too*

Anna: *no not usually*

Isabella: *I don't have, well at home we have, I have two brothers who eat yoghurt every day, and we don't have a milk-free, a milk-free house*

[short break in the interview]

Isabella: *well I said we don't have a milk-free home at home, so I don't really feel like free anywhere you know, maybe at the allergy camp, then you don't have to think of anything, then you feel like you have control and everything is checked, but at home you have to sort of ask too like have I taken the right thing now? You have to be mature. . . you have to be mature for your age, otherwise it won't work because you have to check everything*

Anna: *but at home I can sort of think that I have to, that I can be a bit free but I still have to ask if that's what I can eat, but still, you're a bit free at home and know you can*

Vincent: *you feel much safer at home than when you go out on town or that sort of thing, you want to be safe so nothing will happen then*

MLS: *mm yes exactly*

Isabella: *yeah so you're safer at home, that's the, that's what it's like, because there you know, you have you're experts at home sort of, apart from yourself (Anna, Isabella, Vincent, allergy study)*

While other children talked about the allergy camp as a place of safety, Isabella goes one step further in describing somewhere else as safer than her own home, yet when the others object slightly she concedes that the home is safer than other places. While she stresses the expertise of her parents in managing her food allergy, this does not lessen her own responsibility or the need to assume a more mature role, illustrating the transition from parents' to their own responsibility. Alva recalls her lack of awareness prior to such a transition:

Yeah when I was little I didn't really know that [I was allergic], when I was like five and my sister was three, and she wanted to give me some kind of normal yoghurt, and then I didn't know there was dairy in it so then I had to take medicine. (Alva, allergy study)

According to Alva and many other participants, the constant vigilance required when allergic involves "*always having to check everything.*"

The (few) children whose accounts included allergic reactions at home still talk about their homes as safe places and emphasize that the danger entered the home from outside, rather than within:

We ate tacos one day and I got, I felt that it was a bit spicy and then I started to feel sick, ehh found it hard to breathe and then my nose it gets completely blocked so I can't breathe, breathe in, so you can't breathe with it, completely like it's completely blocked, you have to hold it like this and try to blow out and then ehh. . . ehh so that's what is dangerous that your nose gets completely blocked and it gets harder and harder to breathe with your lungs or throat and in the end I could die, and then we rang an ambulance. (Isabella, allergy study)

Isabella's account then takes a very dramatic course of events where she gets emergency care and must remain at home from school for a few days to recover. She also explains that her family contacted the food chain as the food labeling did not state the taco spice contained milk protein. Other children's accounts also depicted the home as a place, where the young people withdraw and recuperate after an allergic reaction. Melvin, who has multiple allergies says that he has had a lot of allergic reactions, the last one the day before the interview: "*I was going to brush my teeth and then used a toothpaste with milk in it, so weird that you would like have milk in toothpaste, and then I had an allergic reaction.*" This illustrates how difficult it can be to avoid allergens, and how everyday activities like brushing one's teeth, eating dinner, suddenly turns into a dangerous situation.

Despite two different health risks, safety at home is taken for granted underpinned by a trust that parents safeguard their children. While smoking and food practices were regulated predominantly by parents in children and young people's accounts, they also outline multiple risk avoidance strategies of their own, assuming responsibility for managing risks. Here the home as a physical space for risk management comes to the fore, and boundaries within the home (where you are allowed to smoke for example) as well as to the outer world are depicted as essential.

Children's accounts appear to reflect media and public discourses which locate risks outside the home and in others than parents with less attention to risks faced by children in the home (Harden 2000). This may be surprising for children exposed to SHS where the risk is almost exclusively encountered in children's own homes due to the amount of time they spend there. Instead of their own homes, children located SHS risk in the homes of others. Arguably, children with food allergies may be more likely to encounter risks outside the home, yet even when children describe instances of having allergic reactions within their own homes they clearly locate the risk as coming from outside the home. While bracketing off these risks in the home to an extent, when encountered elsewhere the less familiar setting intersects with the risk which serves to intensify it. These findings are supported by results of van der Brughts (2015) study about young people's negotiating risk in public places. They felt safe in their neighborhood and demonstrated less agency in managing risk at unfamiliar places and "an externalization of risk to public space beyond the intermediate local sphere was apparent" (2015:186).

4 Mothers as Primary Protectors

In children and young people's accounts about SHS and allergy, mothers appeared to occupy a different position than fathers: as those most responsible to protect their health. When an allergen enters the home, the absence of a mother can make the situation particularly precarious, as in this account from Melvin and his friend in their paired interview:

Melvin: *My grandmother had bought bread from a bakery and said that it was some kind of fruity bread but it was actually called a fruit and nut bread, and contained walnuts, hazelnuts and that sort of thing*

Leo: *oh*

Melvin: *and I thought it tasted really nice but then five minutes later I sort of lost my breath, couldn't breathe, couldn't breathe at all, got panicky, took the adrenalin shot and phoned 112 and that and then my mum wasn't home so it was really hard*

Leo: *then you have a problem*

Melvin: *yes*

MLS: *but could you take, you know did you inject yourself or did you get some help?*

Melvin: *yeah well granny helped me then but, well I pushed it myself, but you know, that's not fun like, then I thought it really hurt, like I was scared to death because it was the first time I had to take it* (Melvin, Leo, allergy study)

Since then, Melvin has practiced administering the adrenaline injector at hospital, assuming responsibility for his allergy. Adrian, who is allergic to nuts, directly compares his mother's home safety precautions to that of his father's, in favor of the former:

It works well at home I think, they have adjusted, most of all here [at his mother's house], it's completely adjusted to my allergy here and I think it's so nice not to have to bother and think and be worried and that, but dad is like, at dad's who has a new wife and then I've got two little brothers there too, it's not like as suited to me [there are cookies containing nuts there for example] but it's much better there now than at the start. (Adrian, allergy study)

Similarly, mothers often featured as those who protected children from smoking in their homes, particularly for the children who were sensitive to SHS because of their asthma:

Well my uncle he comes over quite a lot and [...] my mum makes him go outside [to smoke] 'cause it's really bad for my sister's asthma. (Anna, SHS study)

However, while mothers may set certain rules to protect children, fathers are reported to be subverting or relaxing them without consequences:

Ryan: *No, I would always like shut my bedroom door [if people smoke in my home]. It's just my dad who really smokes inside 'cause he's like... proper family. Like blood family. And if all my uncles smoke they've just got to stay oot and my Dad will just have a fag like.*

NRD: *What about when you're there?*

Ryan: *My mum kens I've got asthma so she'll stop them, naebody smokes in the same room.* (Ryan, SHS study)

Preventing or reducing children's exposure to SHS and allergens appears to reference the traditional female role in the family as responsible for child health. Mothers' protective strategies were quickly referred to by many children. When challenged by others, the importance of this role is evident:

Rachel: *Mum doesn't like me sitting on the couch when she is smoking, because she always goes if mum and dad are having a fag she goes 'Go away.'*

Danielle: *I've seen your mum next to you with fags before [smiling]*

Rachel: *Aye but... you know what I mean [annoyed] [staring daggers at Danielle for quite some time after this exchange]. (Rachel, Danielle, SHS study)*

Rachel uses the word “always” to emphasize this is not something that is subject to change. In challenging Rachel’s account of her mother’s protective practices, Danielle appeared to question not just the validity of her account but also her mother’s moral identity as a mother who should protect her children. This challenge of the validity of Rachel’s account and her mother’s protective smoking practices changed the dynamic in the group from good-natured banter to a more subdued and less boisterous interaction between them. Risk avoidance strategies around children appears to imply caring and moral entities in parents, particularly mothers (Rowa-Dewar et al. 2014b).

Risk discourses also appeared to reflect group dynamics to some extent. Accounts of indifference to SHS exposure occurred where participants appeared to attempt to distinguish and differentiate themselves from other participants who expressed risky accounts of SHS. In a focus group with three girls aged 10 and 11, Leah and Alexa were friends and clearly positioned themselves as such by sitting close, whispering, and stating that they lived close together. Initially, Lindsay stated her deep dislike for her mother’s smoking while Leah and Alexa, on the other side of the table, were quiet, made very little eye contact with her, and appeared not to listen. When specifically asked what they thought of parental smoking, their accounts contrasted significantly with hers.

NRD: *What do you three think about your parents' smoking?*

Lindsay: *EEE-EEE[makes thumbs-down sign] [laughter].*

NRD: *[laughter] What do you think [to Leah]?*

Leah: *Don't know.*

[Leah and Alexa look at each other, then me, and shrug]

Alexa: *I don't really think about it, I just get on with what I'm doing.*

Leah: *I dinnae really care. It's like; they're outside so it doesn't really... harm us or anything.*

Lindsay: *Well, it does harm me because if I want to get something to eat or drink my mum is always sitting smoking in the kitchen. (Lindsay, Leah, Alexa, SHS study)*

In expressing indifference regarding their parents’ smoking in direct contrast to Lindsay’s clearly stated concern about her SHS exposure. They remove their discursive stake in the conversation, making a point of differentiating their opinions and therefore, by extension, *themselves*, from her.

While mothers and fathers overall were presented as protecting children from SHS exposure, if the child smoked when they were absolved from their protective duties as in Thomas’ account below (note that he only mentions his mother despite living with both his parents). Both Thomas’ parents smoked in the sitting room:

Thomas: *I don't think my Mum bothers 'cause she knows I smoke anyway.*

NRD: *So she just thinks well you're smoking so...*

Thomas: *... so we're going to be sitting in the same haar. (Thomas, SHS study)*

Although both mothers and fathers are expected to, and presented as, engaging in protective practices, mothers appear to be singled out in some accounts as those who should always maintain vigilance:

But my mum she started, when I stopped being allergic to cashewnuts then she started buy stuff like that and she gave it to me too cause I thought it was really nice, then I decided that, I thought she had checked the label and then it said on it that it could contain traces of peanuts and she hadn't checked it or anything, then you get pretty angry because it is my mum after all and she should have checked it properly. (Leo, allergy study)

Questioning mothers' responsibility is an anomaly in interviews with both children with allergies and those with smoking parents. Parents' responsibility, especially mothers' responsibility for children's health stand out as a "moral issue"; mothers should always see to that their children are safe. Home is described as synonymous with family, and a space formed by relations between its members.

Overwhelmingly, as in Harden's study of children's accounts of risks in the public and private sphere of the home (2000), children associated their home with safety. The few participants who problematized or resisted the idea of the home as *always* safe in their accounts were faced with resistance by the other participants in their respective focus groups. This resistance may be testament to children, to some extent, "doing" family and home through their accounts, and thus "defending" the normative idea of the home as a safe haven where parents (especially mothers) see to that their children are safe and sound (Mallet 2004). On the other hand, problematizing this dominant idea means that, at least partially, participants are putting their parents' moral status at stake, as well as their own safety. At the same time, questioning the idea of the home as a safe haven brings to the fore the active roles of children in making the home a safe(r) place, e.g., by being vigilant or moving away from the danger, blurring the boundaries between adult and child responsibility for managing everyday risk at home.

Despite the apparent differences between an SHS risk mostly encountered at home from parents and a food allergy risk mostly encountered outside the home, there are striking similarities in children's accounts. Constant negotiations are a feature of accounts of both SHS and allergies, in addition to tensions between children's and others' responsibility. Smoking is restricted to certain spaces in the home. It becomes clear that homes are not completely "smoke-free" or "allergen-free" and that restrictions are subject to tensions and negotiations. Children and young people move away from parents who smoke, which can also be understood as an act of disapproval. Vigilance is necessary to avoid contact with allergens at home, including not accepting products at home which they are allergic to, such as cookies containing nuts.

Further, homes are evidently not "intact units" with solid boundaries to the outer world. "Leaking homes" in terms of that people move in and out through the home and also (unknowingly) bring allergens or smoking habits which are not in line with restrictions at home are looming in young peoples' accounts. Yet for children of smoking parents, negotiations take place with parents and for children with food

allergies negotiations take place with others. To illuminate children's risk accounts we have contextualized them within a moral framework. Rather than objective knowledge, accounts of risk can be regarded as tools "in the struggle for normalization and conformity by identifying the non-risky as normal" (Hunt 2003:177–178). Risks associated with individual lifestyle and health, such as smoking is an example of a behavior which is imbued with morality. To quit smoking is a signifier for self-control and even respectability (Hunt 2003), and together with increasing demands on parents to be risk-aware (Lee et al. 2010), parental smoking may entail blame, which may also affect how children see parental smoking. The management of food allergy risk also raises moral issues, and parents are sometimes seen as overly concerned and protective. It is argued that a moderate level of anxiety can certainly be a normal response that encourages the food allergic child and the parents to minimize risk and develop adequate management strategies (see Mandell et al. 2005).

5 Riskier Settings and Child Agency

While children's own homes were presented as safe places, the homes of others and public spaces represented increased risk for both groups of children. In contrast to their own homes, where smoking and allergens are restricted, the homes of others and public spaces may require vigilance. In others' homes smoking restrictions can differ from home where smoking is only permitted in certain spaces:

Jack: *The only time I ever stand next to him when he's smoking is in the car and if I have to ask him a question when he's in the utility room, if something is wrong with the computer or something so he can help me or something.*

NRD: *But apart from that does he always smoke away from you?*

Jack: *I move away [laughter].*

NRD: *You move away? How do you do that?*

Jack: *Like when we were at a party at our neighbour's at his house and then they were all sitting round and I was there 'cause they only have one child and . . . he's a bit older than me . . . and we were just standing there and he [dad] started smoking and I was like, 'Well, maybe we can go up and watch a DVD or something.' But it's kind of difficult because my dad was smoking a lot and my neighbour I think 'cause he used to smoke it reminded him of smoking and I was like, 'What?? Doesn't matter, I'll go.'* (Jack, SHS study)

When participants like Jack talked about walking away of their own accord, it appeared to be an action which symbolized disapproval as much as one which protected from SHS. Stjerna (2015) notes young people with food allergy develop strategies as a response to the uncertainties allergy risk involve. Their own responsibility increases with age:

When I've grown up it might be even harder with my allergies, that I will have to walk around with the medicines wherever I go and then be so very careful, let's say you're going

out to eat and then you have to, yeah, no I don't know, it will, like now that I still have two parents who can ask, then I don't have to go and ask myself and that will be a bit harder and that. (Melvin, allergy study)

Indeed, in some accounts, the homes of extended family or friends were used discursively as polar opposites to demonstrate how safe their own homes were. For children with parents who smoked, the homes of others were subject to less restrictive smoking practices than their own homes:

I hate the smell. If people are smoking near you it's just [pulls face of disgust]. 'Cause I hate when I go to my granny's, she smokes all the time and when I come home to my hus I'm still smelling of it. And my brother goes: 'Are you a smoker?' 'cause I smell of smoke and I'm like, 'Nah, I've been to granny's. (Matt, SHS study)

Children with allergies also associated the homes of others with greater risk. They talk about the vigilance needed and that they need to make others aware of their allergy when visiting friends' homes, at times involving them in their allergy management:

I've told them and I think most of my friends know how they should, in case I eat some peanuts, how they should give me the shot and that and I've told them they can't have any peanuts so I don't think they would have anything like that out at home, but if it is out I can just tell them can you take that away or something, but that's never happened but if it does I'll just have to tell them. (Joel, allergy study)

Making friends aware of your allergy is particularly important when eating at their house:

Then I tell them I'm allergic against that and that and then you might think of something the whole family and me can eat. (Vincent, allergy study)

In some situations, Vincent brings his own food. For example, if he is invited to a friend's party he often "brings his own cake from home." In an effort to avoid inconveniencing others, other participants would rather eat at home:

If you're going to eat at a friend's place or their family's, it can be a bit faffy to like tell them I can't have this so you can't have it in your food, so you'd rather not eat at others' places because it feels like it'll be a bit bothersome for them to cook, so you'd rather eat at home than away like. (Sophia, allergy study)

If allergen intake with the immediate and severe consequent reaction happens at someone else's place, children worry about the feelings and reactions of others:

At some point in the summer I got, when I had a chicken-skewer, we had those thai chicken-skewers with peanuts when we were at my best friend's family's house and they still think it's really bad that that happened because I got really ill and we have to phone an ambulance and stuff, and that was when her mum turned 50 and then I got all the attention on her birthday [laughter]. (Nina, allergy study)

Children and young people either expect or wish others to acknowledge and adjust to their allergies in different situations. At the same time, others' attention may be unwelcome, particularly when they exaggerate the dangers. For example, Leo's friend has a peanut-free house for his sake and they are too "*careful with other things they don't have to be.*" He comments that "*it can't be too much fun for them*" and that he does not want to "*make it worse for them*" because of his allergy. This illustrates how the boundaries between their own and others' responsibility and their own and others' homes are drawn.

SHS risks in public places were rarely mentioned, while public places were constructed as risky for children with allergens, possibly because indoor public places in Scotland became smokefree prior to the interviews with children and young people in the SHS study. Parents whose children have asthma or allergies inform, negotiate, and act as a bridge to others who enter their home (and to the world outside the home (for children with allergies). For example, Alva states her allergy is easy to manage in school: "*probably because mum has talked to them.*" Similarly, Molly says that before they were assured that her peanut allergy was not airborne, her parents' protective practices were more extensive:

If I made a new friend for example I couldn't go to their place without either my mum or me having checked that they don't, sort of, have any nuts out and that and mum didn't really want me to go to someone else's place because she didn't really know. And then even if it was about going to the cinema, I didn't normally get to go on my own because there could be someone there who ate, ehm, and then even if we were flying somewhere mum or dad had to try and phone them to say they couldn't serve nuts or sell nuts. (Molly, allergy study)

Similarly, other children say they return home and call their parents when they have an allergic reaction:

It became really, really hard to breathe, like so hard, so I was just like ok I should just go home like, so I phoned my mum and said I couldn't breathe and that I was on my way home, she was like yes ok, then when I was nearly home I started to become unsteady a bit, and my vision started to blur and I was like, ok, I'm like going to faint, so then I phoned my mum again and she phoned like an ambulance and I just, ok, I've eaten nuts or something, she was like ok, do you have your injector and I said yes, then I injected twice and then I went in the ambulance and got really shaky [laughs a little]. (Felicia, allergy study)

While Felicia had practiced self-administering her adrenaline injector at hospital, this was the first time she took her adrenaline injector herself in a real-life situation. Despite this, her mother's supportive role remains prominent, perhaps demonstrating the transitional phase she and many of the other children occupy in managing risk.

Children and young people have to assume more responsibility to protect themselves from exposure to SHS or allergens when not at home. The participants argue that others often have quite lax smoking restrictions, compared to restrictions at their home. They also explain that when visiting others they have to inform them about their allergy and negotiate about risk management. Thus, while bracketing off the risks of SHS exposure or food allergy risks in the home to some extent, when encountered elsewhere the less familiar setting intersects with the risk which serves to intensify it.

6 Discussion

This chapter has discussed children and young people's accounts of health risks in the home using two risk case studies as vehicles to demonstrate the pivotal role the home plays in children's risk landscapes. To children and young people, the home appears to represent both a physical and relational space for risk management as any management or lack thereof is intertwined with the relational aspects of "doing" family and home. Together, family members maintain restrictions around risks. The home is largely depicted as a safe space and risky situations at home are associated to the outer world. At the same time the young people also state that they and their parents need to be vigilant to ensure the home stays a safe space, which demonstrates the complexity of young people's accounts of the home as *both* safe and unsafe.

Children and young people display high awareness of risk and engage in numerous active protective practices – challenging both the stereotype of the risk-prone teenager and the vulnerable and passive child (Rowa-Dewar et al. 2014a, b; Stjerna 2015; Gallagher et al. 2012). At the same time they are dependent on others to manage the risk entailed in secondhand smoke and food allergy risk. This raises questions of how they view others and their own responsibility. Expectations on mothers are particularly high. At the same time children and young people claim responsibility and present themselves as competent risk-managers as evident from the case studies in this chapter.

Some children speak of risk management as a learning process, a capacity they will develop over time (Stjerna 2015). In Fenton et al.'s (2011) study, young people displayed a transition away from parents, and a more independent adaption with people and to places in their environment, compared to younger children. The adolescents were "more independent, taking more risks, making more independent decisions, and advocating for themselves" (p. 179). Children and young people may have to take responsibility in informing others about their vulnerability and question the demands they can make on others to adjust to their needs, illuminating this kind of everyday risk management as a joint project carried out in interaction with others (Stjerna et al. 2014).

Negotiations which take place informally with extended family, friends, or acquaintances may reflect local understandings of how to manage risks and differ from more explicit policies and regulations in public places, such as schools (Rous and Hunt 2004). Arguably, beyond the more concrete risk management functions of such local negotiations, they will inflict on relations between the parties and may therefore be somewhat sensitive reflected in children and young people's accounts of tensions between their own and others responsibility for risk management.

Together with a small body of qualitative studies of children and risk, the case studies presented in this chapter provide a picture of children as risk managers and of current risks in the context of Northern Europe. There is a need for research on children and young people's risk perspectives which includes perspectives from several members of the family (see Harden 2000; Backett-Milburn and Harden 2004), to better capture the complexities of risk management in the context of family life, and extend this to the Majority World. A wider methodological approach including ethnographic

field work may be particularly important since the idea of the home as a safe haven is a normative idea across cultures *and* as risk constructions, which may impact on children's (as well as adults) social identity. Drawing on Joffe (1999, 2003), the bracketing of risk in the home might reflect both a more general identity protection function of people's risk understandings – risks tend to be externalized to “the other” and unfamiliar – as well as the taken-for-granted and normative idea of the family and home as safe haven.

7 Conclusion

The home appears to be a “blind” spot for risks, as demonstrated both by the limited literature on the home and everyday risks from children and young people's perspectives and in the bracketing of risk in the home prominent in children's accounts. The home is regarded as a relational space where parents (mothers) are depicted to have the utmost responsibility for children's health, and it is shared to some extent by children and young people themselves.

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Children's Contributions in Family Work: Two Cultural Paradigms

10

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Abstract

This chapter discusses two cultural paradigms of children's involvement in family and community endeavors that channel many aspects of children's everyday lives and their families' approaches to child rearing. One paradigm – in which children are *segregated* from many family and community endeavors – is commonly assumed in scholarship on children's development to characterize childhood generally, but this paradigm is likely to be limited to highly schooled communities like those of many researchers. In a distinct paradigm that occurs in some communities in which Western schooling has not been prevalent, children are *integrated as valued, mutual contributors* in family and community endeavors. Theories of motivation and prosocial development do not yet adequately account for learning paradigms related to children's integration as collaborative contributors in mature endeavors.

The chapter examines how each paradigm organizes children's contributions in everyday household work, with an illustration of cultural differences between two communities in Mexico. It appears that in the paradigm where children are *integrated* as collaborative contributors in shared, mutual family responsibilities, children regularly take initiative to make complex prosocial contributions and their mothers value their helpfulness. By contrast, it appears that in the paradigm where children are *segregated* from mature family responsibilities, they contribute minimally, they seldom take initiative in family work, and their mothers assign them their "own" chores to do and rarely expect children's help without adult management. Our chapter considers the potential ramifications of the segregation or collaborative integration of children in meaningful and mutual roles in family and community endeavors.

Keywords

Childhood · Chores · Collaboration · Culture · Initiative · Indigenous · Mexico · Middle class · Motive · Prosocial helping · Schooling · Socialization

1 Introduction

A widespread cultural difference in the organization of childhood is whether children are *integrated collaboratively* in the range of mature activities of their communities or are *segregated* from mature endeavors and are instead limited to child-specialized activities. We present and expand upon a growing literature indicating that distinct paradigms of participation in family and community life shape children's opportunities for learning and prosocial development, especially their learning to help and

collaborate responsibly with others (Rogoff 2016; see also Rogoff 2003; Paradise and Rogoff 2009 for reviews, and Lareau 2000; Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik 2013; Zelizer 1985, for related work).

In a *collaborative integration* paradigm, adults often guide and facilitate children's substantial voluntary contributions to mutual productive endeavors. Rogoff and colleagues highlight the centrality of collaborative integration, with children taking initiative in helping in mature family and community endeavors, in a conceptual model referred to as *Learning by Observing and Pitching In* (LOPI; Rogoff 2014; Correa-Chávez et al. 2015; Paradise and Rogoff 2009). LOPI is a multifaceted model that describes a way of organizing learning in which children are included as valued contributors to the endeavors of their family and community, collaborating with initiative and responsibility. It appears worldwide but seems to be especially prevalent in many Indigenous and Indigenous-heritage communities of the Americas (Correa-Chávez et al. 2015).

This chapter draws attention to two key features of the LOPI model – integration and collaboration (facets 1 and 3 of the 7-facet model; Rogoff 2014). Although integration by itself distinguishes this paradigm from a paradigm in which children are segregated from the bulk of family and community endeavors, we also discuss collaboration because some other cultural communities integrate children in family and community endeavors in ways that are not based on mutuality, role flexibility, and collaboration (e.g., Bühler-Niederberger and Schwittek 2014). The research on LOPI is based in the practices of Indigenous and Indigenous-heritage communities of the Americas, where integration appears to be routinely collaborative.

In a *segregation* paradigm, adults often attempt to control children's involvement and delimit children's contributions, managing children's individualized efforts (see Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik 2013; Paradise et al. 2014). This seems to be a common way of organizing childhood in many communities where extensive schooling has been prevalent for generations.

As an orientation to the two paradigms examined in this chapter, consider two children helping to wash their family's clothes under different circumstances and for markedly distinct purposes (see also Mejía-Arauz et al. 2013). One child washes clothes to comply with their parents' chore assignments. This child engages in an activity whose overarching purpose is, perhaps, being a well-behaved child (or, common in middle-class communities, earning money). The child's parents may intend to teach responsibility to the child, assigning the chore and attempting to motivate the child's engagement in conformity with particular cultural ideas about "good parenting." The child's and parents' reasons for the child's involvement in family work involve distinct overarching purposes, even if both the child and the parent are carrying out parts of the washing.

A second child takes initiative to help wash clothes in order to engage with others in accomplishing needed work. This child's engagement with others in a mutual endeavor is part-and-parcel of their collaborative initiative in making a contribution. The child and adult share the overarching purposes of their activity – helping the group and getting work done. The parents of this second child are also concerned with cultural ideas about good parenting; however, for them this is based on

integrating the child's activity with shared purposes – allowing for the child's mutual, collaborative involvement and supporting the child's autonomy in contributing. Even though the washing actions of the children in these two examples are identical, the extent to which the child and parents in each example are collaboratively engaged with shared overarching purposes differs. This chapter argues that these two patterns reflect distinct paradigms of learning and socialization.

The chapter first discusses possibilities for expanding current theories of children's motivation and prosocial development by considering the role of these two paradigms – *collaborative integration* or *segregation*. The chapter then reviews evidence of cultural differences in children's involvement in mature family and community endeavors and related evidence of cultural expectations guiding children's helpfulness and autonomy.

Next the chapter illustrates the *collaborative integration* and *segregation* paradigms with research comparing two distinct communities of Guadalajara, Mexico, that differ both in mothers' views on how children's participation in household work should originate and on whether children's contributions are made with collaborative initiative or are based on adults assigning and managing children's involvement. The contrast between these communities in mothers' views, and the alignment between mothers' views and how their own children contribute to household work, provides support for paradigmatic differences in the organization of childhood.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of possible affordances of childhoods organized around the *collaborative integration* paradigm, including especially cultural support for children's development of collaborative initiative and for engagement with shared family and community purposes.

1.1 Expanding Theories of Children's Motivation and Prosocial Development with Consideration of the Cultural Organization of Childhood

The *segregation* paradigm may be implicitly assumed by some prominent motivational theories such as those contrasting "intrinsic" with "extrinsic" motivations or those concerned with children's engagement in solo, school-like activity (Coppens and Alcalá 2015; Matusov 1998). Drawing largely from research in middle-class, highly schooled communities, these theories assume that adults' role is to manage and attempt to control children's involvement in so-called "adult" activities or in preparation for them. (As pointed out by Morelli et al. (2003), the division of community life into child and adult worlds is itself a product and a sign of the *segregation* paradigm.) This paradigm of childhood is often implicitly assumed to characterize children's everyday lives in general, far beyond the middle-class, highly schooled communities on which it is based.

A consequence of assuming that child development involves segregation from mature endeavors is that this particular cultural pattern may be treated as a generalized principle of motivational and developmental theories (Danziger 1997; Medin and Bang 2014). For example, the assumption that children's activity – or childhood

in general – necessarily occurs separately from mature family and community activities often involves a dichotomization of child and adult roles and a resulting mechanistic tendency to search for “sources” of children’s motivation inside versus outside the child (Plaut and Markus 2005; Walker et al. 2010). Internalization/externalization metaphors abound in addressing this epistemological problem; however, the basic dualist assumption that individuals and contexts (including the activity of others) can be meaningfully understood as separate entities remains problematic and reflective of particular, often middle-class, cultural assumptions (Matusov 1998; Rogoff 1990, 2003). Contrasting views frame children’s development in terms of the mutually constituted nature of individual and social processes, with shared involvement of adults and children in cultural practices contributing to children’s transformation of participation (Rogoff 1998, 2003).

The *collaborative integration* paradigm makes it clear that motivational forces do not “act on” individuals but instead are inherent features of meaningful participation in cultural activities (Lee 1961; Paradise 2005; Rogoff 2003, 2016). Sociocultural/historical perspectives emphasize that the overarching purposes (“motives”) of cultural activities guide participation, with individuals shaping and contributing to those purposes as they engage in cultural practices (Leont’ev 1978). In the *segregation* paradigm, by this view, childhood consists of engagement with primarily child-specialized cultural “motives” and may seldom involve sharing in overarching cultural purposes with adults. By contrast, children’s *collaborative integration* in mature family and community endeavors engages children with these overarching purposes. As with the two children washing clothes, children’s collaborative integration deepens their access to the mature motives that organize family and community life (e.g., ensuring the economic viability of the family) that in other communities might be reserved for adults (consult Hedegaard et al. (2012), Leont’ev (1978), and Roth (2011) for more depth regarding this central premise of cultural-historical activity theory).

This chapter highlights recent research that helps broaden explanations of children’s prosocial motivation beyond consideration of aspects of tasks, ways that adults manage children’s motivation, or ideas about individual differences in altruistic tendencies. The chapter brings the collaborative aspect of the *collaborative integration* paradigm into dialogue with existing theories of motivation, to make sense of observations that collaborative social organization of mature productive endeavors in some communities seems to foster children’s autonomous interest in contributing (Carr and Walton 2014; Correa-Chávez et al. 2015; Damon et al. 2003; Larson 2011; Rogoff et al. 2015; Walton and Cohen 2011).

The motivational importance of social connection is not a new idea (Kâğıtçıbaşı 2005; Ryan and Powelson 1991). However, to understand the development of children’s “collaborative initiative” (Coppens et al. 2014a), relating with others cannot be conceived as only an inner emotional experience of social support.

In communities where productive endeavors are shared among children and adults, relating socially with others and contributing with initiative to shared endeavors may be one-and-the-same motivational process (Mejía-Arauz et al. 2013; 2015). Taking initiative to helpfully contribute in shared activities appears to be central to *how*

children and other family and community members relate to one another in Indigenous communities of the Americas where the *collaborative integration* model is prevalent (Alcalá et al. 2014; Good Eshelman 2005). It may follow that segregating children's roles and responsibilities from the productive efforts of adults undermines children's interest in being helpful and collaborating under their own initiative.

2 Cultural Differences in Children's Integration in or Segregation from Mature Productive Endeavors

A basic cultural difference in the organization of children's learning and development concerns whether or not children participate as valued contributors in mature family and community endeavors, sharing responsibilities while learning to contribute (Paradise 1998; Paradise and Rogoff 2009; Rogoff 2003; Rogoff et al. 2014a).

In many Indigenous and Indigenous-heritage communities of the Americas, children commonly are included and collaborate with initiative in the range of mature, productive endeavors (Bolin 2006; Corona Caraveo et al. 2010; Correa-Chávez et al. 2015; de Haan 1999; Morelli et al. 2003; Rogoff et al. 2014a). For example, the daily activities of toddlers in a Yucatan Maya community were organized around mature family endeavors, and toddlers chose to engage with these endeavors more often than with unrelated play (Gaskins 1999). This approach is seldom accompanied by, and may mitigate the need for, adult-managed child-specialized activities (Morelli et al. 2003).

By contrast, in many middle-class European-heritage communities, segregation from mature endeavors fundamentally characterizes children's activities, beginning in early childhood (Hernández 1994; Lareau 2000). Morelli et al. (2003) found that toddlers from two middle-class European American communities had less access to adult work than toddlers from Guatemalan Maya and Efe (Democratic Republic of Congo) communities and were more often involved in lessons taught by adult experts on scholastic or other topics. Common practices that may derive from this segregation paradigm in many middle-class communities include adult-managed child-specialized activities, explicit role-based division of family work responsibilities, extrinsic rule-based control by adults, and contingent payment – with family struggles – for chore completion (Alcalá et al. 2014; Coppens and Alcalá 2015; Paradise et al. 2014).

Many Indigenous American communities view children's integration and collaboration in mature endeavors as essential to their development as human beings with dignity and responsibility (Alcalá et al. 2014; Cardoso, 2015; Mejía-Arauz et al. 2013). Indeed, children's presence and participation in family and community events is often seen as necessary to the continuation of the cultural practices of the community. Children's involvement includes challenging activities, including ones that middle-class communities would consider too mature or difficult for children, such as young children translating for their families, with access to and knowledge of sensitive family legal, medical, and financial information (Orellana 2001) and

children and youth contributing to community protests and civil resistance efforts (Corona Caraveo 2006; Solís et al. 2013).

Children's collaborative initiative in the *collaborative integration* paradigm challenges the ethnocentric assumption that children's involvement in formal work is likely forced, either by adults or by family economic circumstances. Children's own perspectives on their involvement in mature productive endeavors often clearly oppose such an assumption, as children often report satisfaction in being able to contribute (Coppens et al. 2014a; Liebel 2001, 2004). Family and community expectations and values play an important role in ensuring that children's work involvement is developmentally beneficial in the *collaborative integration* paradigm. The voluntary and mutual aspects of children's involvement in many mature family and community activities, which include formal work, also resonates with recent challenges to the usefulness of work/play or formal/informal dichotomies for understanding working children's learning (Bourdillon et al. 2010).

2.1 Cultural Expectations of Children's Helpfulness and Autonomy

In some Indigenous American communities, parents value children's opportunities to contribute with initiative in mature endeavors, and they stress the importance of children's autonomy as well as responsibility. In a Mazahua Indigenous community of Mexico, parents reported that "too much teaching" distracts and demotivates children's learning (de Haan 1999, p. 91). Children's autonomy in learning is also central to interpersonal "nonintervention" values – a moral sense that one person should avoid directing the actions of another, including in teaching or questioning – in Cherokee and many other Indigenous American communities (Thomas 1958; see also Bolin 2006).

Children from many Indigenous American backgrounds share in cultural expectations that help is given without being asked, by recognizing and responding to others' needs. In Mexico, this cultural value is referred to as being *acomodida/o* (López et al. 2012). To support children in learning these values, parents accommodate children's abilities and interests in shared endeavors (de Haan 1999; Gaskins 1999; Paoli 2003). In turn, support for children's autonomy and initiative is regarded as guiding children's development of a long-term commitment to helping the family and community (Bolin 2006; Correa-Chávez et al. 2015; Lorente Fernández 2006; Mosier and Rogoff 2003; Ramírez Sánchez 2007).

In many middle-class European-heritage communities, children's minimal contributions to mature endeavors seem to accompany a cultural emphasis on self-focused activities such as schooling, extracurricular classes, and chores focused on one's own things and messes (Goodnow and Delaney 1989; Klein et al. 2009). Emphasis on "ownership" of responsibility in personal domains appears to fit the values and socialization goals of many middle-class families, and these "fairness" values are socialized beginning in infancy (Sloane et al. 2012; Warton and Goodnow 1991). Simple directive questions such as "Who got this stuff out?" may convey

cultural ideas about the boundaries of children's responsibilities (Goodnow 1998). Some evidence suggests that assignment of self-focused chores may discourage children from helping the family and reduce their initiative in contributing (Bonawitz et al. 2011; Grusec et al. 1996; Mejía-Arauz et al. 2015). Such implicit cultural "rules of engagement" for children's participation in everyday activities may inform how adults and children coordinate and how family and community members work and learn together (Harkness et al. 2010).

2.2 Cultural Variation in Children Helping the Family with Collaborative Initiative

Children in many Indigenous and Indigenous-heritage communities of the Americas contribute with initiative to a wide range of household work and other mature productive endeavors (Ames 2013; Bolin 2006; de Haan 1999; Gaskins 1999; Paradise and Rogoff 2009). For example, 1 and 2-year-old Maya children in Chiapas anticipated others' needs and eagerly helped their family with everyday work (Martí 2011). In a Yucatan Maya community, toddlers spent over a quarter of their day observing and contributing to household work under their own initiative, choosing to do so more frequently than they played (Gaskins 1999). Relatedly, US Latino immigrant children often take initiative to translate documents and conversations, helping to accomplish productive family goals (e.g., Orellana 2001). Children's collaborative initiative was striking in two studies of children's contributions to family household work in an Indigenous-heritage community of Guadalajara and was more common than among children in two nearby middle-class communities (Alcalá et al. 2014; Coppens et al. 2014a). These contributions are characterized by both autonomy and responsibility; initiative appears to be fundamental to how children in many Indigenous American communities get involved in shared endeavors and is highly valued by families (Paradise and de Haan 2009; Paradise and Rogoff 2009).

Children from many middle-class, highly schooled communities – whether European or Mexican heritage – contribute minimally to family household work and other mature endeavors and seldom do so with initiative (Alcalá et al. 2014; Coppens et al. 2014a; Klein et al. 2009; Larson and Verma 1999). In one of the most comprehensive ethnographic studies to date on middle-class family life in the United States, less than 3% of the activities in which children were participating involved contributing to household work, and this participation was generally parent-initiated and involved considerable struggle (Klein and Goodwin 2013). The researchers in this study suggested that middle-class children's minimal help and lack of initiative in household work result from inconsistent family routines that, if formalized, would delineate who was responsible for what tasks and would minimize the extent to which those obligations were open to negotiation. In essence, the researchers recommended a more explicit commitment to aspects of the *segregation* paradigm. Yet, evidence from many Indigenous American communities suggests that flexible,

mutual responsibilities with child autonomy support children's helpfulness and collaborative initiative, in a *collaborative integration* paradigm.

3 Investigating Children's Contributions in Integrated and Segregated Childhoods

This section traces connections between children's contributions and their parents' values regarding children's involvement in everyday family work, with new evidence from two distinct communities in Mexico whose values and practices align with either the *collaborative integration* or the *segregation* paradigms of child learning and development. (Research was supported by the UCSC Frank X. Barron Creativity Award, NSF Grant 0837898, and the UCSC Foundation endowed chair held by Barbara Rogoff.) The new evidence shows how mothers' cultural values relate to patterns of children's participation, building on these two communities' contrasts in children's integration or segregation from productive family and community endeavors (see Alcalá et al. 2014; Coppens et al. 2014a; Rogoff et al. 2014b).

The research team led by the authors of this chapter interviewed 22 mothers of fourth-grade children about their child's involvement in household work, in each of two communities in urban Guadalajara: an *Indigenous-heritage* historically Nahuatl community with limited involvement in Western schooling and a middle-class *Cosmopolitan* community that has engaged in Western schooling and professional occupations for generations. The shorthand labels "Indigenous-heritage" and "Cosmopolitan" refer to the entire constellations of cultural practices (including occupations, histories of involvement in Western schooling and urban vs. rural life, social status, ethnic histories, family structure, and many others). These shorthand labels do not suggest that one or another feature of family and community life "cause" other features (Rogoff et al. 2014b).

The communities differed in their familiarity with and use of some Indigenous American practices. Although just two Indigenous-heritage families spoke an Indigenous language at home, all 22 families used local Indigenous practices related to pregnancy and childbirth (see also Rogoff et al. 2014b). No Cosmopolitan families reported that a family member spoke an Indigenous language and just 2 of them reported using local Indigenous practices related to pregnancy and childbirth.

The two communities also differed markedly in their experience with Western schooling, in both current and prior generations. Indigenous-heritage children's grandparents averaged 2.7 completed grades of schooling; their mothers and fathers both averaged 7 completed grades (with a maximum of 9 for any parent). Families in the Cosmopolitan community commonly have at least 3 generations of extensive experience with Western schooling (Rogoff et al. 2014b): These children's grandparents averaged 11.2 completed grades of schooling; mothers and fathers averaged 16 and 17 completed grades, respectively (with a minimum of 9 for any parent).

The children averaged 9.5 and 9.8 years old, with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. There were striking differences in children's participation in

adult-organized afterschool and extracurricular activities. Only 4 of the 22 children in the Indigenous-heritage community were involved at all in adult-organized extracurricular activities; they spent on average about 40 min per week. By contrast, all but 4 of the 21 Cosmopolitan children spent on average 4.6 h per week in adult-organized extracurricular activities.

The next section explores mothers' views on how a child's help with family household work should originate, followed by mothers' reports of the extent and initiative of their own children's contributions to family work. The section then examines the correspondence between these two angles on children's work at home – mothers' views of how children should become involved and their reports of what the children actually do to help at home.

3.1 Mothers' Views on How Child Help with Household Work Should Originate

Mothers' views regarding how children should get involved in family household work and what role parents have in originating their help distinguish the *collaborative integration* and *segregation* paradigms. To get at this, interviews were carried out in a conversational format by local native Spanish speakers (the language of all participants), focusing on three key questions dealing with the fairness of assigning children household work that benefitted others: "Would it be fair or unfair to ask a child to: Make an older sibling's bed; make their mother's bed; mop the house?" (These questions were based on research on children's involvement in household work, Goodnow et al. 1991). Patterns in mothers' responses were similar across all 3 of these tasks.

Importantly, some mothers challenged the paradigm framed implicitly in the fairness questions. Evidence of "paradigm misalignment" between the assumptions implicit in such questions and the values and practices of the mothers appears in the example below. (Findings in Blake et al. (2015) also suggest that concerns about "fairness" may be misaligned with what this chapter refers to as the *collaborative integration* paradigm common to many Indigenous and Indigenous-heritage American communities.) This Indigenous-heritage mother articulates the mismatch between her values of collaborative initiative and the idea of fairness as a principle guiding children's household contributions:

Interviewer: Would it be fair or unfair to ask a child to make their mother's bed?

Mother: Well, I'm not sure if... He's never been asked to help like that before, but it's that the word "fair" seems very very strong to me. Better than fair would be, as if someone... I prefer that one wouldn't have to ask for the child's help at all. That the child sees an unmade bed and makes it, without needing to be asked. It's great to just once in a while say, "Hey, you helped with the bed. That's great." Better would be if the help fit with the child's intentions... Because talking about fair, about fairness and unfairness, just strikes me as very strong. Jeez, it's as if you're putting the child to the task of making a bed, isn't it?

Almost half (10) of the Indigenous-heritage mothers resisted the “fair or unfair” line of inquiry or protested that the idea of fairness is in opposition to the collaborative organization of family household activities. (No Cosmopolitan mothers expressed these views.) These Indigenous-heritage mothers disagreed with any form of obliging children’s help and opposed contractual arrangements for organizing children’s contributions. For example, another Indigenous-heritage mother offered the following:

Interviewer: Would it be fair or unfair to ask a child to make their mother’s bed?
Mother: No because, in my case that has never happened because [my child says,] “Mamá, let me make your bed.” In other words, they do it themselves without anyone telling them to.
Interviewer: So would it be fair or unfair to you?
Mother: Well that’s neither here nor there.
Interviewer: OK. So you’re saying that here your kids do it/
Mother: (interjects) /Everything.
Interviewer: without being asked, right?
Mother: Yeah, they just do it.

To examine the prevalence of such values, mothers’ responses emphasizing collaborative organization of family household activities were categorized as based on *reciprocal responsibility with child initiative*. The primary contrasting form of response emphasized children’s household work being based on *individual-focused contractual chores*. Some mothers’ responses fit neither of those mutually exclusive primary categories but instead referred to *circumstantial helping*, where children’s contributions to family household work would be viewed as fair if arising from unusual circumstances, such as when children occasionally filled in for others. (Circumstantial helping was reported by fewer than a third of the mothers in each community; see Table 1.) No mother in either community indicated that children should not be involved at all in family household work or self-care chores. (Inter-rater reliabilities were based on percent agreement between two bilingual coders, both familiar with the region, on 65% of the interviews. Percent agreement for each of the categories was above 90%.)

Almost three-fourths of the Indigenous-heritage mothers emphasized *reciprocal responsibility with child initiative*, which included protests of the “fairness” frame for many of them (see Table 1): All family members work flexibly together, and children’s help with family household work should come about under their own

Table 1 Frequencies and percents of mothers’ views on how children’s contributions to family household work should originate

	Indigenous-heritage	Cosmopolitan	Significance	Effect size
Reciprocal responsibility with child initiative	16 72.7%	2 9.5%	$\chi^2 (2) = 20.52$ $p < .001$	$\phi_c = .691$
Individual-focused contractual chores	1 4.5%	12 57.1%		
Circumstantial help	5 22.7%	7 33.3%		

initiative. For these mothers, initiative and coordination with others were both valued means and goals of involving children in family household work. Especially when children took initiative to pitch in, their help was viewed as fair and appropriate, as articulated by another Indigenous-heritage mother:

Mother: Here my two children get to it and contribute by themselves, “Look little brother, I’ll tell you how to do it,” and well, they take care of it themselves.

Interviewer: OK. But if for example, a mother asks a child to make their older sibling’s bed. Would this be fair or unfair to you? [.]

Mother: Yes, fair. [.] Of course everyone is able to. One shouldn’t say they can’t. In other words, it’s all the same. But at the same time, it’s important to not obligate them, “Alright, now *you are* going to make the bed.” No.

By contrast, over half of Cosmopolitan mothers emphasized *individual-focused contractual chores*. They reported that children’s help with family household work originated not with children but with parents’ organizational and motivational efforts. Cosmopolitan mothers indicated a hierarchical, top-down division of household work into personal domains of responsibility. They commonly explained that the fairness of a child’s contributions to family household work would depend on whether tasks were assigned or part of a previous “deal” that delimited what children would be responsible for. Children had explicit domains of personal responsibility; requesting children to help outside of these explicit and implicit contracts would be considered unfair.

Interviewer: Would it be fair or unfair to ask child to make their older siblings’ bed?

Cosmopolitan mother: [Explaining her earlier response that it would be unfair if it was a common occurrence]. . . but if it was according to a distribution of work and the older brother did some other chore everyday, the garden or some other thing, fine. As if there was an explicit exchange of responsibilities, then it would be OK.

3.2 Children’s Extent and Initiative in Contributions to Family Household Work and Self-Care Chores

This chapter suggests that the *collaborative integration* paradigm may support children helping autonomously, whereas the *segregation* paradigm sets boundaries on how and to what extent children have access and can contribute to mature family work. In particular, the *collaborative integration* paradigm, evidenced in the Indigenous-heritage Mexican mothers’ responses and descriptions, seems to support children in making responsible contributions to family household work under their own collaborative initiative. By contrast, when children are *segregated* from making mature contributions to family household work, as in many middle-class communities, their involvement appears to be minimal and to originate with adults’ requests and assignments.

All mothers in both communities reported that their child was involved in some way in family household work when asked to report on what household activities

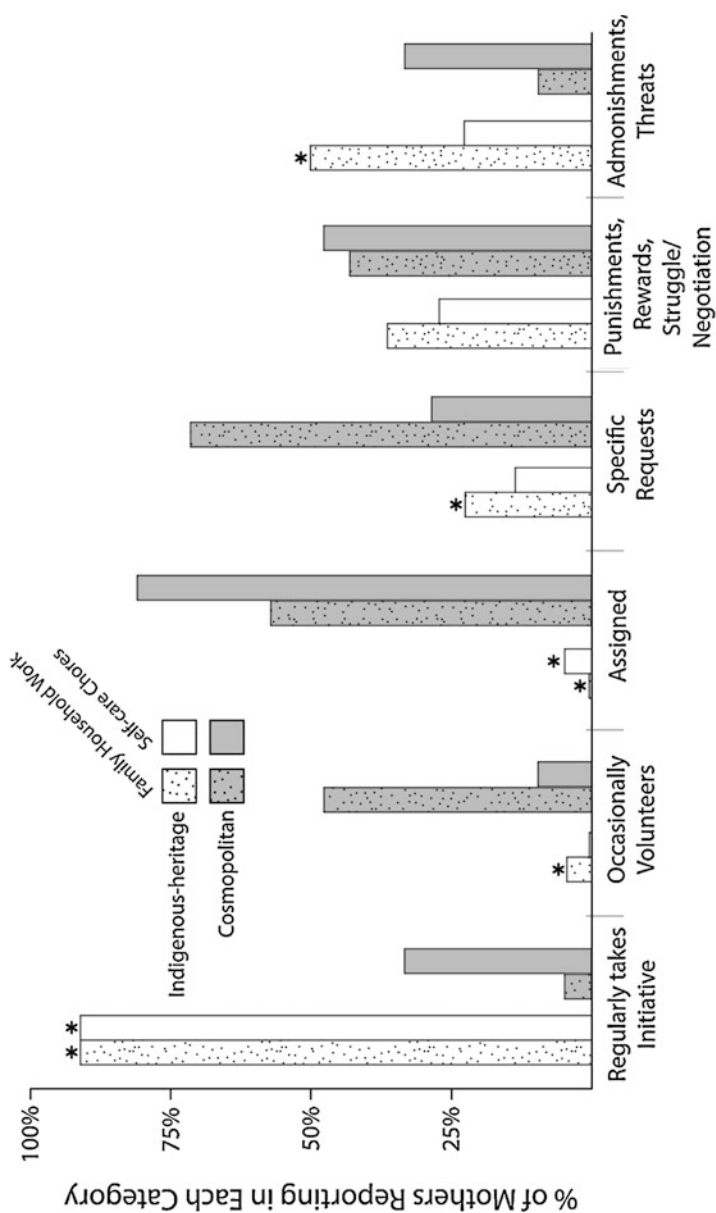
Table 2 Frequencies and percents of mothers' reports on the voluntariness of children's contributions to family household work and self-care chores

	Indigenous-heritage		Cosmopolitan		Significance	Effect size
Family household work						
Regularly takes initiative	20	90.9%	1	4.8%	$\chi^2(1) = 31.91$, $p < .001$	$\phi c = .861$
Assigned	0	0.0%	12	57.1%	$\chi^2(1) = 17.44$, $p < .001$	$\phi c = .637$
Specifically requested	5	22.7%	15	71.4%	$\chi^2(1) = 17.44$, $p < .001$	$\phi c = .488$
Occasionally volunteers	1	4.5%	10	47.6%	$\chi^2(1) = 10.47$, $p < .001$	$\phi c = .493$
Punishments, rewards, or struggles/negotiation	8	36.4%	9	42.9%	n.s.	–
Admonishments or threats	11	50.0%	2	9.5%	$\chi^2(1) = 8.35$, $p < .004$	$\phi c = .441$
Self-care chores						
Regularly takes initiative	20	90.9%	7	33.3%	$\chi^2(1) = 15.24$, $p < .001$	$\phi c = .595$
Assigned	1	4.5%	17	81.0%	$\chi^2(1) = 25.77$, $p < .001$	$\phi c = .774$
Specifically requested	3	13.6%	6	28.6%	n.s.	–
Occasionally volunteers	0	0.0%	2	9.5%	n.s.	–
Punishments, rewards, or struggles/negotiation	6	27.3%	10	47.6%	n.s.	–
Admonishments of threats	5	22.7%	7	33.3%	n.s.	–

children were regularly involved in and how children got involved in helping with family household work, which was defined as work that benefitted the entire family (as contrasted with self-care). However, each community arranged for children's contributions differently, and children's initiative was a main distinguishing feature (see Table 2 and Fig. 1).

Children's contributions in family household work. Indigenous-heritage children were reported to help extensively with a broad and complex range of everyday family work, closely replicating Alcalá et al. (2014) and Coppens et al. (2014a). On average, Indigenous-heritage children contributed almost twice the extent of family household work as did the Cosmopolitan children (mean score of 11.2 and 6.1, SD = 5.2 and 3.3, respectively; $t(41) = 3.87$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.21$). (For coding procedures, see Alcalá et al. (2014) and Coppens et al. (2014a). All reliabilities for the range, complexity, and voluntariness of children's contributions were good to excellent.)

In addition, almost all (91%) of Indigenous-heritage mothers reported their child *regularly taking initiative* to help with family household work, autonomously taking on and helping with work that needed doing, like the rest of the family. Nearly all Indigenous-heritage mothers emphasized that their child desired to be helpful



Voluntariness of Children's Contributions in 2 Types of Household Work

Fig. 1 Bar graphs showing percentage of mothers in the Indigenous-heritage and Cosmopolitan communities reporting on the voluntariness of children's contributions to family household work and self-care chores. Asterisks show statistically significant between-community comparisons, above the Indigenous-heritage bars regardless of direction of difference

(e.g., “*le nace ayudar*”), but only one Cosmopolitan mother reported their child regularly helping with initiative. One Indigenous-heritage mother describes such helpfulness:

Mother: When I haven't come home yet from work, they take the initiative to pick up by themselves. By themselves they get in there and do it, and when I've arrived they say “I've already picked up, I swept, I mopped, etc. We just left the dishes for you to do.” They even give me things to do.

Interviewer: How do they organize themselves to do it?

Mother: It must be that they get together and say, “Ok, I'll sweep, you mop, you do this, and I'll do that.”

In striking contrast, Cosmopolitan children were reported to be minimally involved in family household work and most often under parental *assignments* (a prearranged contract that delineates for children what chores are “theirs” to do) and *specific requests* (a one-time contractual assignment). Most Cosmopolitan families gave children a few low-complexity chores such as clearing the dinner dishes from the kitchen table, and children's work was limited to these activities. In addition, just under half of Cosmopolitan children *occasionally volunteered* assistance in family household work beyond these assignments, usually because they found the task personally attractive (e.g., helping in the kitchen when a favorite food was being prepared).

Some mothers in both communities reported using disciplinary correctives. To get children involved in family household work, about one third of mothers in each community reported sometimes using *punishments, rewards, and struggles and negotiations*. In addition, half of Indigenous-heritage mothers reported using forms of persuasion such as *admonishing* children or using *empty threats* to spur their participation in family household work, which was uncommon in the Cosmopolitan community.

Children's contributions in self-care chores. All children in both communities reported to help in some way with self-care chores. However, Indigenous-heritage children made more varied and complex contributions than did Cosmopolitan children (mean score of 7.3 and 4.7, $SD = 3.8$ and 2.1 , respectively; $t(41) = 2.71$, $p = .010$, $d = 0.85$).

The pattern of initiative in self-care chores among Indigenous-heritage children was similar to their involvement in family household work (see Table 2, Fig. 1). Like with family household work, 91% of Indigenous-heritage mothers reported their child regularly doing self-care chores with initiative. Only 1 Indigenous-heritage mother reported assigning a child to do self-care chores. Only about a quarter of these mothers resorted to punishments, rewards, or experienced struggles/negotiation, or used admonishments or threats, whereas a third to half of them used such measures for family household work. (Perhaps the Indigenous-heritage children by this age had taken on self-care responsibilities more fully than family household work.)

Fewer Cosmopolitan mothers (only 33% of them) than Indigenous-heritage mothers reported that their children regularly took initiative in self-care chores.

However, this 33% reported a higher proportion of initiative than the Cosmopolitan mothers had reported for family household work (only 5%). The greater initiative in Cosmopolitan children's self-care chores (compared with their initiative in family work) seems to be accounted for by girls, who helped with self-care chores more voluntarily than boys: 62.5% of girls and 15.4% of boys regularly contributed with initiative.

In the Cosmopolitan community, 81% of mothers reported assigning self-care chores to their children (vs. just one Indigenous-heritage mother). The 81% of Cosmopolitan mothers who relied on assigning self-care chores was higher than the 57% of them who used assignment to get the children involved in family household work. Here too, the pattern differs by gender: 50% of girls and 100% of boys did self-care chores under assignment. Punishments, rewards, or struggles/negotiations were similar in frequency in self-care chores as for family household work, but were more common for Cosmopolitan boys than girls. The Cosmopolitan mothers used admonishments or threats three times as often for self-care chores as for family work. (These gender differences were statistically significant; gender differences were not significant in the Indigenous-heritage community.)

It appears that the platform for "teaching responsibility" for the Cosmopolitan children is self-care chores, more than family household work. The results are consistent with middle-class family patterns, emphasizing responsibility in personal domains and low expectations for children's contributions to work benefitting others or the family as a whole. The Cosmopolitan parents may feel that inducing their children to help beyond self-care chores would require more heavy-handed efforts to control than seem worth it.

What about children's contributions to child caregiving? The interview also asked, secondarily, about children's contributions to child caregiving. The pattern was a little different than with family household work and self-care. The pattern for children's extent and range of helping with child caregiving was similar to the cultural contrasts in children's family or self-care contributions: The 16 (of 22) Indigenous-heritage children who were reported to help in some way with child caregiving were reported to contribute over twice as much as the 11 (of 21) Cosmopolitan children who helped with child caregiving (mean score of 12.9 vs. 6.2, $SD = 6.8$ and 5.5 , respectively; $t(25) = 2.71$, $p = .012$, $d = 1.10$. [Girls contributed over 3 times more extensively to child caregiving than boys, in the Indigenous-heritage community, $t(19) = 3.37$, $p = .003$, $d = 1.55$.])

Child caregiving in both communities was largely driven by the children's interest and voluntary involvement, but regular initiative-based contributions to child caregiving were much more commonly reported for Indigenous-heritage children (70% vs. 24%). Unlike the findings for family household work and self-care chores, no Cosmopolitan mother assigned children to help with child caregiving.

The reasons for not assigning caregiving were different in the two communities even though no mother in either community reported doing so: When asked whether it would be fair or unfair to ask a child to regularly care for a younger sibling, nearly half of Cosmopolitan mothers indicated that requesting children's help with child caregiving – or even allowing it – is inappropriate or too difficult for children. Only

1 of the 22 Indigenous-heritage mothers said this, and half of the Indigenous-heritage mothers emphasized that children's involvement in caregiving should come from children's initiative, which very few of the Cosmopolitan mothers said. (The remaining third of mothers in both communities reported that asking for children's help with child caregiving would be fair only under unusual circumstances, such as when a primary caregiver was unavailable.)

3.3 Correspondence Between Mothers' Views and Children's Family Household Work

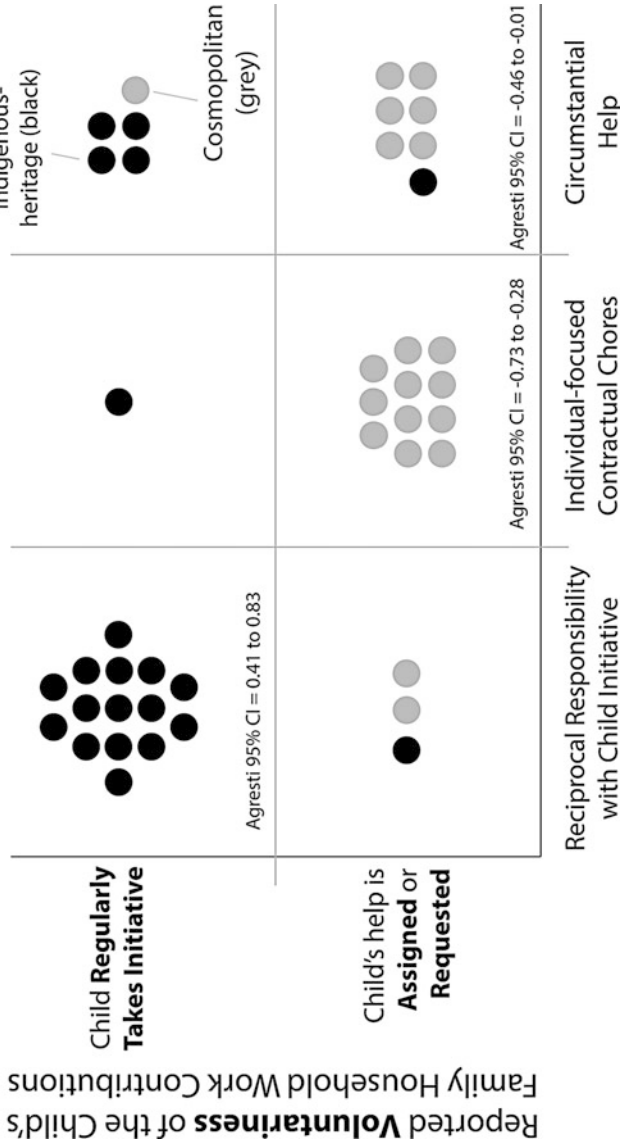
The claim that the differences between communities constitute distinct paradigms is supported by findings that mothers' views and children's contributions within each community formed distinct clusters (see Fig. 2). In the two most prominent clusters, mothers' views on how children's help should originate were tightly linked to the ways in which children participated in family household work. This thematic coherence in cultural values and practices gives evidence of broader paradigms that motivate and guide how parents (and children) understand children's role in family and community activities (see also Harkness et al. 2010).

This coherence appears in cluster graphs that made case-by-case links between each mother's views of how children's participation in family household work should originate – through *reciprocal responsibility with child initiative*, *individual-focused contractual chores*, or *circumstantial help* – and her report of whether her own *child regularly takes initiative* or the *child's help is assigned or requested*. (No children were both reported to regularly take initiative and to have help assigned.)

The clearest cluster (the top-left cluster of Fig. 2) fits with expectations for the *collaborative integration* paradigm; it involved only Indigenous-heritage families – 15 of the 22 of them. The children were reported to regularly take initiative to contribute to family household work, and their mothers regarded children's help as appropriate when undertaken with autonomy and guided by reciprocal, flexibly shared responsibilities among all family members. None of the Cosmopolitan children appeared in this cluster. Although 2 Cosmopolitan mothers regarded children's "fair" involvement in family household work as involving reciprocal responsibility with child initiative, neither of them reported that their children actually contributed with initiative.

The other most common cluster fits with expectations for the *segregation* paradigm; it involved only Cosmopolitan families – 11 of the 22 of them (bottom-middle cluster of Fig. 2). These mothers regarded children's contributions as "fair" when based in contractually assigned individual chores and also reported either assigning or specifically requesting their child's help.

Most of the remaining Cosmopolitan families (6 of them, along with 1 Indigenous-heritage family) formed another, smaller cluster: These mothers regarded children's help with household work that benefits others as fair only under certain circumstances and reported that they assigned or requested children's help. (This is the bottom-right cluster of Fig. 2.)



Mothers' Views on How Children's Family Household Work Contributions Should Originate

Fig. 2 Data clusters showing correspondence between mothers' views on how children's contributions should originate and reports on the voluntariness of children's contributions. Each data point is unique to one participant per community. Agresti 95% confidence intervals are included below the clusters whose between-community proportions were significantly different. Note: One child in the Cosmopolitan community was only reported to contribute under struggle and negotiation and could not be included in this graph (range/complexity score = 8.0)

Most of the remaining Indigenous-heritage families (4 of them, and 1 Cosmopolitan family; top-right cluster of Fig. 2) reported that children regularly contributed to family household work under their own initiative and expressed that asking for children's help with work benefitting others would only be fair under unusual circumstances.

The clustered patterns were statistically different between the two cultural communities, which supports the suggestions of paradigmatic cultural differences in each community's way of organizing children's participation in family household work. Differences in the clustered patterns of Fig. 2 were confirmed with log-linear modeling, which is in principle a three-way chi-square test that examined the combined role of cultural community, voluntariness of the child's contributions, and mothers' views on how children's help should originate. (The most parsimonious model that best described the clustered frequencies in Fig. 2 included all three main effects and two two-way interactions involving cultural community with the voluntariness of the child's contributions, and cultural community with mothers' views of how children's work should originate. Goodness of fit for this multinomial model was $\chi^2(4) = 2.93, p = .57$. All other similarly parsimonious models that excluded either of the two two-way interactions with cultural background were worse fitting.)

The clustered patterns also related to children's range/complexity of contributions. Across both communities, the children who regularly contributed to family household work with collaborative initiative had significantly greater mean scores for the range/complexity of their contributions than children whose contributions were based on parents' assignments and requests ($M = 11.6$ and 5.8 , $SD = 5.1$ and 3.3 , respectively), $F(1, 36) = 5.12, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .125$). Mean scores for the range/complexity of children's contributions were highest ($M = 11.7$, $SD = 5.5, p < .01$) among children whose mothers regarded children's contributions as "fair" when children pitched in to family household work with reciprocal responsibility and initiative and did not differ between mothers with other views ($M = 6.6$ for children of mothers who viewed children's work on behalf of others as fair if it arose from individual-focused contractual chores, $M = 6.3$ for children of mothers who viewed such work as fair only under special circumstances, $SD = 3.4$ and 3.8 , respectively).

4 Two Cultural Paradigms for Organizing Children's Learning and Prosocial Involvement in Everyday Activities

The comparison of the two Guadalajara communities, together with prior research in Indigenous American and middle-class communities, supports the idea that different cultural values and patterns of children's participation in everyday family endeavors constitute distinct paradigms organizing children's learning and development (see also Rogoff 2016). One paradigm is built on children's *collaborative integration* in mature endeavors and is characterized by collaborative guidance of children's initiative, consistent with the *Learning by Observing and Pitching In* model (Rogoff 2014). The other paradigm is built on children's *segregation* from mature endeavors and is characterized by adult management and attempts to control children's limited involvement.

In the Indigenous-heritage community, children taking initiative to responsibly contribute in shared family endeavors characterized both how families valued children's involvement – how children *should* be involved – and also how children helped. Mothers valued children's initiative because they regarded children's autonomy as fundamental to learning to collaborate and contribute, not simply because it is nice not to have to ask for children's help. These Indigenous-heritage mothers' support for children's autonomy should not be confused with a “hands-off” *laissez faire* approach; mothers expected children to be attentive and responsive to opportunities to help by joining in – under their own initiative – to share work and to *convivir*, to be taking part mutually in the activities of the family (see also Mejía-Arauz et al. 2013).

In contrast, in the middle-class community, parents' views and the ways that children contributed to family household work indicated divided roles and responsibilities between family members – a “to each their own work” division of labor with parents taking on responsibility for delegation, motivation, and compliance. Many children were assigned a limited range of tasks, which was consistent with the families' views on what was appropriate for children.

To be sure, Cosmopolitan children made small material contributions to household work. However, their participation often involved little initiative, was minimally collaborative, and seemed to respond to parents' assignments rather than a shared recognition that the work needs doing for the good of the family. These children seemed to do the few chores that they were assigned and simply regarded other work as outside of the purview of their responsibilities. And their mothers seemed to agree.

This “divided” approach to adult and child responsibilities appears to be common in communities with extensive experience with Western schooling and related cultural practices. For example, US middle-class parents hardly mentioned children's involvement in family work in describing the types of activities they valued for their children (Harkness et al. 2011). Instead, these parents emphasized the importance of “family time” focused on social interaction outside of mature productive activities or emphasized scholastic and extracurricular activities thought to be more important for children's development. Family social interaction, child-focused “developmental” or “educational” activities, and household work were viewed as categorically distinct, and parents' time was divided, perhaps thinly, among them – parents reported considerable stress in trying to “fit everything in” (see also Alcalá et al. 2014; Kremer-Sadlik et al. 2008).

4.1 Implications for Advancing Theories of Children's Prosocial Motivation and Development

Current theories of children's prosocial development and motivation to learn should be expanded to account for children's helpfulness in a *collaborative integration* paradigm. Evidence in many Indigenous and Indigenous-heritage communities of the Americas consistently suggests a relation between children's collaborative

integration and children taking initiative to responsibly and voluntarily help in shared family and community endeavors.

Many definitions of prosocial helping behavior emphasize voluntary actions whose end goal is emotionally positive relations with others (e.g., Eisenberg et al. 2006; Over and Carpenter 2009, 2013). This appears to be part of many children's motivation to help out (see Coppens et al. 2014a). However, when children are *collaboratively integrated* in mature family and community endeavors, being "prosocial" goes beyond establishing and reinforcing social connections.

This chapter makes the argument that when children take initiative to contribute in mature endeavors in a collaborative integration approach, they are motivated by taking part in "something bigger." The collaborative integration of children in mature endeavors, including support for their autonomy, offers children the chance to observe and learn what is needed and to determine how best to align and coordinate with others to help get it done. This consistency in engaging together in the overarching, productive purposes of shared activities may be an important motivational affordance of children's collaborative participation in mature family and community endeavors and may support children's development of initiative. When children voluntarily and collaboratively engage with mature family and community activities throughout development, *helping the family* may emerge as a leading developmental activity in childhood (Elkonin 1972; Goodnow 1988; Lorente Fernández 2015).

There are likely to be other motivational paradigms than the two that have been contrasted in this chapter: the *collaborative integration* paradigm – which is consistent with the *Learning by Observing and Pitching In* model (Rogoff 2014) and appears to be common in Indigenous American communities – and the *segregation* paradigm that appears to be widespread in middle-class communities. For example, other paradigms may be based on integration but without the collaborative aspect (e.g., Bühler-Niederberger and Schwittek 2014). It remains to be seen how other paradigms function in children's development and motivation to learn; this chapter is meant to provide a first step in expanding mainstream theory to include one important alternative paradigm, to better understand children's motivation on a worldwide basis.

It is important to underline that the contrast between the *collaborative integration* and *segregation* paradigms does not involve a dichotomy that could be applied worldwide (unlike overgeneralized characterizations of entire communities as "collectivist" vs. "individualist" or people's motives as extrinsic vs. intrinsic). Children's integration and segregation do not happen in the same ways in all communities. Observations of children's integration in family and community work and life – in one or another form – are varied and widespread in the historical, geographical, sociological, and anthropological literatures that tend to focus on Majority World communities (James et al. 1998; Lancy et al. 2010; Nieuwenhuys 1994; Punch 2001, 2003; Vanderbeck 2009). Understanding *how* integration and segregation occur in different communities, and the cultural values that guide those varied ways of organizing childhood and community life, is an area that is ready for thoughtful empirical work.

4.2 Children's Collaborative Initiative as a Long-Term Disposition for Learning

Taking initiative to collaborate and contribute in household work is a much more impressive cognitive and interpersonal accomplishment than simply getting chores done. In addition to broadening the range of children's engagement in mature family endeavors and competence in specific household tasks, collaborative integration may also expand other skills, such as planning, self-regulation, attention, and prosocial helpfulness (Coppens et al. 2014b).

Family household work can give children opportunities to be prosocial, to self-regulate and assess their learning, and to effectively coordinate with others, which may incubate long-term positive dispositions for learning. For example, early experience with and responsibility in helping the family in mutual productive endeavors relates to academic achievement in college among Latina/o youth (Fuligni 2001; Yeager et al. 2014). Helping the family with initiative and responsibility also relates to children and adolescents' life satisfaction and overall psychological well-being, immunological resilience, and the development of neural mechanisms that support social altruism over individual gain (see Fuligni and Telzer 2013).

The cultural paradigms examined in this chapter may also relate to differences in whether children construe everyday activities as opportunities for learning, helping, and collaboration and to the development of these dispositions. For example, Ramírez and Price-Williams (1976) found that Mexican American children interpreted ambiguous scenes with adults and children as involving shared, collaborative purposes (e.g., "The little girl is trying to read the book so she can read it to her blind grandfather") over twice as often as Anglo American children, who emphasized individual achievement. When children's learning is oriented in ways that support their collaborative initiative in mature endeavors, researchers have found associations with longitudinal increases in grades and self-esteem (Blackwell et al. 2007), persistence and intrinsic interest in learning (Elliott and Dweck 1988; Mueller and Dweck 1998), and positive self-worth (Kamins and Dweck 1999).

Research on children's collaborative initiative relates to some recent educational and social-psychological findings on "noncognitive factors" that contribute to (or undermine) academic achievement (Dweck et al. 2011; Farrington et al. 2012). It seems likely that dispositions for learning such as growth mindset, shared purpose for learning, belongingness that "matters" in productive community activities, self-regulated learning, and goal setting have roots in children's early experiences. Important recent research indicates that in an Indigenous North American community and among some first-generation college students, focusing on motivation to contribute to the community enhanced student performance, while a focus on individual accomplishment did not (Fryberg and Markus 2007; Stephens et al. 2012).

This chapter confidently agrees with the recommendation that "the extreme age segregation experienced by many US middle-class children needs a corrective at this point in history" (Rogoff et al. 2010, p. 438). Segregating children from mature family and community activities likely precludes valuable opportunities for learning.

In addition, understanding of children's prosocial motivation has been limited by research and theory based almost entirely on societies employing a segregation paradigm. Research and theory that includes attention to the *collaborative integration* paradigm would shed light on what it means to be prosocial in general and within specific cultural communities, and would inform the efforts of parents to support children's learning and development.

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Part II

Extrafamilial Intergenerational Relationships and Spaces

Jessica K. Taft and Hava Rachel Gordon

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Abstract

Youth political and civic engagement has been subject of significant scrutiny and debate. However, these conversations have not often explicitly considered the roles of adults within youth political spaces. This essay makes visible the range of visions for adults' roles in youth politics embedded within youth engagement approaches: from teachers and primary socializers, to listeners awaiting youth perspectives, to partners and allies. It then focuses specifically on intergenerational collaboration within youth activist networks, showing how

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such collaboration benefits both youth and adults. Adults provide youth with institutional infrastructures, financial resources, historical continuity, and access to authorities, and they play a particularly important role in supporting the activism of more marginalized young people who otherwise have less access to these resources. Youth also impact and educate adults with new ideas and energy. However, while intergenerational collaboration has clear benefits, it is also a challenge in the context of age-stratified societies.

Keywords

Intergenerational relationships, Youth Activist Networks · Benefit of · Biographical availability · Challenges in · Encouragement and emotional support · Financial support · Social movements · Volunteerism, service learning, school-based civic training · Youth advisory council · Social cohesion · Sociopolitical development (SPD) · Youth civic engagement (YCE)

1 Introduction: A Varied Youth Political Geography

Increasingly, scholars, politicians, educators, and activists are turning their attention to young people's capacity for political and civic action. This attention is motivated by a wide variety of concerns. For some, the future of democracies in a rapidly changing world are anchored in how well prepared young generations are to participate in political life. For others, civic engagement is seen as the next frontier of innovation in education. Still for others, civic and political engagement stands as the antidote to a perception that youth deviance and criminality are on the rise. Finally, some view youth political engagement as essential to the continuation of labor, feminist, racial equity, environmental, and other movements for social justice. No matter what the motivation may be, the question of youth political engagement has become a central preoccupation for many adults. However, little has been written that explicitly engages with a key question at the core of these concerns: what role should adults play in youth politics?

This chapter examines various conceptions of youth-adult partnerships as they play out in different models of youth civic and political participation. The goal for this chapter is twofold. First, it aims to provide a typology of youth-adult relationships in different models of youth political and civic action. These three distinct models include youth civic engagement (YCE) structures such as volunteer programs, service learning programs, and other school-based YCE initiatives; more formal political structures such as youth councils; and broad-based social movements. Each of these models represents a distinct political geography for youth, suggesting different spheres of youth political influence. Some of these models aim to integrate youth into institutionalized political practices such as voting and governmental policymaking, while others aim to cultivate youth political influence outside of formal political structures and within larger community and social

movement contexts. There is also a temporal dimension to these youth political geographies: each of these paradigms imagines youth political selves differently, either in the future tense as the eventual fully realized adult citizen or as effective in the present as youth. In presenting this typology, the intention of this chapter is to draw out the different functions of adults as implicated in these models: from the “teachers” and primary socializers in the YCE models, to the listening “ears” awaiting youth policy decision-making and recommendations in the youth council model, to the potential partners and allies in the social movement models.

Second, after distinguishing these three approaches and the adult-youth relationships that are implicated in each, the second part of this chapter is devoted to the various possibilities and pitfalls of the intergenerational relationships that exist in social movement contexts more specifically. It is in this latter social movement model that there exists the widest range of youth-adult relationships. Although like the other models, this model incorporates possibilities for adults to be teachers, socializers, and receptive “ears,” this model also brings with it a clearer recognition of power differentials between adults and youth, and thus this model opens up a broader set of roles for adults to play in youth activist networks. This section highlights the ways in which the social movement context in particular brings with it possibilities for youth and adults to forge more horizontal forms of alliance and mutually beneficial exchange. Although these forms of partnership can prove to be elusive and difficult to practice in the context of age-stratified societies and institutions, they are instructive for rethinking intergenerational relationships across the wider range of youth political programs and spaces.

Before turning to this analysis, it is worth noting here some of the boundaries of this discussion. First, the scholarly literature synthesized here does not include the rich body of research on youth micropolitics, cultural resistance, subculture, infrapolitics, or the politics of every day, including “the political dynamics, strategies and practices that children learn and rehearse” (Kallio and Hakli 2011, p. 103) in their everyday environments. Instead, this discussion highlights the intergenerational dynamics of institutions, organizations, and programs whose primary purposes are explicitly and self-consciously political. These are spaces and forms of politics that clearly articulate and imagine themselves as sites for the production of youth citizenship and youth engagement in political life, whether that be via institutional incorporation or external pressure and via routine or contentious politics. This is not to suggest that other, more diffuse, forms of youth politics in everyday life are “less” political than the forms analyzed here, but rather to indicate that such politics operate with different generational logics and are outside the scope of this analysis. Furthermore, this chapter largely draws on the Anglophone literature on youth activism and in doing so focuses primarily on minority world contexts, although this focus is not exclusive – the analysis presented here also references multiple instances of youth activism in Latin America.

2 A Typology of Youth-Adult Relations in Paradigms of Youth Politics

Youth-adult relationships, as they relate to young people's political consciousness, civic engagement, and activism, can be divided into a three-part typology. Often, these multiple types of youth-adult partnerships are conflated, as are the varied meanings of young people's political development and their actual impact in the public sphere. Because current research on youth activism elucidates both the importance of adult-youth relationships in cultivating youth political voice, as well as the drawbacks of adults in youth activist networks, this typology is meant to provide a more nuanced and critical view of the landscape of intergenerational political relationships. The three paradigmatic intergenerational political approaches described below each imply different benefits of youth activism for different constituencies (youth political engagement as beneficial to youth themselves vs. youth engagement as beneficial to democratic societies at large), different political spheres for youth engagement (more normative forms of engagement such as voting vs. broader forms of political activism, including protesting), and different youth selves (youth as "future adults" vs. youth in the present). And, most importantly for this review, each paradigm for youth civic engagement also implies different adult-youth relationships and different visions of youth potential that are always nested in a larger context of age inequality (Checkoway 1996). It is this larger context of age inequality that is most often underemphasized or unacknowledged in more celebratory views of the role that adults can and should play in cultivating youth activism across different engagement contexts.

2.1 Intergenerational Relationships for Cultivating Youth Civic Identity: Volunteerism, Service Learning, School-Based Civic Training

The contemporary public and scholarly concern about young people's civic development can be traced back to the political uncertainty following the Cold War. As Youniss et al. note, "At a minimum, new generations must learn what democratic citizenship entails and figure out how to satisfy their needs within the demands of a capitalist system" (2002, p. 122). According to Youniss et al. (2002), the end of the Cold War and victory of capitalism as the reigning economic world model has necessitated a more careful and intentional program for cultivating democratic citizenship among youth. No longer can we assume that this transmission of knowledge and civic ethics happens seamlessly or automatically from older generations to younger generations. These scholars argue that increasing youth civic engagement is a vital mechanism for intergenerational political transmission and that it is of central importance to maintaining healthy democracies (Youniss et al. 2002). Proponents of youth civic engagement view this civic training as essential for functioning democracies as a whole and not just as beneficial training or experience for the youth involved.

Although some youth civic engagement (YCE) scholars define civic engagement and competence as understanding how government functions and understanding one's civic duty within this framework (namely voting), many other scholars argue that civic competence extends to a broader "acquisition of behaviors that allow citizens to participate in government and permit individuals to meet, discuss, and collaborate to promote their interests within a framework of democratic principles" (Youniss et al. 2002). In this sense, "civic engagement" can include a focus on the overall health and vitality of civil society and the continual process of collaborative community building (Flanagan and Faison 2001). Despite the inclusion of these broader criteria for youth civic engagement, the ways in which youth civic engagement is *measured* tends to be much narrower – most often conceptualized as knowledge of and participation in formal political channels or institutions. Over the last two decades, several political scholars have expressed significant concern over an apparent worldwide "crisis" of youth political apathy (Delli Carpini 2000; Henn et al. 2002; Thomson et al. 2004; Williamson 2002). These scholars tend to use measures like youth distrust of government, insufficient knowledge of government officials, and low confidence in the political system as evidence of a worldwide youth apathy crisis (Gordon and Taft 2011). For example, Sitaraman and Warren conclude that youth in the United States have a "dismal commitment to politics" in part from a survey finding that 64% of students do not trust the federal government to "do the right thing most of the time" (2003, p. 17). For other YCE scholars, youth are not simply apathetic, ignorant, and lazy, but they are *alienated* and cynical (see Strama 1998; Delli Carpini 2000; Henn et al. 2002; Sitaraman and Warren 2003). In response to these problems, many YCE advocates present support for, cooperation with, and involvement in formal political institutions as the ultimate antidote to a contemporary crisis of youth apathy or cynicism. For example, according to a 2007 United Nations report, *social cohesion* should be the ultimate goal of youth civic engagement training (United Nations 2007).

Advocates of youth civic engagement programs, therefore, implicitly and explicitly aim to *integrate* youth into normative forms of sanctioned political participation, including voting and community service. This is to ensure the generational continuity of the current political regime and economic system. In order to accomplish this continuity, scholars argue that youth civic engagement should be institutionalized in schools as service learning opportunities (Billig et al. 2005; Owen 2000; Yates and Youniss 1998; Zeller 1993) or in formal classroom instruction and civics curricula (Levine and Gibson 2003; Levine and Lopez 2004). Since so often the ultimate measure of the "engaged" citizen is the voting citizen, there is some debate about whether or not youth volunteerism, for example, can foster the type of youth civic engagement that can cultivate the civic competency required for voting. For some youth civic engagement scholars, promoting volunteerism among youth is key to producing new generations of politically competent citizens (see Kirby et al. 2006; Metz et al. 2003). However, other scholars question whether or not civic engagement activities – such as volunteerism – produce politically knowledgeable subjects whose civic orientation effectively translates into voting or other forms of formal political engagement (Andolina et al. 2003; Sitaraman and Warren

2003; National Association of Secretaries of State 1999). In this sense, formal schooling which emphasizes a more specific civics education rather than a generalized community orientation may hold more promise for cultivating civically responsible youth.

Undergirding these youth civic engagement studies and their associated projects and programs is a set of assumptions about the relationships between youth, adults, and politics that must be explicitly recognized. The first assumption is that youth are in “crisis,” that they are essentially apolitical or estranged from politics, and therefore must be actively shepherded into the political process by more knowledgeable adults. In these visions of youth civic competence, adults play an essential (and unproblematic) role in actively incorporating youth into formal politics, whether through teaching civics, directing volunteer opportunities, or orchestrating service learning initiatives. This is essentially a functional view of intergenerational relationships in youth political engagement – one in which adults actively socialize youth into politics in order to ensure social cohesion and the smooth and stable functioning of formal democratic processes. It is not just youth who are the targets of this cultivation: for many YCE theorists, entire democracies hang in the balance. Even though eventual adult civic engagement is the end goal of these civic engagement programs for youth, the development of a “civic identity,” or a sense of responsibility toward and belonging to civil society that might eventually produce behavior such as voting, is an intermediary goal of these programs for youth *before* they come of voting age.

2.2 Intergenerational Relationships for Cultivating Youth Political Participation: Youth Advisory Councils

Many YCE scholars and advocates view one particular type of YCE program, the youth advisory council, as one of the more effective ways of cultivating youth citizenship. As a remedy for the widely perceived crisis of youth apathy and as a mechanism for engaging youth in governmental processes while giving them a hands-on education on how formal politics work, the youth advisory council is a privileged type of YCE program (Matthews 2001) and therefore deserves special critical attention (Taft and Gordon 2013). In contrast to broader and more diffuse forms of YCE, youth advisory councils are designed to bring youth directly into contact with governmental processes. Judith Bessant (2004) notes that Western governments are increasingly placing a premium on youth participation in politics in order to ensure the perpetuation of healthy democracies, and as a result we are witnessing the widespread use of youth councils and other youth decision-making bodies that are directly integrated into governmental decision-making processes. There are more than 140 city or town youth councils and 12 statewide councils across the United States (Martin et al. 2007). As Matthews details (2001), youth councils can vary widely in their structure and their level of authority and responsibility. However, all youth councils are designed to bring “youth voice” into direct

contact with adult policymakers and therefore present a distinctive paradigm for intergenerational political relationships.

Unlike broader YCE activities such as service learning, volunteerism, or other forms of community building, youth councils typically bring smaller numbers of youth (15–25) into conversation with political decision-makers. Typically, these youth are either appointed by adults or they apply for the privilege of serving on the youth council and they are selected by adults. In effect, adults are significant gatekeepers to this kind of youth political engagement. The youth council model is distinct from other YCE approaches in that youth are not necessarily positioned as more passive recipients of political or civic training. Nor is the goal to foster a more diffuse civic “identity” among youth. Instead, youth are positioned as “experts” on youth issues. Youth councils convene specifically to discuss youth-related public policy and function as advisory, expert voices on youth issues. Rarely are these councils invited to weigh in on other social or economic policy issues that might not be youth specific but nevertheless impact young people’s lives.

Although serving on a youth council can be a powerful experience for the youth involved, Taft and Gordon (2013) have argued elsewhere that “youth voice” does not necessarily translate into youth civic *impact* in this model. Youth councils do not hold formal authority in the sense that participating youth cannot vote on youth policy. According to Martin et al. (2007), the only youth council that can introduce legislation (but not vote on it) is the Maine statewide council. While youth councils foreground youth as experts who advise policymakers on youth legislation, there is no guarantee that these policymakers must take youth perspectives into account. In fact, because adults are often reluctant to integrate youth voice in adult decision-making in general, adult interactions with youth councils can often result in manipulation, decoration, and tokenism (Williamson 2002). Indeed, testimonials of youth activists in Taft’s study of teen girl activists throughout the Americas (2011) and Gordon’s study of middle-class white and working-class black and Latino teen activists (2010) reveal this to be the perception that some youth social movement activists have of youth councils.

Compared to the more clearly adult-led YCE initiatives in the previous section, youth councils demonstrate an ambiguous approach to cultivating youth political competency and therefore imply a more ambiguous intergenerational relationship. On one hand, youth councils conceptualize youth civic engagement as more than just future training for relatively episodic forms of political participation such as voting. Youth councils, as advisory bodies to legislators, serve as experiential modes of civic education that position youth as having knowledge and expertise on youth issues. Instead of simply becoming competent voters, youth who serve on youth councils learn how policymaking works in action – a deeper form of formal political engagement than voting. Beyond learning about policymaking, the youth advisory council enables youth to have a direct voice in this policymaking. This immediacy means that youth are not necessarily valued only for their future adult selves (as they often are in other YCE initiatives), but they are also valued in the present for their expertise *as youth*. This holds the potential for more horizontal

exchanges of information and expertise between adults and youth in the crafting of real-time youth policy.

However, after listening to the stories of youth activists who initially pursued involvement in youth advisory councils and then rejected these modes of involvement in favor of more direct forms of social movement activism, Taft and Gordon (2013) argue that there are many shortcomings of the youth advisory council model that undermine the potential for this model to foster young people's democratic political engagement, education, and impact. As Bessant (2004) points out, youth participation in these councils is at best quasi-democratic, as youth "participate" in politics without being given the right to vote, a fundamental aspect of liberal democratic citizenship. In this sense, youth "speak out" to powerful adults, but there is no formal mechanism to ensure that youth are "heard." Additionally, there is no mechanism to insure that the youth who serve on these councils are representative voices of larger school or community-based youth collectives. Because they are appointed or selected by adult gatekeepers, they tend to represent youth drawn from more privileged backgrounds. Disadvantaged groups of youth are less likely to be involved in these types of youth civic engagement structures (Williamson 2002). In this sense, the benefits of these councils to youth may be limited to the actual youth who serve on the councils, rather than to the larger collectives of youth that they could represent. Finally, because the youth advisory council is an institutionalized form of youth participation managed by the state, it is regulated by adults and thus encourages forms of youth civic engagement that may emerge as less controversial, disruptive, critical, and oppositional than does social movement participation (Taft and Gordon 2013). For this reason, even though youth are positioned as "experts" in the youth advisory council, adults are ultimately positioned as superior to youth in this model and thus determine the boundaries of young people's civic engagement.

2.3 Intergenerational Relationships for Cultivating Youth Political Consciousness and Action: Social Movements

While "youth activism" can be cultivated through multiple YCE models, including service learning, civics education, and youth advisory councils, these models are fundamentally distinct from youth participation in social movements. The social movement, as a mode of civic participation, rests on an ideology of participatory democracy rather than liberal or representative democracy. Social movement scholars have long argued that liberal models of democracy wrongly assume that state power is pluralistic (i.e., responding to many voices vying for power) rather than elitist (responding to the interests of the powerful and further marginalizing the less powerful). According to movement scholars such as McAdam (1982) and Piven and Cloward (1979), this means that established, institutionalized modes of formal political engagement such as voting cannot be trusted to ensure democracy, given the concentration of powerful interests in an elite system. Therefore, social movements are often the only routes to real social, political, and economic power

for marginalized groups, including youth. Furthermore, power is not only consolidated in and wielded by the state but exists in discourse, consciousness, and processes of subjectification (Foucault 1980; Scott 1990). It is for this reason that democratic participation, especially for women and youth, often happens outside the state (Kaplan 2004). Rather than preparing youth for seamless integration into an existing, formal political system that often obscures or downplays the consolidation of power, social movements allow youth to develop modes of activism that overtly identify, critique, and subvert this consolidation of power. This does not mean, however, that social movements pit youth against the very institutions in which they live and labor. As Kirshner (2007) points out, activism encourages youth to channel their sense of outrage and injustice toward constructive ends, helping to better connect youth to mainstream institutions such as schools, school boards, or city councils.

The goals of youth activism in social movements go beyond the development of civic identity or civic responsibility. As Watts and Guessous (2006) argue, a key benefit of youth participation in social movements is sociopolitical development (SPD). They define sociopolitical development as “the evolving, critical understanding of the political, economic, cultural, and other systemic forces that shape society and one’s status within it, and the associated process of growth in relevant knowledge, analytical skills, and emotional faculties” (60). Ginwright et al. (2006) argue that much of the conventional literature on youth development sees youth as objects of policy instead of as active agents who have the right and ability to *shape* policy. These authors argue that youth, when conceptualized as active agents, hold the capacity to challenge institutional inequities. This conceptual shift from youth as objects of development to youth as active agents of social change carries with it a shift in the kind of intergenerational relationship that fosters this youth political development. Instead of emphasizing accommodation to an existing system, youth sociopolitical development emphasizes the cultivation of collective agency (Kirshner 2007) and commitment to activism among youth, as well as an analysis of institutional power and oppression. Because sociopolitical development aims to activate youth through social justice organizing, youth emerge as effective and critical change agents. Importantly, this model does not necessarily presume that there is a crisis of youth apathy in which adults must intervene. Rather, this model recognizes that youth activism is actually on the rise, especially among low-income youth of color (Ginwright and James 2002), and assumes that youth are competent change agents. In this paradigm, youth political action and impact can and should be made outside the boundaries of formal institutional politics.

Young people’s sociopolitical development within the social movement context allows for a much broader spectrum of adult-youth relationships since this is often more of a collaborative context. This collaborative context can range from formal organizational structures like nonprofit organizations to more loosely structured youth activist coalitions with adult movements (such as student activist and teacher union collaborations in fights for educational justice or immigrant youth and immigrant labor coalitions that fight for comprehensive immigration reform). These varied relationships are cultivated in a larger milieu that aims to develop

youth empowerment while recognizing the ways in which adultism and age inequality can sabotage young people's political development and impact. Unlike in other YCE models that do not directly recognize ageism as a legitimate obstacle to young people's civic development, adults in youth activist networks are faced with the challenge of aligning with youth in ways that promote young people's political power instead of rearticulating adult hegemony (Camino 2005).

The remainder of this chapter will detail the critical roles that adults play in helping to foster youth sociopolitical development through social movement activism. Unlike the other modes of YCE that imagine adults as the primary socializers and gatekeepers to an existing political system, social movement activism necessitates that youth and adults engage in more horizontal forms of exchange and mutual partnership in the pursuit of social justice both within and outside of the state. As studies of youth social movement activism note, however, these partnerships can take many forms. These studies also reveal that forging functional, mutually beneficial, and empowering intergenerational relationships within youth activist networks is no easy task, especially when these are forged within age-segregated and age-stratified societies.

3 The Impacts of Intergenerational Relationships

There is no singular model of intergenerational relationships within youth activist spaces. Rather, intergenerational relationships within youth activism can take a variety of different forms, which are actively produced, negotiated, and contested by both adults and young people. While recognizing this diversity of forms and the range of intergenerational political practice, this section aims to explore some of the impacts of intergenerational collaboration within youth organizing in particular. It discusses what adult allies offer to youth and youth social movements, paying particular attention to how what youth need and want from adults is shaped by dynamics of race, class, gender, and social location. It then turns to how intergenerational collaboration can benefit adults, highlighting young people's powerful and positive contributions to these relationships. After discussing some of these positive outcomes of intergenerational collaboration, it lays out some of the challenges, difficulties, and potential pitfalls of intergenerational relationships within youth activist spaces.

3.1 Contributions of Intergenerational Relationships

Adults and youth, as distinct social groups, have differential access to social, political, economic, cultural, and educational resources (Wyn and White 1997). Because of these located and constructed differences, adult allies have particular skills, tools, information, and forms of support that they can provide to youth. This is not to suggest that youth necessarily or always need adult support, but rather to

highlight that adults can and do make distinctive contributions to youth activist networks based on their particular positions as adults.

One key resource often provided by adults is money. Sekou Franklin (2014), in his analysis of the Black Student Leadership Network and its relationship to the adult-run Children's Defense Fund, argues that adults provided the youth with important organizational and financial resources, including the loan of several staff members. He notes that the young people were initially skeptical of this relationship and concerned about the ways that it might shape or limit their work going forward, but, according to one of the young leaders he interviews, they "didn't really see any other options at the time that would provide us with an opportunity to build an infrastructure" (2014, p. 125). Adults have often provided financial and logistical support for youth activists, helping to create longer-lasting organizational spaces with these resources. In the United States, much of the financial support has come from a few foundations who have directed their giving to nonprofit organizations working broadly in the terrain of youth-led organizing (Kwon 2013). While youth are allowed to serve on the boards of nonprofits in some, but not all, states in the United States, boards must have at least some adult members for the organization to get insurance, receive grants, and sign contracts. This not only makes adults necessary to the formation of these kinds of organizations but also gives them positions of power and authority. In another example of the need for adults, in Peru minors must be accompanied by adults when they enter political institutions such as the national legislature and when they travel between cities using public transport. Adults – as funders, board members, and nonprofit staff – play a very important role in channeling resources, creating infrastructures, and providing the necessary legal support for youth activism.

Adults play a key role in providing youth with infrastructures in which to organize and are therefore also often located in positions that give them greater longevity in these infrastructures than the youth, for whom participation may be temporary. This is especially true of school- and university-based youth activist organizations. Youth participate in these spaces during the few years when they are students at these institutions, but adult allies are often in these institutions for much longer, giving them access to institutional memory and organizational histories (Liebel 2007). Adults can therefore offer youth movements significant continuity over time, sharing information with youth about what has and has not worked in the past within a given space, reminding them of commitments made by the institution in which they are organizing, and helping to build longer-term projects across multiple years (Gordon 2007). In addition to continuity, these adults often provide important historical political education for youth, helping them to see their own struggles in context and as part of a longer lineage of activism (Chovanec and Benitez 2008; Clay 2012; Gordon and Taft 2011).

Adult allies also prove to be highly valuable when youth seek to access and influence adult authorities and policymakers. As Gordon (2007) notes, adult allies often have greater cultural capital than youth organizers, which can "work like a passport into adult-dominated spaces" (645) and is especially useful for interaction with school administrators (647). Soo Ah Kwon (2013) also found that youth

activists' interactions with politicians were limited by their age and that they experienced substantial benefit from the presence of adult supporters in these meetings. She describes how youth found that local and state politicians would praise them for being engaged but would not take action on their issues. It was only when they were able to demonstrate their ability to mobilize adults in the community that they were able to influence decision-makers. And, as Franklin (2014) writes, major policies and politics cannot be addressed by young people alone, and so "student and youth activists must interact, form coalitions, and organize with veteran activists" in order to have substantial impact (21).

The above forms of adult contributions to youth movements are all rooted in adults' greater social, political, and institutional power and their access to resources. But scholars have also found that young people value adults' encouragement and emotional support for the ways that it can build their confidence, increase their sense of efficacy, and reduce feelings of alienation (Franklin 2014; Gordon 2007; Taines 2012). In his work on black youth activism, Shawn Ginwright (2010) emphasizes "radical healing" and building caring relationships between youth and adult mentors as a politically significant action in and of itself and as a precondition for other forms of organizing. He writes, "Without investments in caring relationships, young people internalize trauma, which can hinder their capacity to transform the very conditions that created it" (57). The emotional care and politicized healing offered by these intergenerational relationships not only provides a foundation of support for youth to continue in their activist work but also substantially enhances both individual and community well-being.

Research on youth activism suggests that the adult allies have particularly important roles to play in supporting more marginalized young people. While youth who possess substantial economic, cultural, and social capital may not need as many resources from adults, youth who experience trauma, violence, and social exclusion find particular value in their relationships with adults. In addition to radical healing from structural violence (Ginwright 2010), youth of color have found that adult allies help them access important social services; lend legitimacy to their work in the eyes of parents, school administrators, and other adults; and generally are key to mediating their relationship to adult institutions and publics (Gordon 2007). Teens from more marginalized communities also tend "to look more to older generations' political insights than... white, privileged teens" (Gordon and Taft 2011, p. 1516). Seeking out and valuing the support of elders seems to be more common among youth who possess less political authority, standing, and capital.

Relationships to adults within youth activist networks are also shaped by gender processes. Adult allies productively interrupt patterns of sexism or gendered power relations within activist organizations (Gordon 2008). This is not to suggest that girls cannot and do not challenge practices of male domination in their organizations without the intervention of adults (Taft 2011) but rather that adults may, in some instances, help to facilitate difficult conversations about internal dynamics. Also significant are the ways that adult involvement in youth activist networks can significantly mollify parental concerns about either the safety or appropriateness of

girls' social movement participation (Gordon 2008). Parental concerns about their daughters' activism, which are distinct from their concerns about their sons' involvement, are often reduced by adult presence, indicating that intergenerational relationships can increase girls' ability to engage in youth activism.

Intergenerational relationships do not only enhance young people's political experiences but can also offer many benefits for adults. Political socialization, education, encouragement, support, and inspiration are not just passed down from adults to youth but should instead be seen as bidirectional (Bloemraad and Trost 2008; Gordon and Taft 2011; Linimon and Joslyn 2002). Much as the particular structural location and social characteristics of adulthood give adults their own distinctive skills, knowledge, and resources to offer in intergenerational interaction, the dynamics of youth as a social category and experience give young people particular strengths and unique contributions to make to social movements.

A great deal of research on social movements has argued for young people's "biographical availability" for participation (McAdam 1986; Petrie 2004; Schussman and Soule 2005). The assertion of this work is that youth have more time and fewer obligations than their older counterparts and are thus more able to become involved in social movements. Obligation, time, and family and community responsibilities, however, are not identical across different youth populations. Girls may be expected to care for younger siblings, low-income youth may be working at a young age, and even college students, often assumed to be the most "biographically available," have different levels of work responsibilities, with more and more youth working full time alongside their studies in order to manage the increased costs of higher education (Perna 2010). Despite all these important caveats and differences within youth experience, however, it may still be the case that young people have a particular kind of availability and openness to social movement participation. Sekou Franklin (2014) argues that young people "can be valuable resources to community workers, activists, and public officials who seek to challenge racial hierarchies and economic injustices in municipalities" (97). They are open to involvement partly because of availability but also perhaps because of the widespread discursive and cultural linkage between youth and social change. As Jessica Taft (2011) argues, pervasive ideas about youth as agents of change may in fact encourage young people to see themselves in this way, making them more inclined to participate in social movement activity. If this is the case, then young people should be seen as an important constituency for adult social movement organizers. Youth have also contributed significant energy to the process and project of mobilizing adults. Franklin (2014) reminds us that SNCC, for example, did not only organize students but also played a key role in encouraging adult involvement in the civil rights movement.

Contributing significant time and energy, youth activists clearly add to social movements, but they also transform those movements and the adults who are part of them. Youth are not merely mobilized for adult agendas but make their own interventions in intergenerational networks and movements. In Jessica Taft's (2011) research with girl activists in five different countries, she found that youth often saw themselves as being quite different from adult activists: more radical,

more optimistic, more creative, and more democratic. These self-perceptions, of course, may not be entirely accurate, but they do influence how young people engage with social movements and with older activists, shaping their expectations of adults and pushing them toward particular kinds of political practices. Further, young people's political perspectives, knowledge, and insights about the social world are often shaped by both their generational location and context and by their structural position as youth (Braungart and Braungart 1986). In the case of school-based organizing, for example, students' direct experiences with underfunded schools give them a strong understanding of the implications of educational funding inequalities, and they often identify issues and problems that are not necessarily what adults would expect (Alonso et al. 2009). In the context of working children's movements, both young people and adults argue for the importance of hearing from young people about how they experience their work lives, rather than necessarily assuming all work is exploitative and damaging (Liebel 2004; Liebel et al. 2001). Bloemraad and Trost, in their study of intergenerational mobilization for immigrant rights, emphasize that intergenerational communication "can increase a whole family's political engagement by pooling different information sources and networks: from schools and new technologies among teens, and from workplaces, churches, and ethnic media among parents" (2008, p. 507). Blanchet-Cohen and Rainbow (2006) suggest that one major benefit of intergenerational partnerships is that the adults learn that children and youth have many more capacities, skills, and insights than they had previously assumed. Young people do not merely learn from adults, but adults also learn from young people.

Intergenerational collaboration between youth and adults can be mutually beneficial. Adults have greater access to financial resources, are often legally necessary for some kinds of infrastructures, help to provide continuity, facilitate connections with various powerful institutions and decision-makers, and offer youth emotional and personal support and encouragement. Young people's energy, enthusiasm, creativity, and distinctive perspectives can also revitalize and inspire adults. Both youth and adults can learn from each other within intergenerational political spaces.

3.2 Challenges in Intergenerational Relationships

Intergenerational relationships within social movements are not only productive for youth and adults, but they are also often quite challenging. Like other coalitions that aim to bring together people from different and unequal social locations (Bystydzienski and Schacht 2001; Cole and Luna 2010), intergenerational movement spaces are profoundly shaped by the dynamics of inequality between the two groups. Adults may, in some instances, offer positive contributions to youth activist networks, as discussed above, but they can also be sources of oppression and unintentional silencing. Young people and adults engage with one another in the context of an adult-centric and ageist society (Checkoway 1996). And even within organizations and spaces that explicitly aim to challenge unequal power relations,

age-based inequalities, power, and privilege continue to shape intergenerational relationships.

The power differences between adults and youth play out in a wide variety of ways within youth activist networks, at multiple levels. At the organizational and structural level, the dynamics of funding, discussed above as one of the potential contributions of adults to youth organizing, often lead to young people feeling dependent upon, and therefore constrained by, their adult supporters and funders. Franklin (2014) identifies this dilemma when he notes that “young groups with few resources often seek out patrons who can help support their activities. For intergenerational or cross-sector initiatives this can lead to a patron-client relationship between two groups.” This patronage relationship can then create conflicts when youth “may view their parents [adult funders or support structures] as moderating influences or devices of social control” (257). In the situation of the Black Student Leadership Network, one of Franklin’s main organizational case studies, the group wrote an essay that critiqued the adult organizations that were supporting them for ignoring youth concerns, taking a more safe and middle-class agenda, being too “insider” in their approach, and not engaging in more transformative organizing (151). They experienced pressure to work on campaigns selected by their parent organization, giving their own agendas less time and energy. When they tried to have greater control and autonomy, they experienced resistance from the parent organization and therefore decided to disband (185). Franklin cautions against seeing this as an inevitable generational conflict, arguing instead that the tension between these groups was also based on the particular historical dynamics of the post-civil rights era in which many adult civil rights organizations had shifted their approach toward more institutional and insider forms of politics, while younger activists were more interested in mobilization, protest, and “outsider” political strategies. The tension that he identifies is not merely based on generational identities and access to resources but also based on the political strategies selected by different types of organizations.

Franklin makes clear that generational tensions and conflicts should not be reduced to the tension over youth dependence on adult resources but also identifies how this dynamic of dependence can significantly constrain youth activists who feel pressure from adult supporters, funders, and parent organizations to act in particular ways. While Franklin highlights the limits put on youth by adult patronage relationships, Soo Ah Kwon (2013) makes clear that the very organizational landscape of youth activism, which has been designed and implemented by adult institutions, produces particular kinds of citizen-subjects through a process of affirmative governmentality. Youth organizing nonprofits are not entirely “free spaces” in which youth construct their own political identities and practices but are part of an apparatus of neoliberal governance. Kwon notes that youth organizing nonprofits, while they may indeed challenge the state and various institutions of power, are also imbricated in a system that encourages young people to become self-managed political subjects who are not only responsible for themselves but responsible for community well-being, providing various kinds of care that once belonged to the welfare state. This project of management is particularly directed at

youth of color and poor youth, in order to prevent these supposedly “at risk” and “dangerous” subjects “from engaging in potentially risky behaviors of juvenile crime and sex” (4). In the context of neoliberal governance and the nonprofitization of activism, adults and their political institutions have created a landscape for youth participation in which “becoming a good citizen-subject necessitates voluntarily and willingly (and, I might add, enthusiastically) participating in supervised programs designed to empower them” (9). Kwon’s work reminds us that the infrastructures of youth activism, which are created, managed, and supported by well-intentioned adults, are not politically neutral and open to all kinds of subjectivities and practices. The infrastructure itself is a productive and generative force with its own logic and limits.

Beyond the power imbalances and constraining limits on youth that emerge out of adult’s greater access to resources, there are numerous cultural dynamics and discourses that can further complicate and undermine intergenerational collaboration. On the one hand, the popular understandings on youth as “citizens in the making” (Gordon 2010), and assumptions about youth as not yet capable of their own political decision-making, can undermine adults’ attempts to really take direction and leadership from youth. Many young activists describe having negative experiences with adults, even well-meaning adult supporters, who fail to take their ideas seriously or who simply celebrate their presence as “extraordinary” but do not know how to work with them (Gordon and Taft 2011). They describe adults who tokenize them and who praise them but who does not really take their activism seriously (Gordon and Taft 2011). They also experience opposition from older activists who think they are “not ready” or who tell them to “wait their turn when it came to leadership” (Franklin 2014, p. 124). Youth are especially critical and wary of adult-led institutions that seem to emphasize only political education or training for the future without giving them any real power or opportunity to make change in the present (Taft and Gordon 2013). Even well-meaning adults are situated within a larger cultural context in which youth is seen primarily as a space of preparation for the future; these adults are not therefore immune from expressing or enacting what youth perceive as adultist and problematic ideas and behaviors.

Much as adults may make assumptions about youth and their (in)abilities, youth also make assumptions about adults. In Jessica Taft’s (2011) research with girl activists, she found that they often positioned adults as a “straw man,” claiming that adult activists were undemocratic, not radical enough, or just too limited in their approach. Such assertions were not necessarily based on experience, but instead seemed to draw upon more pervasive narratives within youth activist circles about the meaning of adulthood, and the importance of youth. These youth-centric narratives were useful for authorizing their own participation but make building intergenerational relationships more challenging. Because of both their actual experiences with adults who continue to act and think in ways that youth find adultist and their assertions about adults’ political limitations, young people can be quite skeptical about building intergenerational relationships.

Even when youth and adults do try to create partnerships and are actively pursuing intergenerational collaboration and are aware of the potential pitfalls

and problems associated with adultism, dynamics of inequality and age-based power continue to emerge within their interactions. Creating egalitarian intergenerational political relationships is an explicit goal of the Peruvian movement of working children, but despite nearly 40 years of working in this direction, this goal continues to be very difficult to both fully imagine and articulate and even more difficult to implement (Taft 2014). Adults can have significant difficulty stepping back and letting youth really lead their own organizations and youth may also sometimes find it easier to rely on adults for difficult choices and decisions (Taft 2014). There are serious challenges for both youth and adults who want to create more egalitarian forms of intergenerational interaction. In the context of planning an international conference, Blanchet-Cohen and Rainbow (2006) found that even when children and adults were both willing to work together, the process was not always smooth. The children thought that the adults did not adjust their language or explain themselves to the children, sometimes disregarded the children's decisions in favor of their own, and did not always take their particular needs (e.g., for unstructured time) into account. Adults were frustrated by the fact that children's participation required lots of additional time, money, and work and found that they were not always able to consult with the kids before making a decision. Intergenerational collaboration, while it may be a goal of many movements and organizations, continues to be quite challenging for both youth and adults.

4 Conclusion: Identifying What Works

Given that intergenerational relationships can be both beneficial and challenging for youth activists and organizers, scholarship can be useful for identifying some of the key features that can make such relationships effective, supportive, and productive and that mitigate some of the very real difficulties. In a classic publication on this subject, Barry Checkoway (1996) argues for positioning "adults as allies" for youth organizers and suggests that being a good adult ally requires learning to challenge one's own embedded adultism and one's assumptions about youth. Questioning adultism and discussing how age-based power and privilege is operating within an organizing space helps youth activist groups to develop increasingly egalitarian forms of relating across age and generation (Gordon 2007; Shier 2012). Making adultism visible and the subject of collective scrutiny encourages both youth and adults to pay attention to the power dynamics at play within their relationships and to confront dynamics that marginalize youth and/or give adults greater authority. The collective attention to adultism, however, is a primarily cultural and informal practice, and some groups have also found significant benefit in complementing this with formal structures that actively limit adult power (Taft 2014). Franklin notes that this was the case for SNCC, who welcomed the advice of adult organizations but "excluded the adult organizations from participating as voting members of its central committee and relegated them to the role of participant observers" (2014,

p. 74). Such mechanisms can help to disrupt deeply habituated tendencies of adults to take up more space and of youth to defer to adult authority.

Intergenerational collaboration is also supported by deep relationships based on mutual trust and affection (Edell et al. 2013; Ginwright 2010; Liebel 2007). These affective relationships not only facilitate intergenerational groups' abilities to productively confront power and inequality but also enhance their dialogic practices and their capacities for being transformed by one another's perspectives (Graham and Fitzgerald 2010; Wyness 2013). Trusting relationships not only encourage young people to express themselves but also require that adults take those voices seriously and allow young people's views on the world to potentially change their own understandings of the issues at hand.

In theory, these best practices for intergenerational partnership could be applied to other YCE programs such as critical civics curricula in schools, service learning programs, and even youth councils. These approaches to disrupting age inequality do not have to be limited to social movement activism alone. However, it remains to be seen to what extent state-centered approaches to youth civic development can realistically allow for more horizontal and equitable exchanges between youth and adults. Future research must attend to this relationship between intergenerational dynamics and the role of the state in the development of youth political consciousness and engagement.

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Intergenerational Communities as Healthy Places for Meaningful Engagement and Interaction

12

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Abstract

Shifting demographics, along with changing family structures and household dynamics worldwide, make it increasingly important to reflect on successful practices that provide opportunities for interaction, engagement, and support across more than two generations. This chapter, therefore, explores three key areas of research: (1) elder-friendly communities, (2) child-friendly communities, and (3) healthy communities, to identify how they align and intersect to form foundations for intergenerational approaches. Instead of a limited view that focuses on the amelioration of age-specific problems, research prioritizes shared principles that promote the development of intergenerational community assets. In addition, there is encouraging evidence suggesting the allocation of policy resources – financial, physical, human – is not necessarily a zero-sum game because intergenerational approaches can produce synergistic outcomes. The chapter concludes with recommendations for additional research.

Keywords

A Neighborhood for All Ages · Age-friendly employment policies · Baby boom · Built environment domains · Buildings · Housing · Outdoor spaces · Built environment domain transportation · Child-friendly city · Building blocks for framework · Definition · Initiative · Co-facilitation methods · Cohousing · Communities for All Ages · Convention on the Rights of Older Persons (CROP) · Cyber Seniors · Elder-friendly communities · Garden Mosaics · Golden Link model · Healthy communities · Home help services · Hope Meadows · Imagining Livability Design Collection · Implementation gap · Intergenerational communities · Aims · Challenges and opportunities · Community benefits · Individual physical benefits · Physical and social barrier reduction · Positive attitudes · Social and built environment · Built environment domains; social domains · Intergenerational community initiatives and policies · International migration · Life-course approach · Life-span approach · Making Connections · Multigenerational bonds · National Center on Grandfamilies · Naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs) · Normative gap · ONEgeneration · Pedestrian safety · Proactive neighborhood planning · Rights-based approaches · Salutogenesis · Shared housing · Social domains · Communication and information · Community support and health services · Employment and civic participation · Social inclusion · Social inclusion · The Marvin · Twin Creeks · Youth bulge · Zoning regulations

1 Introduction

Worldwide, family demographics are shifting. Migration, delayed fertility options, and same-sex partnerships, among others, are affecting household living arrangements in countries around the world. Divorce, temporary labor migrations for one parent, un-partnered childbearing, parental loss due to HIV AIDS or other causes,

and other such life events have led to situations in which children live separate from one parent (Cherlin 2010). In addition, young adults often leave home to head their own households, rather than live with their parents.

In many majority world countries, changes in lifestyle and family structure are intertwined with significant increases in the number of people aged 65 years or older (WHO 2007). Longer life expectancies and better health for aging baby boomers affect both the need for and availability of caregivers. Although elders can be an important source of care for children and grandchildren, they may increase the caregiving responsibilities of adult children, financially and otherwise (Cherlin 2010).

In countries like the USA, multigenerational bonds can be more important than the nuclear family ties experienced in the recent past (Bengtson 2001). For example, grandparents are raising grandchildren for many reasons, including parental drug use (Council on the Ageing in each State and Territory – COTA National Seniors, 2003). In the USA, the population living in multigenerational households grew from 45.3 million in 2006 to 56.8 million in 2012, and in 2009, 16% of US households headed by an immigrant were multigenerational (Fry and Passel 2014). Grandparents in this situation often face considerable strain when dealing with the additional financial, legal, and social demands of raising children later in life, despite their love and dedication to protecting their grandchildren (p. 8):

Parenting our granddaughter (whom we love with every fibre in our bodies) has meant that we have once again become parents in our 40s [which] has taken the joy out of being grandparents. As I am a working grandmother, I have had to drop and change my shifts (loss of income) to accommodate looking after my granddaughter, as I am her primary carer. I take her to after school activities, assist with homework etc. and I find that by the end of the day I am totally exhausted. (Grandparent couple 46 & 49, Grandchild 9) (p. 29)

In the minority world, the patterns tend to be different. Here, many countries are experiencing what has been referred to as a youth “bulge” (Lin 2012). A similar demographic trend in majority world countries, after World War II, was called a baby “boom,” suggesting a different valuation by those setting the tone for the discourse. Within the minority world, the large and growing share of youthful populations is especially evident in cities. The youth dependency ratio in many African countries is upward of 75%. And it has been estimated that by 2030, 60% of the world’s urban population will be 18 or younger and most of the growth will occur in the developing world (Ruble et al. 2003). High rates of rural to urban migration by young people in search of jobs are largely responsible for this trend. Of course, it is only a matter of time before these youthful populations will age and present a new set of challenges for these countries. In the present time, young people in cities in the developing world have diminished social support networks, as their parents usually stay behind in rural areas, where they, in turn, forego the presence of their children, notwithstanding occasional visits and remittances they may receive.

International migration also plays a role in changing household dynamics, as young people from low-income countries seek work in high-income countries. Many

young women from, for example, Mexico, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines are employed as (often live-in) caregivers in more affluent countries like the USA, Germany, Israel, and Singapore (Ayalon et al. 2008; Barken 2014). In addition, young men may leave their homes to pursue earnings in dangerous jobs, with long working hours and substandard living conditions (Zuehlke 2015).

Spurred by these developments, social scientists have shown renewed interest in intergenerational relationships and increased opportunities for interaction and support across more than two generations (e.g., van Vliet 2011; Biggs and Carr 2015). National and local policy-makers in many countries are also giving renewed attention to intergenerational practice to counteract common negative perceptions of aging and to overcome the physical and social segregation of generations (Jarrott 2011; Hatton-Yeo 2010). Against this backdrop, there is a need to identify promising intergenerational practices that may hold lessons and serve as models.

This chapter discusses recent research and current initiatives focused on intergenerational communities. The chapter explores three key areas of recent interest and to identify how they align and intersect to form foundations for intergenerational approaches: (1) elder-friendly communities, (2) child-friendly communities, and (3) healthy communities. The chapter highlights key principles and findings from each of these three areas. The chapter then summarizes key physical and social domains of intergenerational communities, addressing the challenges and possibilities. The chapter concludes by identifying areas where further research is necessary to provide a fuller understanding of intergenerational communities.

2 Elder-Friendly Communities

Aging populations, particularly in majority world countries, and unmet needs of aging households have given rise to a growing interest in “elder-friendly” cities. Scholars emphasize that elder friendliness should address current requirements, as well as plan for the future needs of older community members (Alley et al. 2007). Common focus areas of elder-friendly communities include transportation, housing, health care, safety, and respect for older community members, among others. The importance of each varies among settings and populations. More specifically, it has been suggested that characteristics of an elder-friendly community include:

1. Accessible and affordable transportation, including adequate pedestrian and traffic controls
2. A wide variety of appropriate housing options, including in-home care services
3. Responsive and age-appropriate health care, long-term care, and exercise facilities
4. Safe environments and low crime rates
5. Recognition of and response to the unique needs of seniors, with elders considered to be a vital part of the community and elder-relevant issues present in local agendas
6. A wide selection of accessible and affordable services, including caregiver support services (Alley et al. 2007, p. 7)

These suggestions derive from various sources oriented to the USA (e.g., AARP 2005; Blue Moon 2006; Dumbaugh 2008; Cuyahoga County Planning Commission 2004). However, they are also underpinned by broader conceptual considerations and a global framework for age-friendly cities, endorsed by the World Health Organization (2007), with guides developed in France, Canada, Ireland, Australia, and the USA, among many other countries.

Complementing the need-based approaches referenced above, recent developments include rights-based approaches, consistent with renewed interest in “rights to the city” more generally (Harvey 2003). The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP), established in 2011, is working toward the development of international instruments to strengthen the rights of older people, including a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People (GAROP 2015).

The 2015 GAROP report, titled “In Our Own Words,” discusses the ageism and discrimination that older people experience (Sleap 2015). Based on consultation with over 2,000 older people from 50 countries, the report describes their personal experiences, highlighting the common occurrence of age discrimination around the world. One participant stated, “I am considered a spent force with nothing left to contribute to society – that I have had my turn and should give way to the youth” (*Male, 70–79 years, Uganda (p. 4)*).

The GAROP participants suggest that generational conflict, partly caused by “a lack of communication and time spent between young and old,” can lead to discrimination against older people (p. 5). Based on this work, one of the key principles suggested for the UN Convention of the Rights of Older People includes the promotion of intergenerational solidarity (p. 6). In addition, to address the discrimination and violation of older people’s rights, the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing was established at the UN General Assembly in 2010 (for more information, see <http://www.rightsofolderpeople.org/open-ended-working-group/>). This approach addresses the needs of a specific, age-delineated target group and is similar to efforts focused on creating child-friendly communities. The next section briefly reviews this work.

3 Child-Friendly Communities

Extensive literature exists on the experience, needs, and participation of children and youth in community settings (e.g., Chawla 2002; Driskell 2002; Woolcock and Steele 2008). Much of this research is aligned with the child-friendly city work first developed under the auspices of UNICEF, which defined a child-friendly city as:

... a city, or any local system of governance, committed to fulfilling children's rights. It is a city where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions. It is, as a result, a city that is fit for all. (Child Friendly Cities Initiative, www.childfriendlycities.org)

In 1996, the *Child-Friendly Cities Initiative* (CFCI) was launched to implement a resolution passed during the second *UN Conference on Human Settlements* (Habitat II) and make cities livable places for all (Riggio 2000). This initiative marked a turning point in how young people were perceived in the community, as valuable community members rather than “objects of protection” (Wilks 2010, p. 27). The UNICEF CFC Secretariat at Innocenti took the lead in developing a framework for defining and creating a child-friendly city and to address a range of needs (Schulze and Moneti 2007). The initiative framework includes nine building blocks:

1. Promote **children’s participation** and active involvement to ensure the views of young people are heard and taken into consideration in decision-making processes
2. Create a **child-friendly legal framework** to ensure the rights of children are protected in legislation and regulatory frameworks
3. Develop a **city-wide children’s right strategy** to ensure the development of a comprehensive strategy for the entire municipality based on the CRC
4. Establish a **children’s right unit or coordinating mechanism** to ensure children’s perspectives are given priority
5. Conduct a systematic **child impact assessment and evaluation** to assess the impact of law, policy, and practice on children throughout the process
6. Establish a **children’s budget** to ensure adequate resource commitment for children
7. Produce a **regular state of the city’s children report** to ensure systematic monitoring of the state of all children in the municipality
8. **Making children’s rights known** and ensuring that information about children’s rights is disseminated to all children and adults in the municipality
9. Support the **independent advocacy for children** by nongovernmental organizations and human rights institutions to promote children’s rights (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre 2004).

Associated with these building blocks are checklists for assessment by children, adolescents, parents, service providers, and child advocates. Although earlier CFC work included explicit reference to aspects of place, the later framework is mainly procedural and organizational, intended to guide governance structures and processes that are responsive to children’s rights. Nonetheless, much practice and research intended to support child-friendly cities has been oriented to the design of the physical environment, planning of public spaces, improving mobility, enhancing access to the natural environment, and life chances more generally. These physical environment characteristics, as well as the social environment context, are important to the well-being of young people and elders alike. Therefore, the next section will discuss work related to healthy communities more broadly.

4 Healthy Communities

Ultimately, elder- and child-friendly initiatives focus on the health and well-being of all residents. They include efforts to support physical, psychological, and social well-being. Therefore, healthy communities are an area of potential convergence.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines a healthy city as:

One that is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential. (Health Promotion Glossary 1998)

People are healthier when they are part of a community that offers possibilities for healthy living that are aligned with the realities of their life and support their everyday activities (Kang 2015). Common daily activities include those needed to meet basic needs. A healthy city also features “community participation and empowerment, intersectoral partnerships, and participant equity” (WHO 2015). Recognizing that the physical design of cities is critical for the health and well-being of its residents as well, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014) in the USA promotes healthy community design, improving people’s health, by focusing on the following:

- Enabling and encouraging physical activity
- Reducing injury
- Increasing access to healthy food
- Improving air and water quality
- Minimizing the effects of climate change
- Decreasing mental health issues
- Strengthening the social fabric
- Providing fair access to livelihood, education, and resources

More broadly, salutogenesis, a term coined by medical sociologist, Aaron Antonovsky, is an approach that focuses on health promotion within the built environment rather than the treatment of disease. Salutogenic design incorporates principles that promote health and well-being and relies on the sense of coherence construct, which references people’s ability to comprehend, manage, and cope with their environment (Antonovsky 1996). This model is consistent with current place-making efforts that focus on coherence, vitality, and functionality in designed spaces.

Creating healthy communities can help realize the synergistic potential of approaches to creating elder-friendly and child-friendly communities and can inform practice and guide research on intergenerational communities. Instead of a limited view that focuses on the amelioration of age-specific problems, it is preferable to

identify shared principles that promote the development of intergenerational community assets. In this vein, a study of European cities found that the WHO Healthy Aging Network encourages its members to adopt a healthy aging approach, rather than a more traditional orientation to illness and dependency (Green 2013). The next section describes research on intergenerational communities and their linkage with healthy communities.

5 Intergenerational Communities

The WHO (2007) promotes a broad focus on age friendliness, which “encourages active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (p. 5). Importantly, it acknowledges that aging is a lifelong process. Therefore, an age-friendly community as defined by the WHO is not simply “elderly-friendly” but a community that provides benefits and opportunities to all members (p. 6). Within this paradigm, in 2007, the WHO developed the *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide* as a platform for active aging, and in 2010, it launched the Global Network on Age-Friendly Cities with 33 participating cities (Biggs and Carr 2015).

Intergenerational practice involves three important commonalities: people of different generations participate; participation involves activities aimed at goals that benefit everyone; and the participants maintain relations based on sharing (Buffel et al. 2014, p. 1786). The International Consortium for Intergenerational Programs (ICIP) supports the development of intergenerational practice in the UK through “mutually beneficial activities, which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities” (Beth Johnson Foundation 2001). To engage elders with and on behalf of vulnerable families with children, the Viable Futures Center has created a useful resource guide that includes ideas for policy and practice (JustPartners Inc. 2012).

Intergenerational cities should not be confused with multigenerational cities. The latter focus on addressing the needs of each age group separately and are representative of current trends to segregate populations by age in schools, workplaces, and housing (MacCallum et al. 2010). The former seek to foster meaningful engagement between generations (Kaplan et al. 2007). Yet, in countries such as Australia, intergenerational practice is relatively new compared to youth-focused practices that involve older adults (MacCallum et al. 2010).

Intergenerational programs often focus on reducing the physical and social barriers between seniors and young people (MacCallum et al. 2010). According to Generations United, a public policy organization in the USA, in the best intergenerational communities, “individuals of all ages are an integral and valued part of the setting” (Generations United 2015a). Research has found that young and elderly people both benefit from projects facilitating intergenerational exchange (MacCallum et al. 2010). The next section discusses these various benefits.

6 Benefits of Intergenerational Communities for Health and Well-Being

Research has shown individual psychological benefits of intergenerational interactions. A study of social interactions between adults and adolescents found that adolescents who worked with an older person on a difficult life problem showed much more pro-social behavior than adolescents who worked with a peer on a difficult life problem (Kessler and Staudinger 2007). Another study reported that more frequent contact, greater grandparent involvement in adolescents' lives, and better parent–grandparent relationships predicted adolescents' reports of higher levels of emotional closeness to, importance of, and respect for their closest grandparent's views (Attar-Schwartz et al. 2009). Research has also found less negative risk taking with alcohol and drugs among teens who have strong relationships with older adults (Kennison and Ponce-Garcia 2012). Of interest as well is a pre-post study that found that an intergenerational service-learning course dispelled myths about aging and reinforced career choices among undergraduate students in adult development (Blieszner and Artale 2001).

Intergenerational interaction can foster positive attitudes. An experimental study of pre-post cross-generational attitudes among adolescents and older adults found more positive attitudes in both groups following 1 h of dyadic or triadic contact for 6 weeks. The older participants also reported higher life satisfaction (Meshel and McGlynn 2004). Similar results were obtained by Gaggioli et al. (2014), who found that intergenerational group reminiscence is a potentially effective activity to improve psychosocial well-being and the quality of life in healthy older adults and to improve the way younger generations perceive the elderly (see also Au et al. 2015). This finding is consistent with the more positive attitudes to people with dementia reported by college students in a gerontology service-learning course (Yamashita et al. 2013) and positive observations of an intergenerational playgroup program involving persons with dementia (Skropeta et al. 2014).

6.1 Individual Physical Benefits

The policy framework set forth by the WHO in 2002 supports active aging (Green 2013). This life-course approach focuses on the premise that activity and healthy lifestyle changes in early and mid-life can reduce disability in older age. Healthy communities, therefore, should include spaces designed to support physical activity by both young and old. Parks can be designed with attractive and intriguing spaces for children, while also providing opportunities for adults to be active at the same time, thus benefitting both age groups rather than just one.

Recent developments show encouraging examples of such intergenerational public spaces, including supportive programming and facilities. For example, Fox Valley Park District in Illinois, USA, provides separate programs for young and elder community members, while also creating programs that embrace the family dynamic. ONEgeneration, a private nonprofit in California, also focuses on

intergenerational activities at their shared-site facility. The program offers day care for frail seniors, kindergarten students, and preschool children, bringing the groups together daily for movement, art, cooking, and music activities (Smith 2010).

6.2 Community Benefits

The literature on child- and elder-friendly communities identifies easy and safe access to spaces and facilities as one of the desirable characteristics in the environment. It is clear that characteristics such as this are good not only for children and elders but benefit other population groups as well. The WHO highlights many community-wide benefits experienced when a community enhances mobility and independence, increases security, fosters a sense of confidence to enjoy active leisure and social activities, reduces stress, and encourages volunteering and community engagement (WHO 2007).

Many older adults are committed, long-term community residents, who invest their energy into local issues that concern them. Communities that do not meet the needs of older people may forego significant benefits, such as a loss in their volunteer pool, higher stress levels for family caregivers, and increased levels of institutionalization (Alley et al. 2007).

During an intergenerational conference held in Massachusetts, USA, that incorporated an intergenerational community-organizing model, participants felt a sense of deep connection and mutual affirmation with each other, which in turn resulted in a sense of empowerment and collective efficacy (Kang 2015). Co-facilitation methods, during which adult educators teamed up with youth leaders, were most effective when youth were involved in the full process (p. 134). This partnership also fostered leadership skills for the participating youth.

Similarly, communities also see increased efficiencies when the needs of children and elders are jointly considered. For example, shared-site facilities reduce the need for separate, age-segregated buildings and, hence, decrease associated construction and maintenance costs, while fostering intergenerational cohesion.

7 What Does an Intergenerational Community Look Like?

Scholars have noted that the physical environment plays a critical role in creating an intergenerational community, yet it is lacking research attention (Kaplan et al. 2007). Older people usually prefer to age in place (Scharlach 2009) (Scharlach and Lehning 2013), which requires a physical context that accommodates their needs. However, they often experience declining capacity for independent living, and their ability to participate in community life and maintain their independence depends largely on accessible infrastructure and social resources (Alley et al. 2007).

Research has emphasized the importance of the social and built environment and the relationship between the two (Alley et al. 2007). The aim of intergenerational urban space should be to “enhance social and emotional understanding between age

groups, increase harmony and reduce generational conflict” (Biggs and Carr 2015, p. 10). In addition, research in Australia found that “intergenerational programs involve active engagement and participation of multiple generations” (MacCallum et al. 2010, p. 121).

The importance of both the social and built environment is also highlighted by the WHO’s eight key aspects of age-friendly cities. They include four built environment domains: (1) transportation; (2) housing; (3) outdoor spaces; and (4) buildings, and four aspects related to the social and cultural environment: (5) social participation, respect, and social inclusion; (6) civic participation and employment; (7) communication and information; and (8) community support and health services (WHO 2007, p. 9). These eight domains are also emphasized by the “AARP Age-Friendly World Tour” that provides a global overview of efforts to make communities more age friendly (Turner 2014). The following section discusses each of these key areas in greater detail.

8 Built Environment Domains

The design of environments must meet the needs of the elderly and youth and accommodate and encourage beneficial use. A study of the WHO European Healthy Aging Cities Network found that member cities focused heavily on the supportive physical environments as the context for supporting healthy lifestyle choices (Green 2013). Therefore, we next discuss built environment characteristics that can help form the context of intergenerational communities.

8.1 Transportation

Safety, reliability, accessibility, and convenience are vital considerations for the design of community transportation systems. In addition, the provision of well-designed walking and cycle paths is an important characteristic of a health-promoting, age-friendly community (WHO 2007). However, the design of many communities necessitates travel by automobile to meet everyday needs and can therefore be socially and physically isolating for people who are either too old or too young to drive themselves (Scharlach 2009).

For populations with limited incomes, such as the elderly and youth, the ability to navigate a community’s physical environment is often linked to the cost of living. Young people are restricted by transportation options if they cannot drive and cannot afford available public transportation options. Many communities subsidize public transportation by providing free or reduced rates on bus and train passes for seniors and school-age youth (WHO 2007). However, these subsidies can also contribute to a general concern that elderly populations create an economic burden on other groups (Buffel et al. 2014).

Safety for pedestrians is also a major concern for many cities. For example, in New York City, people aged 65 and older comprised 13% of the population in 2001

yet represented 33% of the pedestrian fatalities (Buffel et al. 2012, p. 602). Local authorities need to create safe, pedestrian-friendly streets with traffic-calming designs and sidewalks that effectively and efficiently connect residential areas to parks, public spaces, schools, and community amenities. In addition, street crossings must accommodate slow-moving pedestrians and give them ample time to safely cross the street (Scharlach 2009). In the USA, cities across the country are developing initiatives to create more walkable communities (Weidt 2015). This also makes good business sense. A recent study found that between 2010 and 2015, nearly 500 companies in over 170 different industries in the USA relocated or expanded to downtown locations with higher walkability scores (Smart Growth America 2015). The 2015 National Community and Transportation Preference Survey also found that 79% of respondents indicated that being within walking distance of amenities such as parks and shops was an important factor in the decision of where to buy a home (National Association of Realtors 2015).

Proactive neighborhood planning and beneficial design principles are behind examples such as the Dutch “woonerf” (Karsten and van Vliet 2006), the British home zone (Gill 2006), and cyclovía initiatives, which have spread from Colombia to Peru, France, Italy, the USA, and elsewhere (Morhayim 2012). By prioritizing nonmotorized transportation, these solutions provide alternatives to traditional streets designed primarily to accommodate cars (Mehta 2013).

The Imagining Livability Design Collection produced by the AARP Livable Communities Group, in association with the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, contains suggested tools for creating an age-friendly physical community environment (Morphy and Ping 2015). The tools include short-term, mid-range, and long-range projects, as well as planning and policy suggestions. Some of the design ideas are fairly common, such as incorporating street trees and mixed-use development, while others are more innovative versions of traditional design ideas such as parklets and pocket parks, modern and mini-roundabouts, and lane narrowing. The policy suggestions include concepts such as “complete streets,” in which streets are designed to accommodate sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bus lanes, accessible public transit stops, safe crossing opportunities, median islands, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, and more (p. 15). Form-based codes, health impact assessments, and place-making concepts are also recommended to foster healthier and more usable public spaces for intergenerational use.

8.2 Housing

Baby boomers in the USA have shown a preference for aging in place as long as possible (Kennedy 2010). Principles of universal design facilitate staying in one’s own home when functional impairments would otherwise make this difficult or impossible (for a summary of universal design principles, see <http://nhi.org/online/issues/148/housingforall.html>). Home help services can further support this option. Whether aging in place helps create intergenerational communities depends partly on local population composition and turnover. In homogeneous communities,

comprising largely the same age group, naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs) are likely, which require supportive programs and community structures (Vladeck and Altman 2015; Capps 2015).

Another way to accommodate multiple generations in one place is to expand the selection of housing options and create places that attract both young and older people. There is a need for innovative housing models that are physically and socially integrated into existing communities (Kennedy 2010). Among these models, various forms of shared housing are getting attention. For example, students of the Cleveland Institute of Music live among a much older generation of neighbors in the Judson Manor senior citizen community (McIntyre 2014). Similarly, a retirement home in Deventer, a town in the Netherlands, offers local university students free housing in exchange for spending at least 30 h per month with its senior residents. They accompany them on shopping trips, prepare meals, play games, or simply spend time and talk (AFP 2014). In Spain, Barcelona City Council, Obra Social De Caixa Catalunya and the Universities of Barcelona, Pomeu Fabra and Ramon Llull, got together to test the idea of housing their students in the homes of older people. Started in 1996–1997 with around 20 older people, it has grown to a fully consolidated program across Spain, operating in 27 cities in seven autonomous communities (Pinto et al. 2009).

Cohousing is also gaining interest as an option for intergenerational living with a growing number of examples in Europe as well as the USA (Korkki 2013). In addition to accommodating a wide range of living arrangements (e.g., shared housing, cooperatives, cohousing), these models should also encompass intergenerationally shared public spaces. In Singapore, the Housing and Development Board provides public housing to promote intergenerational support among extended family members, enabling married children and parents to live in adjoining flats (Thang 2015). The next section describes the research on intergenerational outdoor spaces.

8.3 Outdoor Spaces

In many countries, zoning regulations typically support low-density, automobile-dependent urban growth patterns that have restricted transportation options and narrowed housing choices (Kennedy 2010). Yet, an age-friendly community should include multifamily buildings and mixed-use neighborhoods that bring different ages together and closer to daily services (Scharlach 2009). Local governments must remove regulatory barriers that hinder community livability and shared-use sites while establishing regulations for good community design for healthy living, sustainable transportation, and social interactions (van Vliet 2011).

By creating well-designed public spaces community design can support social cohesion and opportunities and inspiration for meaningful engagement between generations (Kaplan and Haider 2015) For example, parks and urban squares can facilitate social interactions between generations and increase opportunities for

intergenerational play and active living. Intergenerational, shared spaces offer children, youth, and older adults the opportunity to participate in joint programs and interact with each other. Interactions may be formal during programmed activities or informal due to the proximity of usable areas (Generations United 2005). For example, the Housing and Development Board estates in Singapore also offer colocated adult fitness facilities and playgrounds to promote intergenerational recreational activities and “void decks” which are empty spaces on the ground floor of a complex that can serve various purposes and have the potential to create opportunities for intergenerational interactions (Thang 2015, p. 22). Despite the value of these types of shared spaces, as Solomon (2014) points out, most research on intergenerational activities and spaces has been limited to institutional settings.

Nonetheless, some innovative open space designs are beginning to take shape. For example, the demographically diverse transit-oriented development of Twin Creeks in Oregon, USA, is working with Age-Friendly Innovators Inc. to design an intergenerational park that will accommodate both younger and older residents to promote physical activity for age-diverse abilities (for information, see <http://agefriendlyinnovators.org/intergenerational-park/>). Also important in this regard are the provision of green infrastructure and easy access to nature (Sullivan et al. 2004). For example, Garden Mosaics is a US-based youth and community program, also implemented in South Africa, that incorporates youth participation and engages young people in learning from elders, many of whom are immigrants, about growing food in urban gardens (Liddicoat et al. 2007).

8.4 Buildings

Buildings that are accessible through the inclusion of elevators, escalators, ramps, wide doorways, nonslip flooring, rest areas, adequate and clear signage, and public toilets are important characteristics for an age-friendly community (WHO 2007, p. 16). Although toilet facilities, clear signage, elevators, ramps, and similar features are common requests for aging people with limited mobility, many of these characteristics are important for families and young people as well.

Buildings that serve as community schools can provide an opportunity for intergenerational exchange to connect and educate individuals of different ages. A study of an intergenerational school in Ohio, USA, established in 2000, describes the school as the context for multiage intergenerational learning. Local high school students, college students, adults, and seniors mentor primary school students on a daily basis. In addition, all classes make routine visits to local-assisted living facilities and take joint trips to local attractions. Qualitative findings show that, as a result, seniors with mild symptoms of dementia expressed an elevated quality of life as indicated by greater cognitive stimulation and improvement in mood and an increased sense of purpose and usefulness due to the educational mentoring (George et al. 2011).

9 Social Domains

An intergenerational community must encourage connectedness and involvement through various means. Social participation and social support are important in maintaining health and well-being and often contribute to developing competence, enjoying respect and esteem, and maintaining or establishing supportive relationships (WHO 2007).

9.1 Social Inclusion, Participation, and Respect

Social inclusion is an important aspect of intergenerational communities that promotes the health and well-being of its residents:

Independence alone is not enough if we want to improve the quality of life of older people and tackle exclusion. Everyone, including older people, has the right to participate and continue throughout their lives having meaningful relationships and roles. Older people's vital role and responsibility to help build social capital will become ever more apparent as our society ages. (A sure start to later life- Communities and Local Government, 2006 as quoted in Harding 2007, p. 12)

In addition, intergenerational exchange often provides opportunities for participants to break down barriers and develop new understandings of one another (MacCallum et al. 2010). Research has found adolescents' attitudes toward the elderly become more positive after increased contact with older adults (Meshel and McGlynn 2004). In addition, reducing the "invisibility" of children and elders will help nurture "intergenerational empathy" (Biggs and Carr 2015, p. 10). Further, an evaluation of a science-based intergenerational program with at-risk fourth graders in the USA found that school-based activities can improve attitudes toward the elderly and can facilitate improvement in children's school-based behaviors (Cummings et al. 2003). The study concluded that the use of a structured setting and the avoidance of death-oriented discussions contribute to positive effects.

9.2 Community Support and Health Services

When people get to know one another and begin, often in very small ways, to take responsibility for making their community a better place, they create a socially sustainable web of support. Generations can work together to improve their neighborhoods in a variety of ways that create and strengthen feelings of intergenerational solidarity and community belonging (Hatton-Yeo 2007).

Intergenerational practice is instrumental in facilitating relationships between people who would not otherwise be connected (MacCallum et al. 2010). Neighbors of all ages may begin to watch out for one another and reduce risk factors for crime and violence. Such approaches contrast with deficit-based perspectives that focus

narrowly on problems, seeking instead to build on the developmental assets of children and youth and the communities in which they live (Scales et al. 2001).

Intergenerational exchange also fosters both “bonding” and “bridging” social capital (MacCallum et al. 2010). For example, Hope Meadows is a planned intergenerational community containing foster and adoptive parents, children, and senior citizens. In Hope Meadows, adopted and foster children find a home, parents, grandparents, playmates, and an entire community designed to help them grow up in a secure and nurturing environment. In exchange for reduced rent on an apartment, senior citizens volunteer as “honorary grandparents” at least 6 h per week to act as crossing guards and tutors and to read aloud, play cards, or play board games with children (Smith 2001). Hope Meadows inspired a similar development in Portland, Oregon, USA, on the site of a former elementary school (Macht 2013).

In another example, in intergenerational community support, at The Marvin in Norwalk, Connecticut, USA, congregate senior housing with optional assisted living services shares a single facility with an accredited school readiness and childcare program. Community activities dispel stereotypes and build relationships – educational experiences for all age groups, exercise programs, gardening, holiday activities, and more (Under One Roof 2012).

Ample research testifies to the beneficial health outcomes of social capital formation (Kawachi and Berkman 2000). Recent research in 14 European countries suggest that policy interventions should target individual social capital to achieve the double effect of improving personal health and enhancing community social capital, as well as supporting an asset-based approach (Rocco and Suhrcke 2012). The ways in which communities are designed affect opportunities for forming and maintaining social capital and, thus, population well-being (Eicher and Kawachi 2011).

9.3 Employment and Civic Participation

Older people represent a significant economic resource in the community when they continue to be active later in life. They often continue working longer, volunteer for community organizations, care for others, and take on civic duties (Harding 2007). Older people are often eager and willing to work and have job qualifications but may face barriers such as age limits, retirement requirements, and a lack of flexible work options (WHO 2007).

Age-friendly employment policies will enable older adults to adjust their working schedule and responsibilities, without losing their benefits or seniority (Scharlach 2009). Similarly, child-friendly policies will provide opportunities for youth to compete for entry-level jobs and gain skills necessary for future employment.

Seniors can also contribute their skills as volunteers in schools and the community at large. Examples in the USA include the models developed by Experience Corps and Seniors4Kids, which engage older adult tutors with young students in disadvantaged schools to support literacy and tap into the experience of older community members (for more information see <http://www.aarp.org/experience-corps/>).

9.4 Communication and Information

Intergenerational communication can impact one's ability to establish satisfying relationships and communicate with others effectively (Giles et al. 2010). It can be especially important within the workplace setting. The sharing of experience-based knowledge between younger and senior workers is important as workforce demographics shift and the recognition of the competence of older workers becomes critical (Hilson and Ennals 2007).

Models such as the "Golden Link" were developed to increase active aging and counteract views of seniors as problems while promoting the use of technology. The model employed a simple dialogic technique to connect the computer skills of younger workers with the experience-based competencies of the senior workers (p. 36). Similarly, the documentary *Cyber Seniors* shares the experience of a group of senior citizens who take their first steps into cyberspace under the tutelage of teenage mentors (Rusnak and Cassaday 2015).

The preceding brief descriptions of built and social environment characteristics point to interventions that support healthy communities across the life-span. However, some have questioned the value of universal checklists for characterizing age-friendly cities given the complexities and unique characteristics of cities and of population groups (Buffel et al. 2012). It is, therefore, helpful to develop a better understanding of the practices that support intergenerational communities. To that end, the next section describes select policies and initiatives in an international context.

10 Policies and Initiatives that Promote Intergenerational Communities

Community planning efforts often focus on the needs of specific population groups seen to be most in need. For example, many US communities are committing themselves to becoming more "child- and youth-friendly" through the creation of youth master plans (Cushing 2014), while other communities are adopting plans to become "elder-friendly" through the creation of master plans for seniors (Alley et al. 2007), embracing principles that are often very similar. Although these community plans may address intergenerational issues, it is also important to identify community initiatives and policies created intentionally to address *all* age groups and develop a shared vision of livability.

In 1989, the UN General Assembly ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). To monitor and support its implementation, a Committee on the Rights of the Child was established, and, in 1996, the UN International Emergency Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) (Riggio 2000; van Vliet 2008). From a policy perspective, child-friendly city programs are more firmly grounded in a rights-based approach (Chawla and Van Vliet *in press*) than age-friendly programs (Biggs and Carr 2015), likely due to the widespread ratification of the UN CRC.

Around the world, there is growing support for the creation of a similar Convention on the Rights of Older Persons (CROP). These efforts draw attention to the lack of specific, international human rights legislation that protects against age discrimination, referred to as a “normative gap” in existing global conventions. Older people also remain invisible in the new Universal Periodic Review system through which the Human Rights Council monitors implementation, referred to as the “implementation gap” (HelpAge International 2010). CROP would provide an explicit, legal framework for governments to ensure the protection of older people’s rights.

10.1 Initiatives

Empowerment of elders and acknowledgment of their agency in urban development are gaining currency. Yet, mistaken notions of predominant dependence remain an issue (Boermel 2006; Vera-Sanso 2006). The following section describes several initiatives around the world that incorporate intergenerational practice.

The Communities for All Ages, an initiative in the USA, promotes a life-span approach that “emphasizes values of interdependence, reciprocity and collective responsibility” (Brown and Henkin 2014, p. 63). The initiative represents an asset-based, community-wide, multiagency effort that intentionally brought together diverse people of all ages to promote age-integrated approaches instead of age-segregated approaches (Henkin et al. 2005). Through intergenerational assessment tools, the 23 participating project sites identified common issues of concern and created an action plan that developed alliances across diverse organizations; engaged community members of all ages in leadership roles; created places, practices, and policies that promote interaction across all ages; and addressed issues from a life-span perspective. Outcomes experienced by the project sites include the creation of opportunities to match complementary skills and needs, investment in community improvement efforts by all generations, and counteracting the negative effects of age segregation (Brown and Henkin 2014, p. 65).

Lifetime communities in the UK focus on providing all residents with the best chance of health and well-being, as well as social, civic, and economic engagement (Harding 2007). Within this model, elderly people are seen not only as beneficiaries of quality environments but are active creators as well. In addition, lifetime communities focus on many of the themes identified in other initiatives, such as social cohesion and sense of place, built environment, social inclusion, innovation and cross-sectoral planning, housing and services and amenities (p. 8). Within lifetime communities, lifetime homes form an essential component of the physical environment. Developed in the 1990s by Habinteg Housing Association and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, lifetime homes incorporate 16 design criteria primarily related to access and circulation and based on principles of inclusivity, accessibility, adaptability, sustainability, and good value (Habinteg 2010).

Support for grandparents that are caring for grandchildren are a focus for some organizations. Generations United in the USA has established a National Center on Grandfamilies to enact policies and promote programs addressing the challenges

faced by households headed by grandparents and other relatives (Generations United 2015b). Similarly, in Victoria, Australia, the YMCA (2015) sponsors the League of Extraordinary Grandparents. Supported through donations, the program enables grandparents and grandchildren to attend a 3-day camp to have a much-needed respite from daily challenges, receive information about support services, develop social networks, and focus on their personal well-being.

Other initiatives focus on the neighborhood scale. For example, the Netherlands Institute of Care and Welfare developed a 3-year intergenerational program called “A Neighborhood for All Ages” to promote intergenerational work within local social policy (Penninx 2003). The monitoring program determined policy goals for intergenerational practice: greater safety in public spaces, reinforcement of the pedagogical infrastructure around young people, and more cohesion between policies aimed at housing, care, and welfare for senior citizens (p. 106).

Similarly, “Making Connections,” a 10-year-long initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, fosters intergenerational dynamics within disadvantaged neighborhoods in cities across the USA (Hebert 2014). The initiative provides various kinds of assistance to communities, such as flexible financial assistance, leadership development support, peer networking, and result-based accountability training. Participating communities have seen many capacity improvements for children, families, and neighborhoods, although they have yet to see population-level change. The initiative produced important lessons related to creating mechanisms for ongoing resident participation, developing skilled resident leadership as drivers of accountability, building essential change capacities across networks of organizations, and addressing the difficulties that communities experience such as dysfunctional systems and practices (p. 32).

11 Intergenerational Communities: Challenges and Opportunities

The literature identifies various challenges to introducing intergenerational practices into community planning. Yet, each of these challenges also represents an opportunity to improve the understanding and success of intergenerational practice. First, there is still limited understanding of the direct impact that intergenerational strategies have at the community level, which may be due, in part, to inadequate monitoring and evaluation of intergenerational practices (Buffel et al. 2014). This limited understanding can be addressed through educational and awareness raising initiatives, as well as research to provide additional evidence of the impact of intergenerational communities.

Second, stakeholders typically have organizational missions and mandates that are age specific, rather than broadly focused on intergenerational opportunities. Organizations representing the interests of aging populations may offer in-home services, whereas youth-serving organizations may focus on skill development programs. These missions are also aligned with separate funding streams earmarked for the age groups they serve (Henkin and Butts 2002). Funds are often allocated to

organizations for specific activities and specific target populations. Even if they are inclined to collaborate across age groups, organizations may be restricted from doing so by their financial statutes and contractual obligations.

Third, children and youth as well as elders may be in situations of disadvantage and marginalized as a result. Particularly, those of low incomes and minority backgrounds are often in the social and economic margins of society. Age discrimination and financial constraints can limit the availability and accessibility of resources and social networks in a community (Green 2013). As a practical implication of these mobility restrictions, the logistics of social interactions and community or program participation become more difficult (Dickerson et al. 2007; Sanderson and Richards 2010). For youth, school schedules present additional constraints that limit their participation in daytime intergenerational activities.

Yet, research has shown that intergenerational programs offer enormous potential to help vulnerable populations. For school systems and social service agencies with limited budgets, intergenerational programs can foster the development of supportive relationships, increasing social interaction and facilitating positive role models and social support available to at-risk young people. Similarly, older people can benefit from continued activity, creativity, and engagement with young people and be recognized for their contributions and talents (Cummings et al. 2003).

Fourth, misconceptions between different generations are not uncommon. For example, contrary to common myth, intergenerational assistance predominately flows from older generations to younger generations in the family (Bengtson 2001). In addition, research has found evidence of stereotypical images of elders in widely different cultures, from Nigeria to the USA to China (Boduroglu et al. 2006; Okoye 2005; Okoye and Obikeze 2005). Therefore, the elimination of ageism across the life-span is necessary so that those who engage in community development do so on equal footing and based on mutual respect (Pain 2005; HelpAge International 2010). It is also important to raise awareness of the role and status of aging community members, focusing on positive aspects, including older people participating in civic and family life, rather than negative characteristics associated with illness, dependency, and mortality (Green 2013).

Fifth, children, youth, and elders typically have different levels of skill, knowledge, and experience that can hinder joint activities and be perceived as a burden. Yet, varying levels of preparedness and skill can also be seen as an opportunity for interaction and shared learning. For example, young people often need training and practice to learn how to effectively speak in public, conduct or participate in meetings, collect and analyze data, resolve conflicts, and prepare and present recommendations. These are activities with which elders may have experience and can mentor young people. Similarly, young people may be more proficient in using computers and social media and share this knowledge with elders (van Vliet 2011).

Sixth, children, youth, and elders frequently experience life transitions that can undermine the sustainability of relationships and processes. Youth may move away for school or jobs, and when they become young adults, they do not always transfer

their experiences to the next cohort. Elders may become too frail to be able to continue their engagement in the community. Other threats to sustainable practices are organizational in nature, having to do with staff turnover and training, lack of administrative buy-in by political appointees, etc. (van Vliet 2011).

12 Conclusion and Future Research Needs

With shifting demographics around the globe, intergenerational work is becoming increasingly relevant. This work can benefit from different areas of research and practice, including child-friendly communities, elder-friendly communities, and healthy communities. We are just beginning to understand how these three areas align and intersect in this emergent area of inquiry. This chapter presents a selective, international overview that suggests opportunities and challenges for policies, programs, and research.

Some scholars have pointed to the risk that shifting the focus to “all ages” may eclipse the needs of a specific age group and reinvent a “universal urbanite” (Biggs and Carr 2015, p. 7). Therefore, future evaluation is needed to assess if and how the interests of specific age groups are being negatively impacted by efforts that seek to address the needs of everyone. However, there is encouraging evidence suggesting the allocation of policy resources – financial, physical, human – is not necessarily a zero-sum game because intergenerational approaches can produce synergistic outcomes (van Vliet 2011). This poses important questions for further investigation as intergenerational projects increase in frequency and scale.

Further, it is important to understand the impacts of change, such as advances in information technology and the prevalence of social media, on intergenerational relationships. Although the Internet and mobile technologies offer opportunities for different generations to stay connected with each other, become more informed about social activities, and reflect on their family history and culture (Ward and Smith 1997), technology may also hinder and reduce face-to-face interaction. Similarly, information technology can facilitate the sharing of activities and interests in support of intergenerational connections. Yet, it can also lead to a lack of connection when one generation has limited knowledge and skills regarding specific technologies on which interactions depend (Ward and Smith 1997). The challenge of overcoming this digital divide can become an opportunity for intergenerational learning, and further research is needed to better understand the opportunities and challenges of technology in this context.

Finally, most intergenerational initiatives studied to date have focused on outcomes for individuals or small groups. Community-level impacts are harder to determine and take longer to materialize. Additional research is needed to better understand the impacts of intergenerational practice at a larger scale. Despite this need, the projects and policies presented in this chapter show an increase in opportunities for meaningful engagement, and interaction can occur between generations. The benefits of these interactions are promising as a way to promote healthy communities for all ages.

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Conflict, Empowerment, Resistance: Queer Youth and Geographies of Intergenerationality

13

Christopher Schroeder

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Abstract

Queer youth intergenerationality is an emerging topic within geography. As such, the chapter draws not only from geographies of children and young people, geographies of sexualities, and geographies of family, home, and household but also takes an interdisciplinary approach – including family studies, youth studies, critical pedagogy, sociology, and anthropology – to explore the breadth of queer youth research germane to present and future studies of queer youths’ intergenerational familial and extrafamilial relationships. Intersectionality provides a theoretical framework with which to examine queer youth, who represent the intersection of age with sexuality. Intersectionality is further useful in analyzing the ways LGBT youths’ sexual identities intersect with multiple identity markers – race, gender, class, and religion among others – across the life course as

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well as at various sites. Emphasizing site and scale, this chapter explores spaces of important multigenerational and intergenerational social exchange, including the home, school, queer youth group, park, playground, legislature, and supranational organization. This chapter interrogates intragenerational, intergenerational, and multigenerational conflicts, such as bullying and the anxiety surrounding queer youth sex education. The chapter further examines the complex spatiality of bedroom culture in regard to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender youth, and young adults and the bedroom space that becomes a locus of empowerment, conflict, and resistance. As this chapter shows, the intersectional identities of queer youth enable, restrict, shape, and are shaped by complex forms of intergenerational and multigenerational interaction and relationships.

Keywords

Intergenerationality · Intersectionality · Queer youth · Family studies · School

1 Introduction

This chapter explores issues of queer youth and intergenerationality. These issues (like most topics related to LGBT/queer youth) have been given little attention by geographers, and hence the chapter does not confine itself to research produced by geographers. Instead, the chapter takes an interdisciplinary approach to exploring the breadth of queer youth research germane to present and future studies of queer youths' intergenerational relationships. The chapter integrates this interdisciplinary framework by paying particular attention to studies that offer a geographic perspective, namely, those that emphasize site and scale.

The study of queer youth intergenerationality as discussed in this chapter necessitates engagement with theories of intersectionality, which is a burgeoning area in human geography more broadly and specifically the geographies of sexualities (Brown 2012). Theories of intersectionality, at their core, concern themselves with the effects of multiple social categories, typically how an individual comprises multiple, intersecting identities. McCall (2005), however, expands intersectionality to investigate the relationships among different social groups that represent various social categories. In geography, Valentine (2007) highlighted the spatiality of intersectionality, while Schroeder (2012) analyzed scaled relationships between two neighborhoods – and the intersections of sexuality, religion, and class. Understanding queer youth intergenerationality involves consideration of the intersection of sexuality with (young) age (Brown 2012), a form of intersection to which geographers have given little attention to date. As this chapter shows, the intersectional identities of queer youth enable, restrict, shape, and are shaped by complex forms of intergenerational and multigenerational interaction and relationships. In order to maintain a level of coherence, the chapter emphasizes intersections between age and sexuality but, it is hoped, not at the expense of obfuscating other socioeconomic categories, identities, expressions, and/or experiences. As such, this chapter also seeks to illuminate the

ways in which these markers of identity – race, class, gender, religion, and so on – intersect with and impact queer youth intergenerationalities.

To date, much of the literature on intersectionality focuses on the ways that various social categories and identities intersect at the scale of individual bodies. Much of this work lacks explicit attention to space and spatiality (Schroeder 2012; Valentine 2007). Monro (2010) argues that institutional spaces structure intersectionality differently. While her focus is neither on youth nor intergenerationality specifically, this approach to intersectionality, one that looks at how intersections structure space, could benefit studies of queer youth intergenerationality, which at its basis requires the intersection of at least sexuality with age on an individual body and how that individual interacts, or intersects, with a different age grouping. Extending these insights to the study of queer youth intergenerationality has the potential to showcase the powerful spatiality at work not only in queer youths' lives but also in the ways their lives intersect with other groups and social spaces. In other words, intersectional intergenerationalities combine with different outcomes whether at school, in the family, in front of the legislature, or even during the United Nations' International Youth Day.

Similarly, queer youth intergenerationality lies at a subdisciplinary intersection, between geographies of sexualities and geographies of children and young people. Yet, neither subfield has given sustained attention to issues of queer youth, let alone any direct attention to queer youth intergenerationalities, the more egregious considering the seemingly timely subject matter and fertile conceptual terrain. As Bethan Evans (2008) noted, children's geographers have traditionally shown a disproportionate concentration on issues confronting younger children, thereby giving less attention to adolescents, teenagers, and/or young adults. Conversely, adults' experiences dominate geographical studies on sexuality. The small, but growing, body of geographical research on queer youth rarely attends to legal minors (as defined in much of the Global North), giving preference instead to young adults. While institutionalized adulthood may explain some of the focus on adult sexuality, the methodological, empirical, and ethical exigencies of researching legal minors' sexualities may also account for the lack of attention to this topic. Nonetheless, researching queer youth through an intergenerational lens potentially enriches our understandings of both subjects, contextualizing queer youth as a less discrete social category while helping build a more comprehensive geography of intergenerationality.

Drawing from anthropology, geographies of children and young people have heeded Caputo's (1995) important call to look at children on their own terms in the here and now as generators of their own culture(s). Attending to these individualized everyday lived experiences tend to privilege children and young people's' microgeographies, such as the bedroom, classroom, playground, neighborhood, or shopping mall. An overemphasis on the microscale, however, limits the scope of children's geography. Nicola Ansell (2009) stresses the politics of scale when looking at issues confronting children and young people, who do not always have access to the processes and decisions that shape their lives since those decisions tend to take place at larger scales: boards of education, social services, and legislative or judicial channels. These

macro-geographies are inherently intergenerational, wherein adults regulate youths' existences, even if often lacking direct contact between adults and youths.

Intergenerationality – whether conceived at a micro- or macroscale – can be queered. For many scholars of sexualities, queer not only acts as a noun or adjective, it also acts as a verb. Queering, then, can mean many things, but often it is used to interrogate, discover, and/or expose underlying non-normativities, whether they are individuals, groups, categories, behaviors, etc. Queering intergenerationality is a means to highlight how intergenerational relations are fluid and flexible, never fixed, spatially or temporally. This chapter, accordingly, rejoins Vanderbeck's call “for a less compartmentalized approach to issues of age within geography” (Vanderbeck 2007, p. 215). Subsequently, the chapter seeks to expand on Vanderbeck's initial queering of generations and consequently of intergenerationality. This queering of intergenerationality, whether attending directly to sexuality or not, can complicate the myriad permutations of intergenerational relations, thereby illustrating its dynamic and multilateral dimensions.

2 Locating Queer Youth Intergenerational Relationships

Although geographers have given little direct attention to issues of queer youth intergenerationality, the chapter, in the following sections, assembles a multi-disciplinary body of research relevant to the many facets of queer youth intergenerationality. These studies have been grouped in relation to various spaces that reflect these important facets of queer youths' lived experiences, such as the home and the school (the two most researched spaces of queer youths' lives). The chapter also attends to both familial and extrafamilial intergenerational relationships as they overlap or blur in the complex spatiality of queer youths' lives.

2.1 The Home

Notwithstanding an otherwise vast literature, geographical research on home spaces has paid scant attention to issues of sexuality (but see Gorman-Murray 2006), let alone queer youth and especially their intergenerationalities. As such, to trace a lineage of research, this chapter reaches beyond geography to a range of other social science disciplines and areas (including family studies) that include LGBT/queer youths' experiences within the home as a topic worthy of research.

Brickell (2012) argues for a critical geography of home and family. She contests the quaintness of an already placid home space celebrated in much of Western society. Consequently, she highlights the tensions and conflicts within many home spaces. While she does not expressly analyze the home through the lens of intergenerationality, tensions and conflicts often arise not just between parents but often also include children as well, such as in cases of domestic abuse. Mapping the ways in which these conflicts interconnect with other sites and scales outside of the immediate family, such as with extended family members, friends, or social service

institutions, would resonate with her call for a critical geography of home and, therefore, worthy of future scholarly attention. The ways in which family conflicts connect with other spaces evince the blurred distinction between familial and extrafamilial intergenerationalities.

McRobbie and Garber (1976) introduce the concept of bedroom culture in their seminal piece “Girls and Subcultures: An Exploration.” While not geographers, the study elucidates the complexity of bedroom space and the ways in which teenage girls produce their own (sub)cultures therein. Subsequent studies have looked at the ways in which teenage boys produce their own form of bedroom culture in London (Wulff 1995). These studies of bedroom culture often posit the bedroom as a space for teenagers to cloister themselves in order to negotiate family relations. As such, these studies do not directly deal with intergenerationality. Schroeder (2015) expands on the concept of bedroom culture by looking at how one transgender, teenaged girl relied on her bedroom space in navigating her everyday life while negotiating her relationships with family, classmates, and others. The bedroom became a refuge from adultist practices. Yet, adults and adultist practices retain the power to enter this space, physically, socially, legally, and so on. As such, for so many youths – queer or otherwise – the bedroom does not merely function as a container. Instead, socio-spatial relations converge on the bedroom, illustrating the complexity of this microgeography (Schroeder 2015).

Through an in-depth ethnographic study that focuses on bourgeois, white, straight teenagers in a California town, Childress (2000) explores a world mostly devoid of direct adult influence. When contact between adults and teenagers does arise, he reduces these intergenerational relationships to mere conflicts whether between the teenagers and their parents or other adult authorities. As most participants come from more privileged bourgeois backgrounds, conflict is typically swift due to its relatively minor, if not petty, situations: transgressions of adult authority over curfews, navigating privacy over issues of sex and sexuality, and demands to fulfill material desires. While the work does not discuss adultism directly, it is useful in considering the ways in which adultist practices limit bourgeois adolescent agency. Adultist practices here or anywhere, however, are highly uneven, influenced by myriad factors, namely, how they intersect with sexuality (Schroeder 2012) and the ways in which space structures those intersections. Further research is needed to examine the extent to which adultist practices are in fact oppressive and to embark on Vanderbeck’s call for a less polite interrogation of children’s and adolescents’ responsible social agency (Vanderbeck 2008).

With a focus on queer youth, Valentine et al. (2003) look at coming out within the family and the transition from adolescence into adulthood though they do not include any minors. While this study is not specifically intergenerational, I contend that coming out is an inherently intergenerational process, as youth come out not only to parents but also to many other adults – both inside the family and outside of it. D’Augelli et al. (1998, 2008) provide studies in community psychology, emphasizing LGBT/queer youths’ experiences with family members, including parents, siblings, and extended family, in and out of the family home. Work by Schroeder (2015) extends D’Augelli et al.’s work on the relationships between and among

LGBT/queer youths and their siblings by looking at the ways these relationships are interconnected with other family members as well as other spaces (Schroeder 2015). Siblings can comprise great age differences, and parents often act as intermediaries in sibling relationships of any age, thereby speaking to the intergenerational nature of sibling relationships. The ways in which sibling relationships interconnect with other sites and scales, namely, the school, illustrate the complex spatiality of often taken-for-granted relationships.

With a concern that research on queer young people focuses too pointedly on the negative experiences of queers, Gorman-Murray (2008) presented positive experiences of queer youth in their nuclear families, as recalled by adults reflecting on their coming out experiences. For Gorman-Murray (2008), queering the family involves, first, heterosexual parents discovering that their biological offspring's sexuality deviates from their own and, second, that these parents (and perhaps their other children) embrace their non-heterosexual child with affirmation. This is an important perspective because it is often assumed that parents do not, at least immediately, accept their queer children. But, Sedgwick (1993) identifies another mode of queering the family. For her, queers queer their own queer families. More expressly, when non-heterosexuals assemble their own families by regarding close friends as dearer than kin, they subsequently queer the family institution. Yet, Sedgwick points out that through the reliance on family as a metaphor, those queers express veneration for the family as institution – and its heterosexual presupposition. The material and discursive, here, collude to hold the heterosexual, nuclear family as supreme. I, furthermore, argue that Sedgwick's queer family is premised by and for adult queers due to many adolescents' obvious limitations in breaking from their natal families (Schroeder 2015). Nonetheless, queering the family and queer family formation offers fertile ground to explore myriad modes of intergenerationality, such as the way one's "chosen" family can be a multigenerational blend of sociobiological relations comprised of some family members and friends.

In many non-normative, nonnuclear families, intergenerational relationships are often in flux. For example, the intergenerational relationship between grandparent and grandchild, which Tarrant (2010) identifies as simultaneously intimate yet distant, does not always translate to queer youths' relationships with their grandparents. Although the effect of queerness on the grandparent-grandchild relationship often goes unnoticed, Scherrer's (2010) research revealed a social expectation to come out to one's grandparents. While many assume grandparents to be a source of conflict in their queer grandchild's life, she found that they could serve as an unexpected source of support. When grandparents take on the role of primary caregiver in queer youths' lives, however, coming out becomes less of an optional privilege. Coming out to grandparents then presents a greater source of anxiety for the queer grandchild as it would with any caregiver who is directly linked to one's immediate well-being (Schroeder 2015). The potential significance and complexity of this reversal of care relationships and how it might impact the relationship between a queer adult grandchild who provides care to his/her grandparent.

The grandparent-grandchild relationship defies the presumed negative or positive binary. But, in what ways do LGBT/queer youth queer the extended family? Like

all familial relationships, extended family relationships involve a complex socio-spatiality which queer youth must navigate, negotiate, mitigate, and maintain. But intergenerational relationships between queer youth and their extended family may differ from the day-to-day interactions within the home. Citing Sedgwick's theory of the avunculate (1993), I mapped the shifting, overlapping contours of inter-, intra-, and extrafamilial relationships, intergenerational or otherwise. Family may already be queered in a more closeted way, which is part of Sedgwick's theory of the avunculate. In Schroeder's (2015) study of queer youths' experiences with home, participants told how queer aunts or uncles – or even a parent's close queer friend – provided support, helping also to assuage any ensuing anxieties among family members.

Drawing on Judith Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place* (2005), Vanderbeck argues for geographers to devote more attention to extrafamilial intergenerational contacts, which have been overshadowed by an uneven attention to familial intergenerational relationships (Vanderbeck 2007). Vanderbeck makes a compelling case, but we should hesitate in drawing clear distinctions between extrafamilial and familial intergenerational relationships. First, the family is at the core of many youths' lives, wherein parents often determine where a child attends schools or where and how a child will worship – among a host of other microgeographic decisions that influence a youth's everyday lived experience even outside the actual family space. Second, the family is instituted at a number of scales, from the regulation through children's service providers to the school board or from a host of sociopolitical realities instantiated by the state apparatus to national and supranational laws that govern transnational migrations of individuals and families. Thus, research must be careful to attend to the complex interconnectedness between the familial and extrafamilial in studies of queer youth intergenerationality.

2.2 The School

Straddling many scales at once, at least in the United States, the school might more aptly be conceived of as having a flat ontology (Ansell 2009) as a host of bureaucratic and everyday forces simultaneously shape it. Local school boards, state or provincial legislatures, federal laws, and (inter)national consumption of knowledge and information all converge on this institutional space. These forces not only regulate space but every facet of the school, from the social reproduction of the teachers and administrators to the manufacture of curricula to the publication of textbooks and often highly politicized choices about the books that are permitted in the school library.

From a more everyday standpoint, the school, as an institutionalized space, exercises its power as it segregates adults and youths from each other (Holloway et al. 2010; Vanderbeck 2007), and it further categorizes youth typically by 1-year increments. Notwithstanding this institutionalized reality, a host of modes of intergenerationality also operate within the school and the sphere of its influence, even if outside of its walls.

Geographers have not given sustained attention to intergenerationality in school environments, which seems to be the domain of sociologists of education (Crosnoe et al. 2004). But, even there, researchers have focused primarily on parent involvement in schools, younger children's introduction to primary education, and teacher-student interactions in academic achievement.

While the school is a separate institutional space of its own, it also closely intertwines with the home and family, through official routes such as parent-teacher associations and parent-teacher conferences, through parents' involvement when a child is hurt or bullied, and as siblings of different ages share the same school space. Heterosexism and homophobia, however, pervade the school at all levels from primary to higher education (Rankin 2005; Chesir-Teran 2003; Dinkel et al. 2007); this becomes apparent when individual and community-wide anxieties are induced by, for instance, the placement of a children's book in the school library explaining same-sex parenting or transgender students seek to use the bathroom or locker room that reflects their gender identities.

Bay-Cheng (2003) presents an insightful look into the anxiety surrounding teen sex. LGBTQ sexuality causes even greater anxiety, and she points out the contradictions in sex education courses when confronting LGBTQ youth. Gilbert (2004) continues this discussion of the language used in sexual education courses and how it relates to LGBTQ youth. Christopher Fisher (2009) furthers this argument with his look at abstinence-only-until-marriage sex education curriculum, taught to LGBTQ youth in the United States who could not hitherto get married.

With his reading of the gay teen book *Geography Club*, Brown (2006) offers a textual analysis of a queer youth group closeted as a geography club. The fictitious teens, who occupy the margins of the school, negotiate homophobia and heterosexism in a school that seems to be policed more by the youths than the adult faculty. Consequently, the author all but erases the role of adults and their consequent adultism. Notably, the advisor to the eponymous geography club ignores the goings-on of the club, thereby obscuring any overt adultist behaviors while simultaneously obscuring how adults, especially those who aid queer students, may face the same scrutiny as queered adolescents. Yet, the historical regulation of students and teachers evinces how homophobia and heterosexism confront both queer (ed) youth *and* teachers in the school through an "intertwined" oppression (Blount and Anahita 2004).

Similarly, Valenti and Campbell (2009) shed light on the struggle many adults faced when deciding to become the advisor of a Gay-Straight Alliance or a GSA. In a mode of intergenerationality, the adults who ultimately made the decision shared that they held a protective attitude toward youth but had to balance that with the threat of being fired. The adult advisor and the students have a mutuality of concern for sexual minority rights, which politicizes both the teacher and the students. The fear of backlash, as expressed by the advisors, reiterates that heterosexism and homophobia in and out of the school are intertwined (Blount and Anahita 2004). According to research by Walls et al. (2009), the presence of a GSA has a positive effect on LGBTQ/queer students, whether or not they join the group. In

comparison with out-of-school queer youth groups, however, GSAs may provide less intergenerational and intercategorical contact, since they are only as diverse as the population of the school (Schroeder 2012).

In one of the few explicitly geographical examinations of queer youth and schooling, Mel Freitag (2013) asks, “What does it mean to queer a school space?” In answering this question, she applies the concept of safe(r) spaces to the school (Fox and Ore 2010). The parenthetical (r) acknowledges both the intersections of other identities with sexuality as well as that the school, with all its attendant injustices, can never be completely safe for any sexual minority. As such, notwithstanding attempts to assuage the effects of a homophobic and heterosexist environment, the school presents a hostile climate for queer teens (Kosciw et al. 2009; Ferfolja 2007). Nonetheless, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) approaches queer youth in school in a way that provides an unduly optimistic portrayal of the nature of queer youths’ educational experiences, given that it is well documented that many US schools are not “caring and accepting” in relation to sexual diversity:

Most lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ)* youth are happy and thrive during their adolescent years. Going to a school that creates a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and having caring and accepting parents are especially important. (2014)

They follow this optimistic tone with a series of rather grim statistics related to increased risks of suicide, infectious disease, and substance abuse due to increased exposure to violence in schools and elsewhere across the United States. The CDC, then, offers ways for adults to increase LGBT/queer youths’ resiliency in light of the perpetuation of violence in and out of schools.

While the CDC focuses on challenges queer youths face in the United States, the LGBT education rights organization, Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), has taken up the call in “fostering a global dialogue about LGBT youth in schools.” A recent report sponsored by GLSEN’s partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) highlights the atrocities that LGBT/queer students face in schools and educational settings across the globe (Kosciw and Pizmony-Levy 2013). From the report, one can garner a geography of intergenerationality that is premised on the scaled linkages of hostilities from the body to the globe. From the report, one can garner a geography of intergenerationality that is premised on the scaled linkages of hostilities from the body to the globe, which rely on a state apparatus to oppress queer youth. The state apparatus comprises multiple health and penal organizations as it often colludes with religious institutions. Considering the extent of oppression facing queer youth throughout the world and the ways that this oppression relies on the force of multiple institutions, it is perhaps surprising that queer theory and its adherents have not called for the dismantling of educational institutions as they have often done in relation to the arguably less pernicious institution of marriage.

3 Queer Youth and Inter- and Intragenerational Hostility

While hostilities toward queer youth occur intergenerationally and at all scales, intragenerational bullying at the microscale receives the most attention likely due to its increased, on-the-ground visibility. Yet, neither geographers of sexualities nor children's geographers have given sustained attention to issues of bullying. In a landmark study, however, Percy-Smith and Matthews (2001) examine the "hidden geographies" of bullying in an urban neighborhood. They begin by acknowledging that neighborhood bullying shares characteristics with in-school bullying. As such, they devote their study to child-on-child bullying. They also define bullying as a social construct, one in which the accepted meaning shifts from cultural and historical contexts. They argue that bullying typically occurs outside of adults' gaze. Reducing bullying to "social collision" (Percy-Smith and Matthews 2001, p. 59), however, they treat bullying as an inevitable social phenomenon – as almost an essential characteristic of children and childhood or a biological imperative that waits below the surface to manifest the moment adults are no longer present. They suggest that to deal with bullying, strategies should rely on policies that engage both youths and adults – together – not as separate entities but as members of a shared community.

Andrews and Chen (2006) build on the aforementioned study to examine bullying's psychosocial origins and impacts, from which they surmise that bullying is a product of familial dysfunction with a unidirectional trajectory to the child. While this summary could ring true in many instances, it tends to reduce bullying to only a very individual(ized) phenomenon. Like Percy-Smith and Matthews, they also find that bullying increases at times and in spaces that lack adults' gaze and control. But studies assume that, because adults are removed from the absolute space of bullying, they cannot be complicit in bullying. Neither study attends to the bullying of queer youth although queer youth are often prime targets of bullying. Turning attention toward LGBT/queer youth and issues of sexual identity in schools expands the geography of bullying and its production. One such way is the ways in which homophobia and heterosexism infiltrate not only in a particular school but also the ways in which they pervade the school as a socio-spatial institution. For example, if school officials, or other adults within the realm of school space, are homophobic or heterosexist, then this surely would permeate the culture of the school itself. Additionally, legislators' homophobia and heterosexism impacts the ways they legislate the school. These vectors of homophobia or heterosexism, whether inside or outside the school, influence the internal culture within a given school. Blount and Anahita (2004) examine how heterosexism and homophobia interweave to form a matrix that affects both LGBT/queer students and educators. Of course, heterosexism and homophobia can play out in any given milieu in countless ways, but what is most important here is that bullying is not merely an individual conflict. The geography of bullying is constituted by complex multigenerational assemblages of adults and youths, in conflict or accord, at multiple scales and in various spaces.

These studies point out that bullying is the product of a power differential that can be based on numerous socioeconomic markers or personal attributes. But, they also

assume an automatic adult objectivity, wherein they construct adults as crucial in deterring bullying. But, this approach is reactive especially when bullying is mutually constituted by and through both children and adults. Here, adults and children can collude, intergenerationally, in all forms of oppressive bullying. Andrews and Chen (2006) do call for further research on adult bullying, but they ignore the intergenerational dimension of it, thereby rendering adult bullying and youth bullying mutually exclusive. This becomes more pronounced when they point to the workplace as the locus of adult bullying, but they forget that the school is indeed an adult workplace. Therefore, what is crucial is not so much deterring bullying but preventing bullying by not socially reproducing it, in the family, the school, the legislature, and so on.

3.1 Queer Youth Groups Outside the School

In *In a Queer Time and Place* (2005), Halberstam makes a hasty judgment against queer youth groups and queer youth outreach providers. While she vaunts conspicuous leisure consumption, she renders LGBT/queer youth groups pernicious, categorically accusing them of perpetuating strict generational boundaries. For Halberstam, queer youth groups are ostensibly comprised of polarized ages: queer teens on one end and “honorary grandparents” at the other. Apparently, in Halberstam’s queer youth groups, these ages share little intergenerational contact; instead, queer youth groups’ goals are merely some facsimile of normativity. Yet, queer youth groups are not compulsory like education. But, even more importantly, many queer youth groups are youth led, if not youth instantiated in the first place. The LGBT/queer youth group in Toledo, Ohio, researched by Schroeder (2012, 2014, 2015), was not a de facto counseling center repeatedly trying to mitigate the effects of homophobia and heterosexism – although this is indeed one component. But, additionally, the group provided a locus for a host of social-cultural-political programming, which even included venues for youth to perform folk-inspired music, which Halberstam identifies as the epitome of radicalism.

De Montigny and Podmore (2014) analyze the methodological complexities of researching queer youth in an out-of-school LGBT/queer youth group in Montreal. Notwithstanding the ever-present adultist control and regulation of space, they include the cooperation of the queer youths and adults in the forging of safe spaces for queer youth in schools and the community at large. They delineate ways in which these spaces can become threatened by outside forces. Although they do not explicitly name it, these threats render the space not safe per se but safe(r) (Fox and Ore 2010; Freitag 2013).

While adults ultimately control the space of the queer youth group, as well as bring in the extant unequal power differential external to the youth group (Schroeder 2012), the LGBT/queer youth group, at least in Toledo, Ohio, transcends and transgresses this arrangement. Adults empower the LGBT/queer youth in myriad ways, ways that definitely extend beyond the microgeographies of the youth group itself.

These point further to powerful and meaningful modes of intergenerationality, defying any notion of perpetual conflict between youths and adults.

Many adults – queer or straight allies – provide multifaceted queer social services (de Montigny and Podmore 2014), albeit at the grassroots level. According to an ethnography of a queer youth group in Toledo, Ohio, adult volunteers provided the queer youth participants with a noninstitutionalized sex education, an education specifically geared toward LGBT/queer youth. Many institutionalized school curricula deliver a simultaneously adultist and heterosexist sex education. This compulsory, in-school sex education, however, tends toward moralistic didacticism with a narrow emphasis on normative heterosexuality involving two opposite sex married adults engaging in penile-vaginal intercourse who have successfully avoided sexually transmitted infections through abstinence until marriage and who will procreate at an appropriate, prescribed time (Bay-Cheng 2003; Gilbert 2004; Ferfolja 2007; Buston and Hart 2001). This excludes a number of sexual identities, practices, and behaviors. The LGBT/queer youth group partners with allied social service providers, such as the local AIDS resource center, to provide a more comprehensive sex education, where non-normative sexualities are at the core. Colloquial language, an informal setting, and even games and prizes engage the youth in a lesson they are encouraged to help lead.

School curricula in the United States, as outlined above, are indeed political and politicized, as well as scaled, given that they are embedded in a nexus of local school boards, state or provincial legislatures, and federal laws and policies. Skelton (2009) calls to widen political geography to include youth as political agents. But as Ansell (2009) points out, formal political venues typically exclude youth from the processes therein, with youth having increasing difficulty in accessing larger scales. How exactly one fosters youth involvement in politics remains unclear.

Nonetheless, queer youth in Toledo, Ohio, have participated in local political campaigns, volunteering their labor in canvassing as well as marching in local parades or demonstrations (Schroeder 2012). Many of the adult volunteers at the youth group, in conjunction with other adults at different sites, facilitate queer youth participation in these various forms of politics. In a more coordinated effort, many of the youth – especially those who are out to family and/or peers – participate in the Ohio State Lobby Day. The event involves many adult and youth volunteers as they trek to the statehouse to petition for LGBT/queer rights and equality. The aforementioned political involvement revolves around a host of issues, some of which directly relate to queer youth but also to broader LGBT rights as well as reproductive rights.

Since these examples – and arguably other forms of engaging youth in politics – required a coordination of queer youth and adult mentors, getting youth involved in formal politics arguably often requires an intergenerational approach. This intergenerationality also demonstrates how queer youth politics are both “little p and big P politics” (Skelton 2009) while also providing a possible shift from micro- to macro-geographies of youth.

Importantly, the intergenerational involvement between queer youths and adults in politics points to a level of mutuality. Adultism does not only presuppose an ever-vigilant control of youth by adults, it also assumes a unidirectional responsibility of

care from adults to youth. But, when queer adults and queer youth both directly share many of the same concerns for issues and policies that directly affect them, the burden of responsibility rests on both. Notwithstanding the many conflicts and tensions between and among youths and adults, intergenerational empowerment can produce mutually beneficial outcomes.

4 Youth(fulness): Flaunting, Vaunting, and Fawning Through the Life Course

Mark Casey (2007) argues that Western society at large vaunts young people – or, at least, their youthfulness – through an overt sexualization. His study looks at this relationship more specifically as it manifests in the gay scene’s bars and nightclubs in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. His study neither investigates queer youth nor any attendant intergenerationalities, at least not through any direct engagement with the aforementioned subjects. Instead, he focuses his attentions on the ways in which older gay men feel undesired in such spaces. His study illuminates a difficult topic in discussions of youth, youthfulness, age, sexuality, and intergenerationality: the ways in which these relationships are sexual(ized), whether they are, in the language of psychoanalysis, conscious, unconscious, or subconscious. Here, however, Casey showcases the sexual tensions that older gay men feel toward their younger counterparts (all of whom are ostensibly adults since his locus is in the gay bar) in spaces of queer consumption. He only explores these tensions unilaterally, from the point of view of the older gay man, not acknowledging that young gay men make use of the gay scene in more ways than merely to shun older gay men. Along with their young lesbian counterparts, the gay scene becomes an integral space for lesbian, gay, or queer identity formation, especially in the often tender time of simultaneous transitioning from in- to out-of-the-closet and from adolescence to adulthood (Valentine and Skelton 2003).

Jodie Taylor (2010) studied middle-aged queers, providing empirical evidence for the ways in which some middle-aged queers defy the normative life course. Many of these men and women juggle professional responsibilities while engaging in their respective gay scenes’ music venues, bars, and dance clubs. Taylor further evinces the ways that the life course is not only defied but the ways it is also nonlinear. In other words, many queers go through non-normative life courses in different ways; for example, some may embark on a normative life course, deviate from it, only then to realign with it at some point. Nonetheless, for the queers in Taylor’s research, the cliché holds true: “Youth is a state of mind.” For the intergenerational scholar, this is more than a cliché; it reverberates how age, notwithstanding its chronological inevitability, is a social construction. The meaning of one’s years shifts from site to situation, having simultaneous, even contradictory, meanings for different individuals, groups, or generations. Among these middle-aged queers, within in their gay bars, dance clubs, and music venues, Taylor finds high levels of “multi-generational social exchange” (Taylor 2010, p. 902). These middle-aged men and women do not enter these establishments as mere discrete age cohorts, trying to defy

growing up or growing old. Instead, according to Taylor, these gay venues regularly provide a locus for “cross-generational participation, respect, and communication among people in their twenties, thirties, forties, and beyond” (Taylor 2010, p. 901). Notwithstanding the evident level of frivolity woven through these intergenerational exchanges, a mutuality emerges between and among the participants regardless of age.

A queer temporality emphasizes the here and now and the new (Halberstam 2005; Taylor 2010) because queers simply do not have to be bogged down with the putative burdens of biological reproduction. Yet, this focuses largely on spaces of lesbian and gay consumption, obscuring the many other sites and spaces where queer temporalities may play out. It, moreover, obfuscates the ways in which many queers of all ages interact within the commercial gay scene as well as other social spaces. Consequently, modes of intergenerationality may be going unnoticed by scholars. Likewise, too much emphasis on biological reproduction, or queers’ lack thereof, disregards the complex ways in which queers of all ages partake in, perpetuate, or disrupt processes of sociobiological reproduction.

Despite the important meaningful social contact, the aforementioned geographies of encounter are grounded not only in frivolity but also on a certain level of privilege. Even more importantly, these studies highlight the limitations present in many queer subcultural venues, spaces where Halberstam locates potentially more meaningful, if not more radical, intergenerational contacts. Moreover, a unidirectionality encompasses studies looking at the ways in which people defy the attendant assumptions of their chronological years. In other words, studies on non-normative life course progression only deal with those refusing to grow up. Indeed, West (2007) does not limit this to middle-aged gay men or subcultural queers, noting the ways in which Western society as a whole is obsessed with eternal youthfulness.

This unilateral attention to age-defying behavior obfuscates ways in which many LGBT/queer youth (whether teenagers, adolescents, or young adults) must grow up quickly. The exigency of maturing quickly deserves further study, most notably, because such research may reveal the effects of oppression and challenge assumed notions of gay privilege. Some youth, however, might choose to grow up quickly regardless of circumstances. Whether choice or circumstance, the inverse of the commonly accepted queer temporality has not received sustained consideration. But, myriad conditions could account for this growing up fast, considering the additional burdens or responsibilities that many LGBT/queer youth face. In my own research, young queers, from impoverished backgrounds, took up the slack in caring for their younger family members, while others pitched in to ease financial burdens. These conditions point to how LGBT/queer youth face various intersections of identity and socioeconomic category, but their sexuality is not a mere additive; it informs their expectations and how they will respond to them.

For other LGBT/queer youth, the concomitant effects of ostracism and cloistering can impact one’s scholastic achievement but in contradictory ways. For example, one respondent reported failing grades due to in-school hostilities, while another told me that a lack of social life allowed for more time to study. Not only can peers ostracize but so can family members, to the point of disowning their LGBT/queer child. In such

cases, the very young find themselves in a situation where they have to fend for themselves. Many such situations presented themselves in the queer youth group I studied. Some youth carefully navigated the closet in an attempt to prevent homelessness. Others shared financial and material resources to secure shelter and mobility, while others shared information and knowledge on how best to obtain educations, training, and/or apprentices, the urgency of which was more pronounced for some than for others.

Since age and ageism are mutually constituted (Pain and Hopkins 2010), both LGBT/queer youth and their older counterparts partake in and share the burden of ageism. Pain and Hopkins also demonstrate the multilateral dimensions of age and ageism, but they tend to focus on the most polarized age groupings. In other words, the very young (minors) and the very old (post-retirement elderly) both face levels of segregation – the school and the convalescent home, respectively – while also facing varying levels of disempowerment such as policies over which they have little control or say. This neglects myriad age cohorts and groupings in the middle, a widespread neglect even beyond geography. Adulthood, as a vague definition, falls into a large age range, typically presumed to be beyond one's teens but somewhere before retirement, at which point the emphasis shifts to the elderly along with related gerontological studies. Because this accounting of age subsumes so many decades, middle-aged people and attendant issues are rarely explicitly conceptualized as a specific age cohort. Nonetheless, middle age, like all age categorizations, is a social construction.

5 Future Intergenerationality: Considering Future Directions for Queer Youth Intergenerationalities

Taylor (2010) expands the discussion on queer temporalities by examining middle-aged queer's deviance from the conventional life course. Like Casey (2007), she locates the gay commercial scene as the site where her middle-aged respondents hold their middle age in abeyance. Unlike Casey's findings, however, middle-aged queers do not conflict with their younger counterparts. Instead, she finds meaningful intergenerational contact between these middle-aged queers and the young adult gay club patrons. Foci on age, ageism, and/or intergenerationality among LGBT individuals and subcultural groupings have been sparse in geography. Casey and Taylor open up important debates within these topics, but their works provide a foundation on which to build further research. Importantly, both of these studies hint at the sexualization of intergenerationality, insofar as ostensible tensions between young and older adults manifest in gay commercial spaces. The study of queer young adults has been hitherto de- or asexualized despite the core topic of sexuality. While accepted as taboo, geographers of sexuality are poised to research the ways in which the gay scene fosters or inhibits sexual contact among intergenerational cohorts (Simpson 2013).

Furthermore, the gay commercial scene functions in relation to other spaces. This complex spatiality of intergenerationality, therefore, needs to be addressed. In what ways do the intergenerational contacts in the gay scene relate to or inform intergenerational contacts outside of gay commercial spaces? In other words, do

these intergenerational contacts extend to or interface with other spaces, such as the workplace?

Geographers also must attend to the ways that queer youth intergenerationality intersects with other identities and socioeconomic categories. How does/do gender, race, and class impact intergenerational relationships? Religion, moreover, serves as both a broad social institution influencing cultural politics beyond its immediate bounds as well as an everyday locus for individual worship and expression of faith. This understudied intersection of sexuality with age and religion offers fertile territory to understand intergenerationality. In my own work, I have looked at both tensions and cooperation among the individuals and groups representing the intersection of sexuality, religion, and age. Even putatively liberal religions, like the Unitarian church, can create conflict with queer youth, even if that intergenerational contact between older minister and younger queer youth group is indirect (Schroeder 2012). On the other hand, older, wealthy gay men worked together with a straight male Methodist minister on the behalf of homeless queer youth in the 1960s (Schroeder 2014). Unfortunately, historical research on queer youth, like this, is almost nonexistent, despite the fact that contextualizing queer youth intergenerationality through a historical lens can offer insight on temporal/spatial shifts. David Johnson (1997) investigated Chicago's historic young male homosexual community. While not explicitly intergenerational, he exposes a queer intergenerationality by examining the word-of-mouth process that allowed older gay men to hire younger gay men, creating a concentration of "sissies" in some offices. Schroeder (2014) revealed how older gay men with means helped homeless gay youth by offering them jobs. Research like this unveils the complexity of queer youth intergenerational relationships outside of spaces of consumption, building a fuller picture of both queer youth and intergenerationality.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ways in which familial and extrafamilial relationships can blur. But, with more and more stories of children coming out as gay, lesbian, or trans* at earlier ages, geographers of childhood and sexualities need to focus on the spectrum of ages within the family and the intergenerationalities of all age ranges, not just between the very young and very old. Research looking across the life course answers Vanderbeck's call "for a less compartmentalized approach to issues of age within geography" (Vanderbeck 2007, p. 215).

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Generationing Educational and Caring Spaces for Young Children: Case of Preschool Bathroom

Zsuzsa Millei

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Abstract

This chapter demonstrates how Foucauldian thinking can be used to understand the ways in which educational and care spaces are constituted through mechanisms of “generationing” by “putting into action” various historically contingent knowledges and discourses about “childhood” and children and how those are spatialized into material arrangements. Mechanisms of “generationing” operate in children’s places but the differences they re/produce between “childhood” and “adulthood” are often taken for granted. This chapter aims to trouble the taken-for-granted “generational view” of children’s places and show how children’s places are not simply given or happen or being created on uncharted territories. To do this, the chapter provides a brief review of “relational space” and the inseparability of knowledge/power/space in Foucault’s theorizing. It then retools

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Alanen's concept of "generationing" as a set of mechanisms of power. The case of an Australian preschool bathroom provides an illustration of the various mechanisms through which "generationing" of spaces and material arrangements takes place and its power effects.

Keywords

Generationing · Conceptions of childhood · Conceptions of adulthood · Power · Places for children · Material arrangement for children · Foucault · Alanen

1 Introduction

With the consolidation of modern nation states during the late nineteenth century, a modern conception of "the child" and "childhood" emerged, associated with notions of freedom from work and duty to learn (Therborn 1996). The latter became considered as the characteristic of adult life. This enduring differentiation still "construct[s] schools as essential sites of child development, while involvement by children to any great extent in the workplace is viewed as exploitative" (Vanderbeck 2005, p. 75). Historical notions of and knowledges about "childhood" created special places for "childhood" (Pain 2001), such as the school and preschool with their particular spatial organization as children's places. Constructions of "childhood" are symbolic meanings that are translated into the creation of places, practices, and material arrangements of children's everyday life (Kraftl 2006). These places, practices, and materialities are under constant change and manifest differently across societies, geographical locations, cultures, and political systems. In turn, places also help to constitute how "childhood" is understood in relation to "adulthood." In children's places an assumption about the "generational structuredness of children's lives and relationships" gained a strong foothold (Alanen 2001b, p. 129). At the heart of this view stand those processes that constitute and reconstitute concepts of "childhood" and "adulthood" and their relations.

Alanen (2001a, b) sets out to examine "generationing," the very practices through which people are categorized as children or adults, and how these practices give a specific "generational shape" to social relationships connecting these people. "Generationing" is a key theoretical concept of Childhood Studies but has not often been applied in detailed empirical ways other than as an overarching framework Alanen's (2001b). Bourdieusian study aimed to trouble the assumed differences between childhood and adulthood and its uncontested use as a methodological starting point in childhood practice and research. She argued that this taken-for-granted "generational view" or "order" constructs children and adults as ontologically different and structures their relations in particular ways. Similarly to other social differences, such as gender or class, the generational view posits "children's childhoods within larger social structures" extending to the global social system (Alanen 2001b, p. 142). This chapter continues to trouble "the truth" of this kind of "generational structuredness of children's lives" but with the application of

Foucault's thinking and with a focus on the spacing of children's places. It aims to make visible those mechanisms through which children's spaces are constituted and materialized. Attention is paid to how educational and care spaces are constituted through historically contingent knowledges and discourses and how the mechanism of "generationing" creates boundaries, set force power relations, manifests in practices and materialities, and with what effects. To exemplify this mechanism, the case of a preschool bathroom in Australia is utilized.

The example of the preschool bathroom is particularly potent, since in its physical construction and current use, and in its understandings as a space, multiple knowledges and complex discourses and practices were/are applied. These knowledges include medical, educational, and psychological kinds shaped by modern "western" conceptions of "childhood." The spaces of the preschool bathroom are also connected to other institutional spaces and their social processes, such as regulatory institutions, the hospital, home, and school (see also Millei and Imre 2015, forthcoming; Millei and Gallagher 2012; Millei and Cliff 2014). Thus, the preschool bathroom, as a grounded, bounded, and material place, has multiple space identities different to those who frequent it or understand it as a particular space, such as children, teachers, and families (Pain 2001). Space in this meaning is abstract and is connected to the discrete place of the bathroom. Spaces of the bathroom are also linked up to other spaces through the discourses those spaces reference (Foucault 1980; Jackson 2013). Discourses that circulate in the bathroom are in continuous ebb and flow, for example, about trends in biological and cognitive development, pedagogy and curriculum, regulatory statements and practices detailed in national or local policies, or gendered discourses related to motherhood and caring (without the intention to provide an exhausting list and the examination of all of these here). This dynamism re/configure social relations and therefore gives a place its political potential (Massey 1994).

Foucault's theorization of power, as a set of relations that crisscross spaces, usefully adds to understanding place and space. Since in Foucault's view power is fluid and productive in nature, it helps the analysis of the social worlds of place by exploring how "power [is]. . . put into action" (Foucault 1982, p. 788) by mobilizing certain discourses that ascribe identity to certain places and regulate individual's actions in those places. To show this, examples will be provided of how teachers talk about the bathroom and the practices they perform "to put power into action" and with that to re/create social relations and materialities of the bathroom. It is well established in research that childhood is a historically contingent construction that contains ideas and ideals about what childhood is or should be about. However, how childhood is differently enacted, materialized, evoked, negotiated, and experienced at particular sites is less known (Kraftl 2006). Therefore, by placing attention on adult's views and actions, this chapter aims to illustrate this and also to "know more" about how "adulthood" is constituted by adults in relation to "childhood" in this early childhood education and care setting (Vanderbeck 2007; Vanderbeck and Worth 2015).

To do this work first, conceptual definitions of space, power, and knowledge will be introduced based on Foucault's cartography and followed by the

conceptualization of “generating.” In order to combine the two methodological approaches developed by Foucault and deemed useful for the understanding of space and power, historical constitutions of “childhood” will be shortly reviewed and in the next analytical sections combined with the selected discursive formations used by participants in relation to the preschool bathroom. In the analysis, those “generating” mechanisms will be identified that contribute to place and space formation in the preschool bathroom. The chapter finishes with some considerations about the effects of spaces and places that are created *for* children *by* adults.

2 Foucault: Spatiality, Knowledge, and Power

Despite the many critiques addressing the usefulness of Foucault’s thinking for spatial analysis – its methodological weakness (e.g., Gutting 1994), Kantian conception of space (Harvey 2007), thinking of space as order (Thrift 2007), and its suitability for only the study of enclosed spaces (Allen 2003) – geography was at the center of Foucault’s concerns (Foucault 1980; Murdoch 2006). Scholars fruitfully applied the spatial aspects of his theory (see Allan 2003; Murdoch 2006; Crampton and Eldon 2007; Philo 1992; and various more recent studies in children’s geographies, e.g., Pike 2008; Pykett 2009; Philo 2011). His genealogical method (“history of present”) decenters the subject and shows how knowledges and discourses about the subject – ways of knowing – are historically produced and constitute the subject in shifting ways rather than producing a continuous history of a stable subject (Foucault 1980). Thus, it is not the universal child who runs through history and is treated in different ways. Rather it is “the child” as a concept that is understood in different ways in history as constituted by the available discourses at points in time. Genealogical inquiries focus on the processes, procedures, and technologies through which knowledge and beliefs are produced and that bring us to think about the subject, “the child,” in a particular way and at the same time legitimize this thinking as truth (e.g., Foucault 1977, 1982).

The other main area where Foucault’s thinking is productive is the examination of enclosed spaces or disciplinary institutions, such as the school and the preschool (e.g., Foucault 1977, 1979). It is in these institutions where “ways of knowing” (developed in expert knowledges) are deployed as “‘ways of doing’ in specific territorial contexts” (Murdoch 2006, p. 31). In examinations of this kind, the regulatory aspects of these institutions are foregrounded by studying the ways in which individuals subject themselves to these discourses (learn to understand themselves and act accordingly) and their actions are conducted by discourses deployed in these institutions. This chapter attempts to combine both of these analytical angles by drawing on short summaries of genealogical studies of schooling and “the child” and combine those with the study of the enclosed place of the preschool/bathroom.

Foucault’s thinking extends to space and uses spatial metaphors, spatial relations, and arrangements. It understands those as part and parcel of his theory of power where discursive regimes constitute these spatial power relations (Murdoch

2006). Foucault explored how discourses of madness materialize in the spatiality of asylum (1979) and discourses of crime and punishment in the physical structure of the prison (1977). In these spatial arrangements, it becomes possible to distribute and discipline bodies and govern and monitor individuals' conduct. This thinking then leads to the exploration of how the spatiality of educational places and spaces have been/are being re/produced through the operating (and historically specific) expert knowledges and discourses. With an acknowledgment of the ways in which these knowledges and discourses that shape places are also shaped by larger social, political, and economic processes, attention is placed on how those discourses and materialities of place constitute subjects (such as the "prisoner" or "the child" and "adult") and power relations.

For Foucault, as Murdoch (2006, p. 48) summarizes, "[t]here is no clear distinction between power, knowledge, practice and space – all these aspects are interwoven with one another . . . [and] [t]his interweaving shows space to be relational in nature." It is however important to note that Foucault thinks about these configurations as heterogeneous, and historically and territorially specific. Different knowledges and discourses produced understandings about "the child" in different historical periods, but for today's thinking about "the child," Enlightenment ideas were decisive. The expert knowledge (*savoir*) of psychology placed "the child" within the confines of the Enlightenment: reason, individuality, and progress (Burman 1994; Cannella 1997). The logic of progress constituted the notion of "developing child" and produced discourses to describe and assess this child. Thus, "the child" was placed on a developing trajectory toward "adulthood" and constructed as lacking in certain aspects. Related disciplines (*savoir*), such as education, produced discourses about the "educativeness" of the person, including ideas of "childhood," classrooms, and school administration. These discourses were aligned with rationalities, particularly logics underpinning broader sociopolitical processes, "to the personal progress of the child" (Popkewitz and Brennan 1998, p. 15). For example, educational and care discourses address "the child" as "in need of care, nurturing and play" to reach "adulthood," where "adulthood" is characterized by "reason" and an ability to be a particular kind of citizen of the nation (Burman 1994).

The Enlightenment view of "the child" – as an individual who progresses toward reason – and the resulting division between "childhood" and "adulthood" help constitute a particular "generational view" that will be discussed in more detail later. It also led to the separation of places for adults and children, and children's place became the home and school isolated from the adult world of work (James et al. 1998; Burman 1994). The Enlightenment notion also underpins research where "[a]nalyses of childhood and the phenomena studied [are] often conceptualised as 'children's own culture', and children's special places studied as a separate unit of analyses" (Kjørholt 2003, p. 265).

Schools and preschools are arguably places for children, workplaces for teachers, and particular services for families and the nation; thus, all these agencies understand these institutions as particular but different spaces. By "[e]mploying a spatial perspective it becomes more obvious that 'the school' is a variably

constituted place for different people and different agencies” (McGregor 2003, p. 366). Constitutions of places and spaces of school and preschool map out heterogeneous and shifting power relations, including intergenerational power relations that “contribute[s] to the (re)production of patterns and processes of age differentiation and segregation” (Vanderbeck 2007, p. 206). Places through these processes also gain their own “age identities” (Pain 2001, p. 156) and age-related and shifting power relations. For example, in closed institutions, such as the school and preschool, such “mappings facilitate regimes of surveillance” (Nespor 2004, p. 312), which include children, parents, and colleagues surveilling each other to ascertain whether these places fulfill their mandates prescribed in the discourses attached to their spaces.

Even though the preschool is an enclosed institution, its spaces are not “bound” but “porous ones produced through their webs of connection with wider societies” (Holloway and Valentine 2000, p. 779; McGregor 2004). As Foucault (1984a, n.p) further explains, space is filled with sets of relations as “space takes for us the form of relations among sites.” In his view, sites or places, for example, are related as forms “of temporary relaxation -cafes, cinemas, beaches.” In this way, Foucault’s cartography “is coextensive with the whole social field . . . it is a spatio-temporal multiplicity” (Deleuze 1999, p. 24). With the delimitation or formalization of spaces, a “network of knowledge” is attached to them that “make up a sort of geopolitics” (Foucault 1980, p. 77). Consequently, the preschool and the bathroom are situated at the intersections of simultaneous and dynamic space-time relations present in the wider society that create the space as “a moment in the intersection of configured social relations” (Massey 1994, p. 265). For Foucault (1982, p. 788), “power only exists when it is put into action.” Therefore, the examination of power, or geopolitics of a place, focuses on power relations present in knowledges, discursive formations, and material arrangements that are themselves situated at the intersection of “wider” space-time relations and the ways in which those are deployed in places and put into practice.

3 Generationing

Horton and Kraftl (2008) critique the utility of the concept of “intergenerationality.” They argue that beside all the other differences that relate to the structural ordering of society or taken as an aspect of identity (Hopkins and Pain 2007), the concept of “intergenerationality” does not offer additional or distinct explanatory power. Alanen (2001a) is on a different view and understands “generationing” rather as a process that adds important insights into how childhood plays a part in the structuring of society based on a continued concern with how adult-child relations are organized. In light of this critique and in relation to Alanen’s view on “generationing,” this chapter retools the concept of “generation.” It takes it as a series of mechanisms that creates or mobilizes shifting boundaries between (rather than permanent structures of) “childhood” and “adulthood” that speaks generational differences into existence. The examination of “generationing”

thus turns attention to the category boundary work of participants by exploring how they invoke and navigate between relations and discourses (Staunæs 2005). Category boundary work (Petersen 2004) can involve producing, reproducing, reinforcing, transgressing, and contracting boundaries between different groups of people bound by particular characteristics, such as age. It can also include the negotiation of different boundaries, such as rejecting boundaries, creating new boundaries, or replacing boundaries by other discourses. Thus, “generationing” does not structure societies, rather “generationing” is a collection of mechanisms that draws on and recreates relations among people and the many different discourses and spatial arrangements that shape the experiences of “childhood” and “adulthood.”

Current constitutions of “the child” are anchored in modern “Minority World” cultures and Enlightenment thought. “The child” is inserted into a series of societal, political, economic, and futuristic expectations related to adult/citizen/adulthood (including parents, teachers, nations – see Bloch and Popkewitz 2000; Prout 2005). These expectations make “childhood” and children the most intensively governed sector of existence, for example, through welfare, education, and economic policies (Rose 1999, p. 123). These governing mandates exploit and reconstitute aspects of “childhood,” such as children’s “educativeness,” malleability, and dependency constituted in relation to adults (Ryan 2005; Mannion 2007). These characteristics, and others produced through expert knowledges about children, are often discussed in deficit terms or with ageist overtones (e.g., Pain et al. 2000; Löfdahl 2010). These particular differences between adults and children constitute and draw on a “generational view” that underpins theorization, research, and approaches to children’s education and care.

More particularly for this chapter, “the child” is discussed in expert knowledges, such as educational psychology/child development, in relation to notions of developmental and biological becoming (see Walkerdine 1984; Burman 1994; and subsequent research building on these). In education and early childhood education, “the child” is dominantly viewed according to children’s expert/teacher/adult-defined needs and interests and pedagogical approaches designed to cater for those needs and interests (e.g., Cannella 1997; Blaise 2010). In participatory research and engagements with children, “the child” is understood in relation to a more competent “adult/researcher” that limits children’s participation (Christensen and James 2008; see also intergenerational critique of Mannion 2007). These discourses (re)produce a “generational view” and are ubiquitous in education, care, and research. They provide taken-for-granted starting points for thinking about children and practices that remain mostly untroubled (Alanen 2001a).

“Generationing” can be seen as a relational process that accentuates the co-constitutive relationship between “childhood” and “adulthood” (Alanen 2001a; Mannion 2007). The concept of “childhood” is well theorized and the contingent knowledges and discourses that have historically shaped “childhood” have been well explored. This is the result of concerted scholarship in the field of Childhood Studies (see James et al. 1998), early childhood education (Cannella 1997), and psychology (Burman 1994; Walkerdine 1984). “Adulthood” however is

less explored (Vanderbeck 2007; Vanderbeck and Worth 2015) despite these concepts' well-identified co-constitutive relationship. However, discourses of "childhood" say as much about "adulthood" as "childhood" and re/produce differences between children and adults in the form of ruptures. They also lead to particular kinds of contestation based on taken-for-granted differences, such as "adult as more powerful" or "adult as more knowledgeable" and so on (see Alanen and Mayall 2001; James et al. 1998; Gullestad 1997; Mayall 2002; Kjørholt 2003). Mannion (2007, p. 409) explains that "spaces are invariably created out of the contested intergenerational knowledges and practices." Thus, the very places and spaces of "childhood" are not given but constructed, practiced, and put into material arrangements (Krafl 2006), which are explored here further. Children's places are not simply given or places that happen or being created on uncharted territories. As Harrison (2007, p. 600) explains further, when we represent children:

we find ourselves always already within patterns and regimes of truth as the very resources which allow us to agree or disagree. We come to ourselves already entwined in the unfolding historicity of many such regimes such that our intentions are always already outside themselves and our desires, actions, and words will never have been quite our own.

In order to sketch these territories and mechanisms of "generationing" of children's spaces, a study is used that was conducted in an Australian preschool between 2009 and 2011 and again in 2014 (see Millei and Gallagher 2012 and see also Millei and Imre 2015, forthcoming). The original research (2009–2011) explored children's ideas about and plans for their bathroom followed up by the refurbishment of the bathroom. The follow-up study in 2014 sought the views of all adults employed at the preschool after the refurbishment was finished. Participants included all educators (10), administrators (3), cleaners/gardeners (2) and community members of the preschool's board (2), and the original builder (1) together with two children who visited the bathroom during its opening event and worked on the original refurbishment plans. Children's views are not included in this analysis. The analyzed data is selected from these interview transcripts and targeted descriptions of the actual bathroom before and after refurbishment (please see the detailed description of research in Millei and Imre (2015, forthcoming) and Millei and Gallagher (2012)). This data segment provides some illustrations of the different knowledges and discourses that offered reasoning for the material arrangements and spaces of the preschool bathroom. The analysis thus focuses on outlining different mechanisms of "generationing" by identifying how ideas of "childhood" and "adulthood" were deployed and "actioned" in the material arrangements of the bathroom. These mechanisms are the actual ways in which separate spaces are created for "childhood" and notions of "childhood" and "adulthood" are re/produced.

The name of the preschool was published in other articles and there were only a small number of participants representing few roles involved in the second part of the study. Therefore it would be easy to identify participants if their roles were listed next to their pseudonyms in the analytical section. Quotes are only referenced

by pseudonyms and they are all from adults who worked at the preschool in different capacities during the interviews. This treatment of data is in line with the University of Newcastle, Australia, ethical guidelines.

4 A Very Brief History of (Pre)Schooling and “Childhood”

In the complex matrix of the emergence of the modern nation and welfare state in the “Minority World,” monitorial schools were replaced by mass schooling during the nineteenth century. Alongside these developments, scientific disciplines, such as education science, psychology, and medicine, produced bodies of knowledge about the character, health, and “educativeness” of the person (Popkewitz and Brennan 1998). These new discourses produced a modern and distinctively “Minority World” view of childhood, and practices contained specific views of what children should be like and how they should behave and the particular ways childhood could be intelligibly talked about. These discourses positioned children in relation to the adult/citizen of a nation state. In this way, “Minority World” societies viewed “the child” as an individual who is progressing through a path of development to become an adult/citizen but who lacks certain attributes (Burman 1994).

In the monitorial school, prevalent during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the main task was to teach children (and adults in shared classrooms) to read and write. The monitorial school was exchanged with a different kind of school, closer to what exists today in the “Minority World” and postcolonial “Majority World” that became a “machinery of moral training” to help establish the forming modern nation states (Jones and Williamson 1979, p. 87). This shift increased the importance of the moral influence of the teacher and resulted in the spatial rearrangement of the school. This arrangement – the teacher at the front and age-based classrooms– emphasized the teacher’s role and the significance of age in the educative process. The monitorial arrangements of the enormous classroom and the wide age-range classes were exchanged with relatively small classroom size and age range of pupils, where the teacher’s knowledge and authority dominated (Jones and Williamson 1979; in relation to the American school and its egg-crate image, see McGregor 2003).

Preschools during the first third of the twentieth century in Australia claimed sole responsibility for the expert knowledge on child hygiene, “proper” parenting, and growth defined in terms of the developing science of Child Study utilizing medical and psychological knowledges (Burman 1994). It became the responsibility of kindergartens to perform “health work”; encourage the social, mental, and moral development of the child; and help build up the knowledge base for “appropriate” child care (Millei 2008). Although this was to ensure the production of a healthy nation as part of nation-building efforts, these rationalities, discourses, and practices remain firmly embedded in what institutional early childhood care and education and its places and spaces are about even today in Australia (Millei 2008, 2011).

This short genealogy of the school, preschool, and “the child” provides a starting point from which the taken-for-granted “generational view” of the preschool could be troubled. What follows is an examination of a particular enclosed institution, the preschool and its bathroom, entwined with references to some further historical insights to continue unsettling the “generational view” of educational places and spaces.

5 Places and Spaces of the Preschool Bathroom and “Generating”

When the research started in 2009, the bathroom had three walls that separated the bathroom from other spaces, a classroom on each side and the arrival area at the front. All three walls had windows from a meter high to the ceiling that made the bathroom space visible from these sides. This organization of space allowed others in both classrooms, the arrival area and in a more limited way from the veranda to see children using the bathroom, since walls did not separate the toilets either. The arrival area opened to the bathroom from the front. Children deposited their bags in this space and parents collected information from individual children’s folders located in this area. In the morning and afternoon, this space was busy with adults leaving and collecting children and their belongings with the bathroom in full view. As all children were collected at the same time from within the classroom, group toileting was unlikely to coincide with this time but individual children sometimes used the bathroom. The bathroom walls and space contained only simple fixtures. The walls were light green with safety reminders and visual prompts displayed for children’s use about ‘proper’ hand washing or as a reminder to flush the toilet. In contrast to the classrooms and other areas of the preschool, the bathroom looked as a less amiable or aesthetic environment.

After the refurbishment of the bathroom it looked more spacious and children’s toilets were equipped with dividing walls and locks. The windows were replaced with walls from the arrival area side and with about 1.3 by 1 m tall windows from each classroom sides. The plans created as part of the participatory research exploring the future design with children were mostly sidelined. (see more in Millei and Imre 2015, forthcoming)

The bathroom is a fairly simple place in the preschool, and this simplicity reflects particular discourses that shaped its creation, such as hygienic discourses. Participants also mobilized hygienic discourses in their interviews to understand the place and space of the bathroom.

5.1 Containing and Separating

During interviews following the refurbishment of the bathroom, adult participants discussed the hygienic nature of the bathroom in ways that made connections to the spaces of the hospital and the home: “Just felt that it was like a hospital . . . The cupboards in that area are just sterile” (Jane); “I guess I had envisioned that it wouldn’t look so sterilized” (Nora); “It is sterile and clinical but functional . . . 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” (Jade); “I think it is very bland, very clinical, there is no colour, . . . that is just a boring bathroom that you can see in a hospital” (Gizelle); “. . . it is almost like a hospital setting now (laughs) opposed to . . . do you know what I mean? I don’t know” (Tracey); and “Anything that is clean gonna look clean . . . you know the floor and even if we cleaned it during the holidays it still looked grotty so compare to that it looks good” (Eva). The words “sterile,” “clinical,” and “hospital” explicitly reference a very clean environment of particular kind. Light green walls and the mandated maintenance of high standards of hygiene with the application of regulated cleaning products and practices prescribed by national standards (COAG 2009) all point toward that these space germs need to be contained and dealt with. Hygienic discourses connect with other spaces, such as those that are regulated by powerful medical and public health knowledges, hospitals, and medical centers and that construct patients/children as inferior and putting experts/adults in the position of mastery.

The maintenance of a hygienic place and the containment of bacteria and viruses, smells and sounds associated with bathroom use, are ensured by the creation of the closed space of the bathroom. The mechanism of confinement historically arose to protect the population from the contagion of disease (Foucault 1967). Women played a major role in containing the biological and moral “disease” associated with uncleanliness. As a contemporary expert, Miss de Lissa (1911, np) commented on Australian preschools in a public magazine during her visit from England:

The contagion of disease was not limited to the physical plane, and whenever there was disease, either mental or moral, there must be contagious germs in the community. There was no other way to help but for women to try to clean up the world, as they had for ages to clean their homes. And there was no surer way than to get the children and let them learn right habits and right attitudes. Those ladies present as a national council stood for nationhood. They must not forget that the wealth of the nation was the little children.

The historical kindergarten was considered as one of the programs able to cure the disorder in the social world by remedying the inner world of children through learning the “right habits” and “right attitudes” (Hultqvist 1998). Historical traces of hygienic discourses remain in the preschool bathroom, including the threat of contagion as expressed in participants’ views outlined earlier. The threat of “immoral” behavior associated with “unreason” is also present in the form of social threat to others (Foucault 2006). To exemplify the latter, a participant addressed this concern in the following way: “I still don’t like the whole idea of you know ‘play’ in the bathroom. You go and then do your ‘thing’ (laughs) [and you are out].” She continues later in the interview: “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 others’ penis and stuff like that” (Lora).

Fear of contagion of illness and “unreasonable” behavior historically led to places of otherness where the limits imposed by society were “initially aimed at confining those with a range of moral failings . . . in poor houses and asylums”

(Mckenzie and Macleod 2012, p. 1085) or later in schools, such as delinquent or street children (Rose 1989). These different forms of spatial separation safeguarded against the risk of contagion in a social sense. Children's toilets are kept separated from the adult toilets due to the threat of infection caused by the still underdeveloped hygienic practices of children that potentially endangers the health of adults. Children and adult toilets were also separated to save adults of the sight of potential "immoral" behavior. Adult toilets were located adjoining both classrooms in a place where children were not allowed to go. Telling as much about children as adults, mechanisms of spatial separation and containment coupled with the mobilization of discourses of hygiene and morality have "generationed" the preschool bathroom as a place and spaces for/of children. Discourses of hygiene and morality construct the binaries and power relations between "unhygienic" and "immoral," therefore "unreasonable" children and "hygienic" and "moral" therefore "reasonable" adults. To restate again, these binaries have origins in Enlightenment discourses of "childhood" and the individual.

5.2 Civilizing and Remediating

Anecdotal evidence from staff members showed the many concerns about children's lack of "proper" hygienic practices that should have been taught at home, such as the "correct" way of washing hands or cleaning one's body after using the toilet, hence the reminders placed on bathroom walls. Children were sent to the bathroom in small groups twice a day supervised by a teacher who instructed them about the "proper" way of performing these actions. Some children were reluctant to use the toilets without the walls especially when others were around. As Flora expressed, there are "few children [who] all throughout the year would not like to go to the toilet unless everyone was gone, so that privacy issue as well." Of course at other times children could use the bathroom also.

These group toileting times were compulsory and offered avenues for the explicit teaching and regulation of groups of children. The bathroom is a space for "corporeal regularization," including the "ordering" and "civilizing" of bodies (Leavitt and Power 1997). Not surprisingly, it was also a space in which bodies that were "uncivilized" stood out as such. These were those children who "could not hold on" until they reached the bathroom, who had "snotty faces" (mucous from the nose covering the face), who regularly wetted themselves, and who had signs of physical discomfort but still contested "going to the toilet." Bodily fluids as carriers of illness had to be contained in a closed space and children had to learn the containment of their own fluids to become "civilized." For most children, an early childhood setting is the first point of prolonged and intense institutional contact outside the family. While "traditionally" much of the "civilizing" process fell within the home, children spending multiple days each week in early childhood settings potentially shift these responsibilities and position early childhood settings as sites and teachers as appliers of "civilizing regimes" (Foucault 1977; Leavitt and Power 1997; Millei and Cliff 2014).

To regulate and help the self-containment of these bodily fluids ignited the deployment of pedagogical, psychological, and medical expert knowledges and discourses. These helped participants to understand and address these issues (see Millei and Cliff 2014). Specific toilet training regimes were initiated to remediate “failing” children. Children were also sent to the doctor or counselor for check up and cure. Thus, civilization and remediation were other mechanisms of “generationing” that through the deployment of particular knowledges and discourses set force power relations between adults and children and constituted adults’ bodies as “trained” and “appropriate” and children’s bodies “untrained” and in “need of remediation.”

5.3 Observing and Surveilling

The enclosed but still fully visible space of the bathroom also provided an economical way to supervise children. As discussed before, children’s “unruly,” “immoral,” and “untrained” behaviors and hygienic practices called for adult surveillance and remediation. While participants argued that the original bathroom constructed with three large windows serviced the assumed regulatory prescriptions of “children needs to be seen at all times,” this statement was not and is not at the present stated in state and national regulatory documents (ACECQUA 2013). The interview with regulatory bodies suggested that the expectation is that children’s whereabouts are known so their safety is ensured. Despite these “facts,” participants expressed that they felt they needed to supervise or *see* children at all times, including while in the bathroom. Their work was considered easier in an open bathroom.

During the refurbishment of the bathroom, all windows were removed and replaced with much smaller ones to accommodate to children’s requests and plans of the new bathroom. This severely limited visibility into the bathroom from outside. The participants expressed their views the following ways about this: “I don’t like how we can’t see in from the locker room” (Agatha). “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. I feel that there is less visibility aspect but you can usually hear if something is going on ahmm and you go and investigate” (Casey). “I am still struggling with the lack of visual. You know being able to see going from this big wide open space and now . . .” (Lora). “Yeah it is hard for the staff too, it is good for the privacy, I don’t know how the staff 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” (Sara). “It’s harder for the teacher to keep an eye on the children. It is not that you want to watch children 24/7” (Gizelle).

The open (original) bathroom similar in structure to that of the Panopticon described by Foucault enabled the direct observation and surveillance of children. As Foucault (1977) suggests:

The theme of the Panopticon – at once surveillance and observation, security and knowledge, individualization and totalisation, isolation and transparency – found in the prison its privileged locus of realization . . . its task was to constitute a prison-machine with a cell of visibility in which the inmate will find himself caught . . . [at] a central point from which a permanent gaze may control prisoners and staff. (pp. 249–250)

Ultimately the aim of the Panopticon is for those being watched to internalize the observation, turning the process in on themselves to self-regulate their actions. Thus, the bathroom with the large windows served as a technology that enabled the teacher to “gaze” on children, for children to know that they are being observed and that they know they need to perform “proper” practices and act appropriately in the bathroom. Children were cognizant of the “gaze” and developed ways to avoid it (see Millei and Cliff 2014; Cliff and Millei 2014). During the planning of the new bathroom, children also expressed that young children need this “gaze” to feel safe; thus, they understood themselves and their position as constituted by the adult gaze. The spatial setout of the bathroom incited mechanisms of observation and surveillance and mobilized discourses that constituted children as “in need to be watched” or “needed to be watched” and adults as the “overseers” and in the position of power to “see” and “know,” thus in the position of mastery over children.

5.4 Ascribing

The hygienic and therefore “bland” place of the bathroom also troubled staff at the preschool. They did not like how it did not represent something (rarely expressed) that they have associated with childhood. As one participant stated, “I really wanted this place to be a place . . . propagated for the children” (Jane). In participants’ words, a view emerged about how places for children should look like, implying also that adult places are different to that: “Not as nice, colours are a bit plane. I don’t mean the old bathroom was overly exciting (laughs) but at least while we had like the windows we could paint them you know and it gave it a bit more colour, you can’t sort of do that anymore” (Agatha). “I just thought it would be more vibrant, the grey and the grey and the green, it’s just sort of flat, boring (laughs)” (Karen). In regard to the new bathroom: “It wasn’t as colourful as we thought it would be . . . So hopefully now . . . [we can] just make it a bit brighter . . . I just hope that they will make it a bit more brighter for the kids, make it more interesting” (Sara). One of the teachers talked about children’s visibility in the place, so the bathroom to be a place representative of who, according to her view, children are:

Interviewer (Zsuzsa): What was the expression you were using?

Nora: Child friendly, maybe that’s not even the right word. . . . I guess I had envisioned that it wouldn’t look so sterilised and that you would see the children’s inputs . . . in the bathroom but I’m not really sure how. . . . [I imagined a place that] was a bit eclectic and had a bit of style. And all those features are there still . . . but I . . . just not look . . . not what I have conjured up in my mind. First, is the function of the bathroom and second, that the children are visible in the space [referring to their ideas and artworks].

Jade shared the idea that the bathroom should “be colourful and playful.” Thus through the mechanism of ascribing the bathroom, particular discourses were mobilized, such as childhood being a time for play and children lives as more “colorful” or “vibrant” than adults. Children thus were constituted as “lively,” “vibrant,” and “cheerful” and adults as the opposite, perhaps “flat,” “plain,” and “boring” to use the participants’ words as they described the opposite of “lively” and “cheerful.” Ascribing thus contributed to the physical shaping of the bathroom as well as the further constitution and creation of a “generational” place.

Tracey added

I visualised to be more child friendly. You know a little bit more hm relatable for children more so than, to me now as I walk in there it sort of remind me of a hospital bathroom and not so much as a bathroom you find in a preschool that is designed by kids, I suppose I see it more (few seconds silence) hmm practically I suppose . . . hmm I mean . . . it is a great improvement to as it was but . . . Hmm as I thought it could be more child driven if that’s the word.

Tracey refers here to current philosophical underpinnings of the national curriculum (*Early Years Learning Framework*), which conceptualizes children as active participants in their lives. The preschool aimed to change practices that incorporate more of this philosophy that is also based on children’s rights. So it was imperative that the bathroom also mirrored this aspect of the preschool’s current thinking. For example, it became important to create a bathroom that used children’s designs and that contained places where children could actively participate in curriculum decisions and implementation. As Jane elucidated:

And I think that was one of the big things for us to have a space where the children could clean up and be more independent and responsible I guess because they have the right to paint and do all those wonderful things they also have a responsibility to help clean up and really there is no facility in the whole place for that to happen for the children.

These discourses ascribed the bathroom as a place that afforded children’s independent activities and the display of their artworks. So the bathroom offered a safe place for children who were still seen as dependent. It also afforded room for children’s independence. However, this was a kind of independence that could only be acted out in ways that adults saw it possible and ensured. As in Kraftl’s (2006, p. 495, original emphasis) study, almost all of the construction work at the school was undertaken *by adults for children*, in the overt construction of a “geography of childhood.” These ways therefore were adult defined and mostly educational. Thus this form of independence was constituted in relation to affordances provided by adults.

In the preschool, the children’s bathroom is “generationed” through the multiple mechanisms that were introduced above; thus, it is a place *for* children (see also in Kraftl 2006). Adults have a separate bathroom. The separated place of the preschool bathroom ensures the containment of contagion and “immorality.” “Immorality” is conceptualized in two ways: first, as “improper behavior” related to pooping and

peeing and, second, as sexual behavior. In this way, confinement ensured the control of “unreasonable” behavior and sexuality and their spread (Foucault 2006). Separation and containment also created the pedagogical space of the bathroom. In this pedagogical/remedial space, the “treatment” and civilizing of children’s bodies happened. This space also enabled the observation and surveillance of children. These mechanisms set force discourses and power relations that constituted children and adults in particular ways and ascribed characteristics of childhood to the place that were separated for them and also contained them and their actions. Constitutions of children as competent agents brought new understandings of children and practices. However, it is still up to adults how children’s independent activities can happen. At the intersections of these knowledges, discourses, and material arrangements, “childhood” and “adulthood” were (re)produced at the intersections of “hygienic”/“unhygienic,” “reasoned”/“unreasoned,” “moral”/“immoral,” playful/boring, and unreasoned/rational binaries. Separating, containing, remediating, civilizing, observing, surveilling, and ascribing are all “generationing” mechanisms that set force particular knowledges and discourses and constitute power relations and taken-for-granted assumptions between “childhood” and “adulthood,” a “generational view.”

6 Conclusion

Foucault’s thinking helps to highlight the ways in which historical, shifting, and contingent knowledges, discourses, and practices produce the material arrangements of “childhood” and children’s places and the powerful hold they still have on these spatial arrangements and practices with children in educational settings (McGregor 2004). There are different scales on which these knowledges, discourses, and practices are produced and exert their influence from. As discussed above, they could be national curriculum, policies and regulations (health and education), or best practice statements, philosophical approaches, or international discourses that travel globally (Millei and Jones 2014). They could also be local preschool philosophies or educational approaches, including rules, timetables, policies, relations between people, etc. (see more in McGregor 2003). These various scales and temporalities “create a space which mediates pedagogic opportunities” (McGregor 2004, p. 360), have different power effects for participating children and adults, and also (re)inscribe what “childhood” and “adulthood” are about. The physical place shaped by these knowledges and discourses has also a kind of “agency.” As shown in the examples, depending on what knowledges and discourses that are related to differences between “childhood” and “adulthood” used to understand place, through generationing mechanisms, power relations are mobilized that regulate (both children and adults), segregate, and (re)produce “childhood” and “adulthood” and lead to particular inclusions and exclusions. However, as Foucault (1984b, p. 245) argues:

I do not think it possible to say that one thing [architectural project] is of the order of 'liberation' and another is of the order of 'oppression' . . . no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remain the possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings . . . liberty is a practice.

Therefore, mechanisms of "generationing" in a similar way could be "oppressing" in some situations and "liberating" in others. Children in the pre-school bathroom developed tactics that provided "refuge" from the adult gaze. They successfully undermined adult surveillance and performed their sexuality, joked about bodily fluids, and found that a great pleasure to do so (see Millei and Gallagher 2012). Therefore, mechanisms of generationing produce complex and shifting places for children and adults where power relations are also shifting and turning, therefore not always part with adults.

Geographers have asserted the importance of viewing place as porous and related to other places. However, studies dominantly still focus on educational places as particular "topographies of enclosure" or as "intimate geographies" (McGregor 2004; Ansell 2009). The application of Foucauldian analysis not only provides a tool for understanding spaces as being connected to wider scales and histories but also for the microanalysis of power to show how ideas that originate in different historical periods and locations affect current thinking, practices, and place creation. These also maintain long-standing power relations between children and adults encapsulated in educational sites that oppress while also offering space for various practices of freedom.

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Abstract

This chapter reviews and synthesizes contemporary theorizations and empirical research on intergenerational education and learning. Fast-changing contexts (such as aging populations, migration, and environmental crises), international policy, and interdisciplinary research all suggest intergenerational education is in a new and exciting “place.” At the center of much of the contemporary literature is the idea that contact between generations can and does lead to intergenerational learning for participants. However, this review suggests three emerging and necessary orientations for theory, policy, and practice in support of intergenerational education and learning: (1) the need to shift from looking at program inputs and outputs in a unigenerational manner toward an appreciation of how the processes of intergenerational learning and practice are relationally and reciprocally experienced and impactful across generations; (2) the need to shift from looking at intergenerational learning within families to harnessing the

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untapped potential for extrafamilial places of intergenerational encounters as contexts of learning; and (3) the need to widen the purposes of intergenerational programs: these will include improved relations between the generations but should also include improved ecosocial wellbeing. Taken together, these three shifts are suggestive of a need for a place-responsive understanding of intergenerational education and learning.

Keywords

Baby boomers · Beanpole family structures · Children's participation programs · Cohesion · Cohort-based approach · Cultural commons · Ecosocial wellbeing · European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) · Extrafamilial intergenerational relations · Formal school systems · Generation · Geographically oriented perspectives · Intergenerational education · Inclusive and reciprocal process · Intergenerational practice · Intrafamilial multigenerational relations · National and international governmental policy · Non-representational theory · Place-based intergenerational differences · Place-based learning · Radical collegiality · Sociological studies of family life · Sociology of childhood · Unigenerational focus

1 Introduction

Policy is now framing intergenerational learning as an important area for development toward more cohesive and sustainable futures. A nexus of wider concerns and potentialities are set to sustain this drive: the need for members of families, organizations, business, education, and other communities to encourage better transfers of knowledge, values, and dispositions in order to address social issues (such as cohesion and migration), and environmental and ecological issues. There is a scarcity of intergenerational education projects on the ground that are sustained over longer periods of time, and even fewer empirical studies of these. It is also only relatively recently that theoretical definitions have been offered. Hence, intergenerational education is very much an emerging field but it does provide a rich seam for further growth in policy and practice, and a new horizon for research.

The chapter is structured in the following manner. The first sections set out the selected sources to outline the context, background, and terminology used in intergenerational education research. Intergenerational learning and education can be said to be in a new place but where is the field to go next? Three "shifts" in direction are offered and some key implications considered. These shifts are:

1. From looking at inputs and outputs of education as unigenerational toward more relational and reciprocal framings
2. From looking at intergenerational encounters as mainly or solely intrafamilial toward realizing that untapped potential for extrafamilial intergenerational contact.

3. From seeing the goal as mainly or solely for improved relations between the generations toward an understanding that intergenerational education provides a distinctive opportunity to address wider issues such as ecosocial wellbeing

2 Contexts and Terminology

Changes in the demographics of the population across the world mean that people are living longer and this is bringing dramatic changes in the nature of family life and community ties. We have seen growing concerns with how different generations transfer capital wealth, care, and other social goods between them (Kohli and Künemund 2003). On the one hand, as Minority World populations age, there are concerns over increased generational niching (for example with some neighborhoods becoming “childfree”), which are seen to restrict intergenerational encounters. There has also been a worry over the loss of expertise as older workers retire in increasingly higher numbers. There is a perceived increase in the proverbial generation gap, a process that likely began about 50 years ago (see Sánchez et al. 2007). The aging of some countries’ populations, new research on learning in older adulthood, and advances in understandings of the potential contributions of the young to social problems, all mean there are new potentialities for intergenerational encounters and for these encounters to be educational or to result in significant learning. What we notice is that as old forms of intergenerational relation are being extinguished, new intergenerational spaces and relations also gain traction within formal social institutions (such as schools and businesses) and beyond, for example, young people’s political action online and in community-based green activism. With these new practices comes the need to research and understand how intergenerational learning “takes place” and what its various reciprocal effects are. We need a geography of intergenerational education.

One area emerging as a goal for intergenerational learning is the desire to address sustainability. At national and supranational levels, as we face new threats of climate change, the loss of tangible and intangible heritage, habitat destruction, fuel and food poverty, calls are made for a reconsideration of the contract between current, past, and future generations. With new threats, the environmental and other injustices done to past, current, and future generations are coming more into view. Across space and time, as more countries face the effects of cross-border and cross-generational environmental and social issues (such as manmade climate change, migration, and terrorism), the need for better and more purposeful intergenerational contact and communication comes to the fore (see Tremmel 2010; Sylvain and Tremmel 2010). Intergenerational encounters are seen as a force for challenging age-segregation (Strom and Strom 2016) and diverse forms of ecosocial injustices (Corcoran and Hollingshead 2014).

Understanding places as intergenerationally made, remade, and inscribed lead us to some interesting challenges and tensions. Within and through intergenerational practices and relations come new problems but also some possibilities. Rather than solely looking at intergenerational relations as sites of competition for financial

transfers or as a battleground for age-differentiated meaning making, this chapter seeks to extend the field by considering the intergenerational dimensions of learning. In the chapter, learning can be understood as the gaining of new knowledge, skills, and dispositions or values through a potentially reciprocal process occurring across generational divides. Given what we have said about the ecosocial context, and considering social demographics and intergenerational justice, when it comes to intergenerational education and learning, we can say we are in a “new place.”

2.1 Generation as a Conceptual Organizer

The term generation carries different emphases depending on how you characterize it and each provides a platform for understanding how learning and education can intergenerationally occur. Three possible views can be in operation – often at the same time.

- (i) For some, “generation” has a predominantly intrafamilial meaning. A within-family definition of generation will lead us to consider the relations among older and younger members of a family; for sure, learning occurs within families and interesting studies are emerging that show how reciprocal learning among siblings and parents can occur in bilingual homes (Gregory 2001) and how learning is mutually experienced among grandparents and the young to promote cultural continuity as well as change (Kenner et al. 2007).
- (ii) For others, a more societal view of generation is what is meant: generations inhabit different social groups. Within the social view, learning can be seen as occurring through contact between often overly niched social groups within but also outside of the family.
- (iii) For yet others, a chronological or cohort-based approach carries more leverage (Alanen and Mayall 2001): the so-called baby boomers are, for example, a distinct cohort whose distinct experiences characterize their dispositions to the world. Learning about and from the experiences of diverse family members, from folk outside of our families, and from cohorts of past, current, and future groups can help us notice how intergenerational learning occurs.

As we might expect, different ideas of generation lead us to different views on what counts as intergenerational learning and education. For this chapter, no one of these meanings of generation will suffice to capture a person’s intergenerational position or the complete set of opportunities for learning across generational divides. In fact, in any one setting, social, familial, and cohort perspectives on generation seem interconnected and permeable as perspectives on intergenerational education and making meaning. Indeed, for any one person with their set of intergenerational relations, all three forms of generational understanding are possible and with these comes a wide array of possible opportunities for intergenerational education and learning. To allow for this enriched generational perspective, the evidence in this chapter suggests that we need all three lenses on generation to appreciate the

contemporary situation and the possible futures. There are encounters between generations at all levels, between social groups, between cohorts over time, and among different age groups at any one time and through these encounters people have the potential to learn. Thus, intergenerational learning occurs within the intimate spaces of family life and outside of them, through everyday lived moments here and now and across a longer arc of time. Hence, we can begin to see how a generationally informed and “geographical” perspective on learning can help us address all kinds of social and ecological issues whilst also highlighting the need for better intergenerational relations.

2.2 Intergenerational Practice

Intergenerational practice as a term began to be used in the 1980s as projects of various kinds sprung up to help build relationships between generations and facilitate exchanges of ideas and resources. In early definitions, it has more recently been described as an inclusive and reciprocal process that builds on the resources brought by each generation and having the following aim: “to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities” (Centre for Intergenerational Practice, 2001, cited in Beth Johnson Foundation 2011). Intergenerational projects often seek to function as “vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations for individual and social benefits” (Hatton-Yeo 2006, p. 2). Kaplan’s (2004) useful typology helps describe intergenerational practice with some forms of intergenerational practice being irregular or once off, while others are more programmatic and involve sustained interactions over time perhaps forming intergenerational communities. While early discourses regarding intergenerational practice focused on one-way exchanges and outcomes, such as efforts to get adults to educate the young or getting the young to support, serve, or assist older members of society; now there is a widespread acceptance of the importance of seeing intergenerational practice as a *reciprocal* process involving all-age exchanges (Jarrott et al. 2006; VanderVen 1999, 2004; Mannion 2012). The following Generations United definition emphasizes this reciprocity. For them, intergenerational practice involves:

activities or programmes that increase cooperation, interaction and exchange between people from any two generations. They share their knowledge and resources and provide mutual support in relations benefiting not only individuals but their community. These programs provide opportunities for people, families and communities to enjoy and benefit from a society for all ages. (Generations United, undated) (cited in Sánchez et al. 2007, p. 35, italics in original).

Commentators have worried over the possibility of greater and multiple generation gaps emerging as older and younger people begin to experience forms of

segregation from each other and/or from the rest of society. The fear of increased generation gaps and intensified generational niching means governments have begun to react with policy initiatives. National and international governmental policy now more clearly attends to the need to address and improve relations among people from all generations. These policies often center on the keynote idea of the creation of a “society for all ages” (UN), which is seen as an effort to reduce the segregation of society, improve intergenerational ties, and support mutually productive exchanges between generations (Krašovec and Kump 2010; United Nations 2007).

2.3 Intergenerational Education and Learning

While “intergenerational practice” framed policy at the turn of the millennium, in the last decade, an interest in looking more closely at intergenerational learning has emerged in policy and in a number of academic disciplines. This is because policy makers, practitioners, and academics have realized that learning could play an even greater part in the way inter- and intragenerational relations and practices are sustained and reinvented. Intergenerational learning, however conceived, will be founded to some degree on the sustenance, creation, and expression of relations between generations. In academia and in practice, the move to looking at the relations between generations has been pivotal in a range of disciplines and here the concern for extrafamilial encounters are seen as key (see Vanderbeck and Worth 2015). Gerontology, education, sociology, and business studies are the cases in point we look at these later in the chapter.

There is now a marked focus on intergenerational learning that has led to a plethora of EU and other international policy and research initiatives. As a result, more robust definitions and some early empirical work on the scope and nature of *intergenerational learning* and *intergenerational education* are now available. New networks such as the European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) (see: <http://www.enilnet.eu>) have been influential. The European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) defines intergenerational learning as a partnership based on reciprocity and mutuality involving people of different ages in gaining skills, values, and knowledge. For ENIL, intergenerational learning must be multigenerational, planned to achieve purposeful and progressive learning and lead to mutually beneficial learning outcomes (ENIL 2012). Kaplan (2004) emphasizes that the outcomes will be reciprocally experienced, however, even though one generation may be nominally the provider and another the recipient. Hence, intergenerational learning requires some interaction between the generations and some cross-generational transfers. Notably, it is not necessarily the case that all participating generations will be in receipt of the *same* inputs or educational programming or that, as outputs they would learn the same thing. Nevertheless, these definitions might only capture some aspects of the significance of intergenerational learning’s impacts.

Geographically oriented perspectives are emerging too. Mannion (2012) emphasizes the reciprocal and place-based elements in intergenerational education.

Mannion (2012) notes that much of the earlier commentary and research on intergenerational practice set out to *describe* practice and to name many diverse *outcomes* in health, leisure, educational, public service, and personal development (Brown and Ohsako 2003) in order to raise its profile. Since outcomes are so diverse, the challenge has been to discern what is distinctive about intergenerational education. Drawing on empirical work on diverse programs of intergenerational education, Mannion (2012) offers a more extended and place-sensitized characterization of what is needed for intergenerational learning to potentially occur including an emphasis on the situated or emplaced nature of all learning:

Intergenerational education (a) involves people from two or more generations participating in a common practice that happens in some place; (b) involves different interests across the generations and can be employed to address the betterment of individual, community, and ecological well-being through tackling some problem or challenge; (c) requires a willingness to reciprocally communicate across generational divides (through activities involving consensus, conflict, or cooperation) with the hope of generating and sharing new intergenerational meanings, practices, and places that are to some degree held in common, and (d) requires a willingness to be responsive to places and one another in an ongoing manner (Mannion 2012, p. 397).

Looking at *purposes* is another way to discern the distinctiveness of intergenerational learning. As demonstrated above, intergenerational education would expectedly aim to promote *greater understanding and respect between generations*. Without this outcome, almost any form of education that involves different age groups could claim to be “intergenerational.” Mannion (2012) suggests improved intergenerational relations are *not sufficient* as goals. Taking a situated view, because intergenerational programs are always located some “where” or place, they will generate new meanings, practices, and effects within these places. Like Mannion (2012), Granville and Ellis (1999, p. 236) argue for this expanded view of goals arguing that a truly intergenerational program must show a benefit and value for both generations *and* “demonstrate an improvement in the quality of life for both, and from that, an improvement in the quality of life for all.” Similarly, Mannion (2012) notices and theorizes how it is *within and through place-change* processes that intergenerational education occurs. This has implications for what directions intergenerational programming might be considered and is captured below.

3 Intergenerational Education and Learning: In a New Place

We have seen the reasons why intergenerational learning and education might be considered to have arrived at a new juncture and how policy, practice, and theory might be responding. The next section summarizes the new directions of travel for the field which seem set to reposition it further in a new place. In formal, nonformal, and informal learning, three emerging shifts or step changes are noticeable. It can be argued that taking each on board will help gain the as yet unrealized benefits of intergenerational contact and learning. These shifts mean intergenerational

education and the learning can be better understood, supported, and utilized more effectively for ecosocial wellbeing. Three “shifts” signpost new directions for intergenerational education theory, policy, and practice.

The three shifts are:

1. From looking at inputs and outputs of education as unigenerational toward more relational and reciprocal framings
2. From looking at intergenerational encounters as mainly or solely intrafamilial towards realizing that untapped potential for extrafamilial intergenerational contact
3. From seeing the goal as mainly or solely for improved relations between the generations toward an understanding that intergenerational education provides a distinctive opportunity to address wider issues such as ecosocial wellbeing

The next sections take these “shifts” in turn explicating some of the rationales and the implications of each. While these three shifts are already in train to some degree across many arenas, they need to be more comprehensively taken on board for a more forthright direction of travel to emerge. As we will see, early responses to the changes in demographic structure were unigenerational, intrafamilial, and concerned with single-issue features (for example lifelong learning in workforces). Now, there is increased interest in taking a more relational view on the role of intergenerational education and learning as part of a wider set of inputs, processes and impacts of societal changes. Indeed, a relational view permeates these shifts in perspective or reframings. This is critical if we are to understand the intergenerational dimensions of sociomaterial practice and learning in many spheres of life and across discipline: *inter alia*, formal education (at school, college, and in higher education), in sociology, in gerontology, in issues such as children’s rights and participation, in the workplace, and in wider society as it faces ecological and other challenges.

1. Moving from Unigenerational to Intergenerational Framings of Education and Learning

The initial response to the changing population profile in research had been to pay closer attention to the experience of older members of society. In social and health-related studies (for example, in health, welfare, and employment) researchers began to look at the experiences of older people (Atchley 1980). More recently, a relational turn is noticeable across many disciplines that had taken a singular or unigenerational focus. Influenced by generational changes in demographics and wider intergenerational exchange, in many disciplines, especially in the last 10–15 years, researchers have turned their attention to intergenerational matters. This has been the case for research in education, social policy, welfare, and health. This has been possible, in part, through the application of a generational or cohort approach to the social experience Mannheim (1952). The relational turn is noticeable in many disciplines: gerontology, sociology, and education are the examples we can consider briefly next.

Gerontology, unsurprisingly, has focused on the care, welfare, health, and ongoing contribution to society of aging populations (Hooymann and Kiyak 2008). Until recently, the field did not pay much attention to the relations and processes that conspire to create the social and medical condition and experience of aging. More lately, it has become clear that a more relational account of aging was needed to understand the dynamics of the aging population (Andershed 2006). Renewed interest is now found in, for example, studies of the age-old contract between generations or what encourages members from one generation to give financial and other resources to another (see Albertini and Kohli 2012) but do not take transfers of learning as a possible intergenerational conduit of exchange.

The education and learning of older adults has come to the fore in gerontology too. Strom and Strom (2016) challenge false assumptions about the age at which people are considered to have stopped learning, arguing that as people live longer we need to provide for older adult education and not underestimate the abilities of older people and the potential for all generations to engage in reciprocal forms of learning (among older adults, grandchildren, and their grandchildren's parents). In education, schools are experimenting with intergenerational models (Mannion and Adey 2011; Intergenerational Schools 2014) with multiage classrooms both indoors and out where there is ample opportunity for peer-to-peer learning with adults working as mentors and co-learners.

Somewhat separately, in the sociology of childhood, until the late 1990s at least, the focus had been firmly on children and childhood as a life phase. In much of the late 1980s and 1990s, studies of childhood and children's lives, in the so-called New Sociology of Childhood (Prout and James 1990) sought to understand the experience of children and young people as participants with rights and agency in society in their own right (Qvortrup 1994). As services and research communities sought to respond to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Tisdall and Punch (2012) note that in that period binary framings of adult-and-child were used less than critically alongside modernist "mantras" about the need to understand young people's own cultures, and the need to advance their agency and participation.

In response, in sociological research on children's rights and participation, there are calls to recognize a more relational perspective on pupil voice and children's views (Mannion 2007; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Wyness 2013). Fielding (1999) suggests that schools in particular should adopt a form of "radical collegiality" between pupils and teachers. Mannion (2007) emphasizes that "intergenerational becoming" better characterizes so-called children's participation programs since adulthood and childhood are intertwined and it is both adults and children who coconstruct the opportunities for participation. Taft (2014), however, warns that children's positioning as less powerful than adults means we need to attend to this aspect with great care for intergenerational dialogue to be effective. Either way, children's participation research calls into the frame the need for improved adult-child relations as key to addressing the rights of young people to having a say in matters that affect them.

Similarly, in sociological studies of family life, taking a relational, generational, or intergenerational reading has become more significant (see for example, Brannen

et al. 2013; Thomson 2014). Looking at the effects of demographic changes in a relational way has led researchers to reappraise all kinds of social exchange practices: for example, sibling relations (Punch and Tisdall 2014; see also Punch, this volume), fatherhood (Brannen et al. 2011), motherhood (Davis 2012), and the longitudinal changes in the intergenerational division of work and care (Brannen et al. 2004).

In education itself, as with other disciplines at the outset, a unigenerational and unidirectional view on learning between generations was taken. Brătianu and Orzea (2012) suggest that intergenerational learning was historically a process found mainly *in family life* through which the older people shared their values, beliefs, and tacit knowledge with younger members. The flow of education was from older to younger, through transmission and cultural reproduction. “Research on intergenerational learning within families includes a range of studies that focus on the transmission of beliefs and practices and the modelling of behaviors from generation to generation” (Gadsden and Hall 1996, p. 1). Brătianu and Orzea (2012) note that new demographic changes particularly in the Minority World have led to the increasing size of the older population and that this will lead to the emergence of the new extrafamilial paradigm of intergenerational learning.

The impacts of the aging of the population have been strongly felt in some research on education and learning. Initially, in lifelong learning research on “third age” learners (Dale 2001), older workers (DeLong 2004; Field and Canning 2014), we can see that the early impetus had been to worry over the aging population that was becoming less included and a workforce undergoing loss of experience as workers began to retire in ever larger numbers. Orzea and Brătianu (2012) show how we continue to worry over the effects of the retirement shock wave leading to substantial knowledge losses. Rather than fixing the problem with unigenerational approaches, they see intergenerational learning as a way of stemming the tide of this loss and as a way of maintaining competitive advantage. Research has sought to look at when and how older workers can be retained, retrained, and when and how their experience can be drawn upon.

Across disciplines, it is only more recently that an intergenerational lens has been applied to what on the face of it appeared initially to be unigenerational issues. When we consider the effects of the aging population in a relational way, for example, we can notice some ongoing impacts on family life which will have knock-on effects on learning within the family home. Intergenerational studies have shown that an aging population results in altered childcare practices and intergenerational transfers of resources (Hoff 2007). Demographic changes can also lead to challenges to workforce sustainability and development as a larger number of aging knowledgeable workers leave organizations without opportunity to pass on their skills and experience. Mobile workforces and migration mean that there is less face-to-face contact between younger generations and the older population but changes in digital technologies mean people have more opportunity to have social contact with a much wider intergenerational cohorts of relations and friends (see Dhoest 2015). In contrast, formal schooling has been critiqued as being remarkably resistant to working closely with communities or linking in a sustained way with adults without

professional educational qualifications. In theoretical debates, commentators now advance the idea that young people's participation cannot be understood outside of a consideration of place and generation (Mannion 2007). These examples show that taking a multi- and intergenerational lens can help us refresh how we address what might appear to be unigenerational issues.

2. Moving from Solely Intrafamilial to Include Extrafamilial Intergenerational Contact for Learning

In the early industrial age, in Minority World economies the family decreased in size and became "nuclear." As work patterns changed, this meant fewer family members were living under the same roof or nearby and concerns emerged about the effects of a widening generation gap on social harmony and cohesion. In the postindustrial period, some distinctive effects on intergenerational relations of the changes in demographics were notable. As the population ages, we have begun to notice the rise in "beanpole" family structures (Vern et al. 1995; Brannen 2003) with up to four generations alive at the same time leading to a doubling of the timespan for intergenerational relationships. With these changes, in fact there comes increased opportunity for multigenerational relations across increased intergenerational contact lifespans within and outside the home. As family size shrinks and the population ages across the globe, we are also noticing the increasing importance of multigenerational bonds within families (Bengtson 2001) and the increased potential for extrafamilial relations too though this is seen as less well harnessed in practice into the way society creates cohesiveness. The potential for educational response here is immense but is as yet untapped.

Extrafamilial intergenerational relations have come to the fore in organizational and business studies as a concern as a result of changes in demographics. In Europe, as society ages, and the baby boomer generation (born after World War II) start to retire (2015–2035), a bulging number of older workers near retirement and exit the workforce. At this time, one worry is that insufficient time and energy will be spent on knowledge sharing between the generations to the detriment of organizations' ability to grow, prosper, and change. In economic analyses, intergenerational learning is seen as an imperative for survival in the world of business and organizational survival. Ropes (2013) suggests that intergenerational learning is one approach to combating loss of knowledge, skills, and values through older worker retirement. Intergenerational learning, he argues can improve an organization's capacity through stimulating new knowledge and improving work processes.

Alongside changes in demographics, the changes in the actual opportunity for intergenerational contact leads commentators to worry over threats to community cohesion and arguments for supporting it. Some pressures on intergenerational cohesion include the increased need for "eldercare" in general (with fewer people in work to "pay" for their care), the rise of childless couples (leading to concerns for who might care for them as they age), the falling birth rate (which leads to some communities and countries ageing faster than others), international and urban-to-rural migration (leading to less contact between family members of different

generations). These kinds of changes mean that contemporary Minority World beanpole family members are perhaps hard pressed to maintain links as their family structures change and as they become more dislocated across space and time. Multigenerational coresidence in the family home becoming less common or possible as multilocal, multigenerational families become the norm (Hoff 2007). In this light, any program of intergenerational education would need to understand the situated nature of its provisions.

Interestingly, a mixed picture emerges about the classic concern over generational gaps and community cohesion. Some analysts are more hopeful than others. As Bengtson (2001) summarizes, intrafamilial multigenerational relations are increasingly diverse (through divorce and stepfamily relationships, increased longevity, and increased diversity of intergenerational relationships). As the generations share longer lives together, Bengtson (2001) notices the increasing importance of grandparents in childcare and overall intergenerational solidarity. Other literature reviews of empirical studies of intergenerational transfers and relationships have not found any substantial weakening of ties in late modern families (Nauck et al. 2009). Intergenerational structures within families are changing for sure but this now means intergenerational relationships *outside* families can and are becoming increasingly important. As a backdrop to these statistical analyses, commentators note that there is no elaborated theory of intergenerational relationships (Nauck et al. 2009) or intergenerational education and learning, but this is an area that is getting some new attention.

Like Mannion (2012, see above), Kump and Krašovec (2014) review the rise of intergenerational approaches to learning and they emphasize the extrafamilial aspects. They suggest intergenerational learning programs are now appearing in various forms in schools, community organizations, hospitals, and beyond. Kump and Krašovec (2014) note that intergenerational learning is connected to community education since it involves active participation for a common good. Intergenerational learning, like community education, can be social and collaborative, and be dedicated to mutual empowerment, community renewal, intergenerational solidarity, and social equity. It will often set out to advance social cohesiveness and inclusion, citizenship, and generate new forms of social capital. Nonetheless, we have some way to go before the policy and practice fields are adequately sensitized to the benefits of extrafamilial intergenerational contact for education and learning.

3. Moving from the Goal of Improved Intergenerational Relations to Wider Ecosocial Wellbeing in Places

Intergenerational learning and education remain untapped as ideas in many realms for researchers and policy makers alike. As we have seen, the argument is that intergenerational contacts can lead to education and learning in ways that offer scope in addressing some key social policy “wicked problems” including social cohesion and inclusion. With a more place-responsive approach, intergenerational education is also apt as an approach to addressing issues other than just the social. Many issues are both socially relational and ecologically significant (for example,

the issues of climate change or the effects of desertification on migration). From the analysis presented here, the main argument is that intergenerational education and learning remains needs to be understood as an explicit approach to issues that are themselves both ecologically and socially relational.

A distinctively geographical reading of intergenerational education and learning can help us here. On the one hand, we see the limitations of seeing an age segregated society as a problem to be solved ungenerationally and in ways that fails to take account of context and place. From the perspective of the health and wellbeing of humans and their inhabited locales, intergenerational contact can be seen as part of a wider movement towards ecosocial wellbeing (see Mannion 2012). The rationale from this perspective is that “aging population opens new opportunities for numerous people who otherwise think and function differently, but who are united in the common goal of benefiting the community and its human and natural resources” (Kump and Krašovec 2014, p. 167). Attending to the need for more sustainable relations between people and places has been the goal of environmental education since at least the 1960s. Stapp (1969, p. 34) “suggest that environmental education is aimed at producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to help solve these problems, and motivated to work toward their solution.” Many in environmental education indicate that intergenerational encounter can be an antidote to what some have described as a sense of displacement (Orr 1994) as inhabitants. Early environmentally focused intergenerational education looked at how the younger learner experiencing an age-segregated program might go on to influence and educate their families about environmental issues (Uzzell et al. 1994).

More recent studies of intergenerational forms of environmental education research have found empirical evidence that participants from all generations can benefit through learning via intergenerational encounters, reciprocal inputs and outcomes, and mutual engagement in places. Intrafamilial intergenerational learning is coming under the research spotlight (Jessel 2009). New “material geographies” look at how artifacts, green cultures, and participatory citizenship inform research on the political ecology of household and everyday sustainability (Gorman-Murray and Lane 2012). In the home, relations and learning between generations are seen as key to green lifestyle growth. Bowers (2009) has argued for some time that younger and older people need more interact to pass on and sustain what he calls the “cultural commons” or the “activities, knowledge, skills, and patterns of mutual support that do not rely on a monetized economy” (Bowers 2009, p. 196). He suggests that it is in the local cultural commons that we learn alternatives to the consumer dependent lifestyle that he sees as undermining community and degrading the Earth’s natural systems. There are inevitable tensions and debates about what kinds of knowledge gets passed on to whom and to what ends; not all intergenerational learning will support improved human and ecological wellbeing to the same extent and some may degrade it.

Other evidence too supports the view that intrafamilial intergenerational learning will likely be insufficient to address larger social and ecological challenges. Payne’s (2010) study of “green” families looked to find out if the intimate space of family life

could provide an effective form of environmental education. Payne noted, however, that even though values, practices, and dispositions to being green were being passed on between the generations that the members of these families appeared to be swimming subversively against the tide of wider formidable pressures of consumer culture. Collins (2015) rightly notes that we should not expect the youth of today to tackle the challenges of sustainability alone. Within the family but also, critically, outside of it, she argues, we should help engage adults and young people separately and together since there are likely to be exchanges in both directions. However, there are a few nationally supported programs of education emerging that securely build on this realization. Exceptions in research include Mannion and Adey's (2011) study of a school-linked community garden and Peterat and Mayer-Smith's (2006) intergenerational farm study and Gilbert and Mannion's (2014) study of the role of stories in connecting people of all ages with their local natural and cultural heritage. Through taking a geographical and environmental reading, these three studies all argue for the potential for intergenerational practice and education to address ecosocial wellbeing within and through improved intergenerational contact and relations. Mannion (2012) and Krašovec and Kump (2010) recommend we begin to "think differently" about social and environmental policy since the improvement of welfare in the community and the sustainability of its human and natural resources are in fact joint goals. One might say that all place-based education can have an intergenerational practice dimension and vice versa.

4 Schools as Places of Intergenerational Learning?

There are numerous research-informed benefits to taking an intergenerational approach to formal schooling. The possible advantages of creating an intergenerational dimension of formal schooling would accrue to pupils, the older participants, their relations among them, and the wider community too. Whether it be gardening, literacy, computer learning, or local history projects, intergenerational school-linked projects of many kinds, all show the linked nature in which they can improve outcomes for pupils, engage learners in settings beyond classrooms, and improve interage community involvement. The evidence on community gardening projects, for example, shows enhancements in academic learning for pupils (Williams and Dixon 2013), while other research has shown that relations among the teachers, pupils, parents, and wider community are enhanced (Mayer-Smith et al. 2009). Mannion et al. (2010) exemplify this linked synergy in their analysis of place-based intergenerational projects. They showed that the way in which meanings were generated within the curriculum making processes were changed through taking an intergenerational and place-responsive approach. They summarized what happened in one school thus:

There was a realisation that there was an untapped potential in community people, visiting facilitators and pupils. Teachers could see new possibilities within new curriculum framings for connecting coursework to these approaches in ways that could meet teaching and

learning outcome imperatives in locally specific ways. Pupils noted that community members brought new authentic, situated, perspectives and had locally valuable knowledge bases. We found that intergenerational place-based learning was quite materially-focused, hands-on, sensory in nature and engendered opportunities for encounters with living and changing places inhabited by people, now, in the past and to be inhabited differently in the future. The activities allowed pupils to be connected with local places in new ways through encounters with living things (domesticated animals as well as wildlife) and non-living things (eg water in the burn, archaeology). These experiences brought many pupils to reflect on how they live now and how they might live in new ways in a place (Mannion et al. 2010, p. 32).

As the case of intergenerational school-linked gardening shows us, the outcomes for pupil learning, community cohesion, and other impacts can be intimately connected. To date, these interlinked synergies have not always been captured since research often focuses on one or other of the participating generations or one or other of the different kinds of outcomes. Since inputs, outcomes and effects are more likely reciprocal when schools move to engage with curriculum making in an intergenerational way, there is a need for research to inform when and how schools might be supported to take such an approach across the different spheres of school life: in class teaching, in the extended curriculum, in governance groups, and beyond. The experiments in full-blown intergenerational schools in practice are at an early stage of development but are showing signs of positive impact (Intergenerational Schools 2014). Mannion et al. (2010) noted how in one secondary taking an intergenerational turn was a big step change for a traditionally organized school. Krašovec and Kump (2010) warn that the participation of the older adult in schooling will work better if they receive adequate training for taking up these roles (as volunteers or otherwise). School leaders that understand these issues and are encouraged through policy and inspection and monitoring regimes will be more likely to experiment with a more coconstructive approach to curriculum making with parents, community members within local places. Further policy shifts and supports are, therefore, needed before teachers will readily harness outside agencies of other generations to be found in community groups but as contexts for learning beyond classrooms are becoming more expected as the norm, intergenerational practice seems set to feed more directly into the core business of school-based learning. For the moment, however, we have still some way to go before we can say intergenerational education can take a firm hold in formal school systems.

5 Toward Place- and Generation-Responsive Curriculum Making

Taken together, the evidence from diverse disciplines is strongly in support of the view that intergenerational approaches to learning and education are needed, viable, and worthwhile. While early literature sought to describe intergenerational practices and record effects, new theories of intergenerational education are now finding expression in research (Mannion 2012). Theory can be employed to express how

learning occurs through intergenerational contact and what the purposes of such learning might be. Some advances on setting out a theory of intergenerational education have been made; some rest on links between theories of learning and theories of place and how these connect to address intergenerational concerns. Geographical and philosophical theories of place can help us here.

Mannion and Adey (2011) note that any learning curricula are made within the process of the production of relations between adults and children alongside place change processes. For Mannion and Gilbert (2015), the links between intergenerational practice and place are understood within a relational ontology where materials, places, practices, and people are intermeshed. It is the idea of the “eventfulness” of all the tangible elements of a place (Casey 1998) that makes learning possible. It is our embodied experience and responsiveness to differences found in places and the way places act back upon us reciprocally that results in emergent learning. For Casey, places are events emplacing things in complex ways with diverse effects. “It is an issue of experiencing a place differently, experiencing its eventfulness otherwise” (Casey 1998, p. 337). Mannion and Gilbert (2015) build on that fluid and relational view of place to suggest *intergenerational learning* occurs when people of more than one generation respond to generational differences found within a given place. Mannion and Gilbert (2015) thus bring together various strands of intergenerational theory (Vanderbeck 2007; Mannion 2012), other theories of place (Casey 1993), place-based learning (Somerville 2010), and embodied experience (Grosz 2005) to derive two premises for intergenerational education:

- (a) The first is that people from different generations and places are reciprocally enmeshed and coemergent.
- (b) The second is that people from different generations learn from each other through making embodied responses to differences found in places.

Mannion (2012) builds on these premises to argue that intergenerational pedagogies should encourage learners to be responsive not only to intergenerational differences but also to the differences found in the situated places they seek to inhabit. Within a relational ontological view, participating generations need to be responsive to each other and to a changing and contingent environment in which we are enmeshed.

Given the many threats to knowledge formation, social cohesion, and the sustainability of the Earth, environmental education provides a framing for intergenerational education and vice versa. Place-based education and intergenerational education can be seen as two sides of the same process. This work will involve educators, learners, and their collaborators in actively seeking out *place-based intergenerational differences*. Mannion (2012) and Ross and Mannion (2012) suggest working in *nonrepresentational ways* to do this. Nonrepresentational theory, they suggest, invites us to employ more experimental approaches to understanding, imparting, and documenting the world and our lived experiences of it. Nonrepresentational approaches build on an ontology of becoming where people, plants, animals, and materials are not static but changing in relation.

Because of this, we can never adequately represent in research or education. Many forms of research and curriculum making are seen as being too extractive and reductive of experience and in various ways fail to capture the material, embodied, affective richness of everyday life (Jones 2008). Instead, nonrepresentational approaches seek to invent, perform, and create new relations. In a nonrepresentational place- and generation-responsive curriculum, differences are to be found in our relations with place and with others through our embodied activities within families, in the public sphere, in schools or colleges, and in organizations. But reciprocally responding to differences found among people-in-place will generate a starting point for a viable intergenerational curriculum. Put simply, response making comprises how we grow and change as a person and this, in part, happens through intergenerational relations within our lived experiences of an ever-changing place (Mannion 2012). Place-responsive forms of intergenerational education may therefore be critical for the creation of more inclusive, sustainable forms of ecosocial flourishing.

6 Conclusion

Employing an interdisciplinary approach, this chapter has explored the history, definitions, and theorizations of intergenerational education and learning. The chapter shows how interdisciplinary understandings of intergenerational practice and learning and its sociomaterial context can help us notice three shifts required to tap into its potential to address ecosocial wellbeing. The relatively unconnected fields of inquiry (health, geography, economics, sociology, gerontology, and education) have thus far noticed that the concern over the aging population has initially sought to address issues that are distinctively pertinent to the older adult population themselves: their health, economic transfer, their employability and presence at work, and the need to keep learning, socially included and active. But, as the chapter has shown, these fields have each moved toward a more relational view albeit in diverse ways. In the end, each discipline realizes that unigenerational fixes are not seen as effective as intergenerational ones. Reciprocal outcomes for all participants in multigenerational contact are also seen as relevant. Extrafamilial intergenerational encounters offer untapped potential to address more than the sustainability of business and the drain of older generations as they retire. Looking to address solely the needs of older adults – through initiatives around active aging or the university of the third age – also misses the potential for more engaged reciprocal forms of learning across all ages and generations. Similarly, looking to address children’s needs to participate without addressing intergenerational dimensions will be remiss.

Looking at intergenerational contacts, contracts, and encounters as potential learning experiences leads to the recognition of a stronger contemporary need to reorient public institutions (schools and beyond) to allow for greater opportunities for formal, nonformal, and informal intergenerational education and learning. A consideration of the purposes of intergenerational education indicates the scope for addressing wider ecological and social ills within formal, nonformal, and informal learning. This means

that intergenerational practice and learning should be a growth area within all kinds and places of education since many of these could be vital to the creation of more inclusive, cohesive, and sustainable ways of life. There are many yet-to-be-imagined forms of intergenerational encounter and education. These have the potential to make the shared ecosocial sphere life enhancing for all. If we are to use education to address contemporary concerns, we must start by enabling participants from all generations to be more reciprocally responsive to each other and to the places they collectively inhabit.

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Children's Agency and Welfare Organizations from an Intergenerational Perspective

16

Florian Esser

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Abstract

“Agency” is one of the key concepts of Childhood Studies and Children's Geographies. A large number of recent studies have empirically contested a prevailing naturalistic and liberal understanding of agency as a general human property. Nevertheless, the presented theoretical alternatives often assume there is a dichotomy between actors on the one hand and society on the other and therefore reproduce a notion of children as outsiders to society. As an alternative, a relational approach to agency will be suggested that is able to work as a shared social theoretical framework for different post-structuralist concepts recently stimulating further research in Children's Geographies. A relational understanding is

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especially helpful regarding children's agency in respect to welfare organizations. Following Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), considerable research interest has arisen in welfare states' and societies' awareness of children's voices. This leads to the empirical question of children's capacities to participate in welfare organizations. Many of the studies within this field focus on face-to-face interactions between individual professionals and children and come to rather critical and disillusioning results stating that children's voices often do not have any effect in practice or are too quickly transformed into an institutional logic. But other studies are also able to show that children's agency does not just depend on individual professionals' awareness but is much more networked, "messy," and produced in several different (intergenerational) relations.

Keywords

Agency · Organization · Welfare State · Social Theory · Relationalism · Citizenship · Participation · Institutionalization of Childhood

1 Introduction

Children's Geographers' interest in childhood has been deeply influenced by the new social studies of childhood (Holloway 2014, p. 380). Because of Childhood Studies' analytical emphasis on children as actors, "agency" has also become a key concept in Children's Geographies, and many of today's critical discussions of children's agency derive from scholars in this field of research. From the very beginning, the idea of children having social agency was first of all a question about the relation between childhood and society. Proponents of the new social studies of childhood stress that childhood has been given only a marginal space in sociology as well as in broader society. Kraftl (2013) and Oswell (2013, p. 38) have critiqued a notion of agency that intertwines the politically motivated critique of children being social "outsiders" with the methodological endeavor of giving children a voice within research. The political will behind this concept may be a reason why the empirical analysis on children's agency is often still driven by a somewhat romantic notion of childhood. Researchers try to gain an insight into children's cultures that are usually hidden to adults. Iona and Peter Opie's (1959) classic study "The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren" may serve as an example of childhood studies "before" Childhood Studies. In the manner of anthropologists, the two folklorists recorded rhymes and games that children passed among each other in the playground. Paradoxically this tradition of documenting traits of children's independent agency tended to reproduce what it was meant to overcome. Instead of "socializing" children as members of society they often reproduced "native" children living outside of an adult society and building their own communities and culture out there.

For this reason, in recent years, as well as there being an ongoing empirical interest in children's agency, the underlying and mostly implicit concepts of agency

have also been strongly contested. This especially included focusing on children's experiences of and in institutional settings that have a significant and increasing influence on their everyday lives. These institutional settings are not abstract but are mostly defined by organizations. A great deal of them are part of the welfare sector and may therefore be called "welfare organizations." Here, welfare organizations comprise organizations implemented and run by the welfare state as well as organizations that may be regarded as part of civil society or the third sector. The term "welfare state" is not used here as an ideal type in order to discriminate between "classic" Western social states and other pre- or post-welfare states. In line with neo-institutionalism, it is supposed that there has been an "isomorphic" development (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) making the institutionalization of childhood a global trend (Zeicher 2009) with the nation state as an important actor but also including agents of civil society. Besides education, "welfare" became the main medium of this process. This happened in a negative mode of protecting children from the dangers of adult society (Redmond 2010) as well as in a more positive mode of improving and "enriching" their everyday lives (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014). A huge body of empirical and conceptual work has originated around children and young people and their agency in different forms of welfare organizations (e.g., Bell and Aggleton 2012; Eriksson 2012; Esser 2009; Horwath et al. 2012; Iversen 2014; Muftee 2013; Payne 2012; Pinkney 2011; Polvere 2014; Redmond 2010). While there is an increasingly sophisticated debate on the theoretical dimension of agency, welfare organizations are often just regarded as the empirical contexts in which this agency is "exercised." This chapter will describe the state of research about children's agency in organizations. It will also develop some further theoretical thoughts toward an advanced concept that is able to locate children's agency in diverse relations which are influenced in various ways by processes of generational ordering (Alanen 2009, p. 171).

The first part of the chapter will sketch the state of agency as an analytical and theoretical concept in Children's Geographies and Childhood Studies. Particular attention will be given to a number of recent studies, mainly from the Majority World, that help to challenge common notions of agency empirically. These critiques provoke a subsequent discussion of the social theoretical foundations of agency. In conclusion, a relational understanding of agency will be presented that is promising to work as an umbrella for many theoretical influences within recent Children's Geographies. This understanding will also guide the critical review of literature on children's agency and welfare organizations in the second part of this chapter. While many studies focus on the individual child-professional relationship, others suggest a broader understanding of children's agency in welfare organizations that goes beyond a dichotomy of children on the one hand and adults, as representatives of society, on the other. This is why a relational approach to children's agency also questions and broadens traditional understandings of intergenerational relations by providing an insight into the complex and sometimes contradictory processes of generational ordering (Christensen and Prout 2005).

2 Analyzing and Challenging Children's Agency

“Agency” is one of the key concepts of Childhood Studies and Children's Geographies, with its own articles in handbooks and encyclopedias (e.g., James 2009; James and James 2012). A large number of empirical studies have resulted analyzing children's agency in different social and geographical contexts. Nevertheless, in 2000, Prout critically stated that “the ‘agency’ in ‘children's agency’ remains inadequately theorized” (Prout 2000, p. 16). Only recently, almost 15 years later, David Oswell renewed this complaint by summarizing that “much of the writing on children's agency draws on a particular rendition of the relation between agency and structure which largely ignores the huge wealth of writing more broadly within sociology on this topic” (Oswell 2013, p. 38). But while there were nearly no elaborated writings when Prout made his original diagnosis on the state of theorization more than 10 years ago, things have now slightly changed. Oswell and many others have not just expressed their concerns about the state of agency in relation to childhood but by doing so have challenged existing pre-theoretical concepts both empirically and theoretically (Esser et al. 2016; Krafl 2013; Ryan 2011).

2.1 Challenging Children's Citizenships

The rising interest in children's agency is often justified by the demands of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In Article 12, the “child who is capable of forming his or her own views [is given] 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.” Further on, children are guaranteed to be heard “in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child.” Subsequently, a strand of research has emerged that tried to prove empirically that children to a great extent have the necessary capacities to make moral judgments and act responsibly and therefore may be addressed as citizens (Larkins 2014, p. 19). Despite having good intentions to expand children's political rights, this tradition of research has been criticized for reproducing a “liberal” notion of children as rational actors, as well as for being only able to value their agency insofar as it may be regarded as an expression of this rationality (Valentine 2011). The emphasis “on children's entitlement to civil participation draws from liberal arguments about the relationship between the state and the individual” (ibid., p. 350) founded on the idea of independent citizens who act for their own maximized advantage and a state that has to leave them the freedom to do so. Critiques argue that while “all people, including adults, are interlinked, interdependent and reliant on others” (Cockburn 2013, p. 14), a liberal understanding of agency is likely to devalue obvious forms of dependency and therefore marginalize children.

The ongoing debate on children's citizenship also highlights the duality of the relation between state and children. While the UNCRC demands the active participation of children in a broad range of areas, they are also addressed as objects of

projection and therefore excluded from the possible dangers of the adult world (Redmond 2010, p. 474). These findings lead to a general skepticism toward a rights-oriented approach to children's agency and citizenship situated within a liberal framework. Children's agency might generally be acknowledged, but when it really matters, they are not regarded as responsible agents (*ibid.*, p. 476). This means that their rights are translated into actual policies in terms of protection that are likely to exclude instead of include them.

In order to avoid these shortcomings and pitfalls, Larkins (2014) offers an alternative approach to children's citizenship. Acknowledging the ambivalent state of children's official rights as citizens, she focuses on "acts of citizenship" and therefore does not start out from citizenship as a legal status which certain people might have or not. Even more, she disassociates citizenship from formal participatory processes introduced by councils, committees, forums, or decision-making processes. Stating that much of the empirical research on citizenship focuses on older children and on young people who already participate in these formal processes and may therefore be regarded as political insiders, Larkins decided to carry out her field work together with groups of younger and marginalized children from Wales, categorized as "disabled," "Gypsy [sic] travelers," and "young carers." In research groups with these participants, an understanding of children's citizenship was developed that is based on "practices at least as diverse as negotiating rules of social coexistence (wherever this may be), contributing to socially agreed good and fulfilling their own individual rights" (Larkins 2014, p. 19).

Larkins emphasizes that though not all agency might be citizenship, the two concepts are nevertheless closely intertwined, and she therefore asks for children's social and political agency in citizenship. Her analytical model is based on a differentiation between *actions* and *acts of citizenship*. While actions of citizenship contribute to citizenship in currently accepted way, "acts of citizenship claim shifts in rights and responsibilities, new distributions of resources or a new political status that stretch beyond existing boundaries" (Larkins 2014, p. 16). Children in Larkins' research groups pointed out actions of citizenship (negotiation of rules and creating selves, contribution to social good and to the achievement of individuals' rights) but also mentioned acts of citizenship, when speaking of "transgressing existing boundaries of citizenship to dispute balances of rights, responsibilities and status, enacting activist citizens answerable to justice" (Larkins 2014, p. 18).

Larkins ends with a plea for an understanding of agency and citizenship that does not withhold citizenship for children because of their dependency but which is founded on interdependency. This feminist argument plays an important role in many recent attempts to define alternative concepts for citizenship related to children (Moosa-Mitha 2005). This is also the case for approaches that relate children's citizenship to feminist ethics of care (Tronto 1993/2009). Theories like these offer alternatives to a "liberal, autonomous, adult, worker model of citizenship" (Cockburn 2013, p. 192) that disprivileges children from the very beginning. Feminist theories of care also challenge the liberalist basis assumption of the separation between a public and private life. According to this model, children are allocated to the sphere of the private, while citizenship is enacted in the male, adult

world outside of the family home. This home builds a site for practices of caring and reproduction that belong to the realm of morality (Tronto 1993/2009). In contrast, the public is defined through autonomy and production as well as politics and pure reasoning – a structure that represents a boundary for children’s citizenship (Cockburn 2013, p. 195). An alternative model for studying children’s agency would have to be able to regard caring practices as practices of citizenship in order to integrate the realm of the private. Also, the fact of being cared for should not lead to a theoretical or political exclusion from citizenship.

While feminist studies mainly addressed women as caregivers, recent studies have also focused on care work performed by children and their contribution to the resulting reproduction of society. In reviewing this body of literature, Wihstutz (2011) pays special attention to children who take care of their disabled or ill parents in the UK and Germany. She is able to show how parents and children who do not fit into the taken-for-granted frame of a unidirectional caregiving process from parents to children have to negotiate their own situation in the face of this assumed “normality.” She concludes that a predominant “dichotomous understanding of either welfare or citizenship, of either dependence or independence that is thereby contributing to the codification of children’s dependency” keeps children from getting the social support they need as young carers (Wihstutz 2011, p. 455). This feminist critique of a liberal notion of children’s citizenship also prepares the ground for an alternative understanding of children’s agency. It points to a concept that is not opposed to the social in general or intergenerational dependency in particular but locates agency *in* social relations.

2.2 Empirical Challenges: Agency Across the Majority World

While the implementation of the UNCRC was broadly appreciated and led to an intensive discussion on children’s rights in the 1990s and 2000s, current research draws a more complex picture where children’s agency is the matter of concern. Contemporary critiques argue that children are not treated as active members of a community by the Convention. Therefore, their contributions to constructing and maintaining their social worlds are not valued (Wihstutz 2011, p. 453). Furthermore, the UNCRC is criticized for being composed of two competing modern narratives of childhood: the vulnerable child that is in need of adult protection and the active child that is able to follow his or her own agenda. There is empirical evidence that governmental and nongovernmental organizations lean more toward the protective aspects of child welfare while children are more concerned about their own agency than about rights to protection (Cockburn 2013, p. 178).

A third point of critique is that the liberal notion of citizenship and agency underlying the UNCRC is not just adult and male but also very Western. A number of empirical studies from the Majority World have questioned this Minority World concept and, therefore, as Punch (2016) shows in-depth, promise great potential when it comes to reconceptualizing agency. They critique an individualistic concept of agency by claiming that children outside the “Western world” would not

necessarily have this voluntaristic form of agency and asking if this means having less agency.

Bühler-Niederberger and Schwittek (2014) carried out fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan with young children aged 3–6. They described the Kyrgyz culture as collectivist, characterized through a strong age hierarchy as well as through a strong expectation to serve the collective. The authors argue that the children were “reliable accomplices of the authorities most of the time and they are even proud of their compliance” (Bühler-Niederberger and Schwittek 2014, p. 513). On only a few occasions did children question given structures – such as a boy who blamed his father for ostensibly never having any gasoline left for the car if he or his mother wanted to drive somewhere while always having gasoline if he wanted to go somewhere himself. The prevalence of children's actions that supported the given hierarchy leads Bühler-Niederberger and Schwittek to question the assumption that agency is always about making a visible difference. Instead they conclude that a “complying” or “collaborative” agency “is as much accomplished in the reproduction of social situations, in children's contribution to the continuous ordering of interactions” (Bühler-Niederberger and Schwittek 2014, p. 506).

Jensen describes a similar gap between Western notions of agency as a capacity of independent and powerful social actors and children's actual empirical agency. Drawing on Klocker (2007), she uses the concept of “thin agency” as an alternative to analyze the constraints that female live-in child domestic workers experience in Bangladeshi households. She identifies “space–time geography of their work” (Jensen 2014, p. 164) as the “main thinner” (Jensen 2014, p. 164) of their agency. These children, who are under surveillance for almost 24 h in a household in which they are socially positioned as inferior servants, have limited options to shape their everyday lives and the social worlds around them. There are only few spaces and times that allow them to escape their employers' control, such as when meeting other child domestic workers on rooftops. Jensen argues in line with Bühler-Niederberger and Schwittek that having agency is not identical with opposing even changing given structures. However, in contrast with them, she could find little empirical evidence of children who were proud of reproducing the given structure of society and, in doing so, contributing to their own inferior social status. Many of the female child workers in her study rather reluctantly chose to stay in the exploitative work relationships because their alternatives would be even worse. Muftee (2013) gives another empirical example of “thin agency” in her analysis of Swedish cultural orientation programs for children being resettled from Kenya and Sudan. She argues that despite of the aim to *support* children's participation, the Swedish programs would “thin” their agency. This is because the NGO members of staff are likely to adopt an educational perspective attempting “to re-socialize or re-educate the children into ‘future responsible Swedish citizens’ by letting them know what is needed if one is to be included in Swedish society” (Muftee 2013, p. 15).

Payne's (2012) empirical analysis is like Jensen's on the agency of child domestic workers. Nevertheless, her work on children who head households in Zambia challenges common notions of agency from another perspective. She argues that in the research, these young household workers are mainly depicted

as “extraordinary survivors.” Advocating a listening approach, she concludes that despite this, for the children themselves, their responsibilities are described in terms of mundane activities of everyday life. From their perspective, agency is not a question of survival in an extraordinary situation but one of maneuvering “well enough” through daily routines. Like Jensen, Payne reconstructs a “constrained” form of agency (*ibid.*, p. 402) and therefore questions the extent to which a liberal Western notion of agency considers children and their lived childhoods throughout the Majority World. Furthermore, her concept of “everyday agency” also asks critically how the depiction of African children as brave survivors and children without a childhood contributes to a well-intentioned othering and alienation of what these children regard as their “ordinary lives.”

Despite focusing on very different phenomena in such distant places as Southern Africa, Eastern Europe, and South Asia, the abovementioned studies from Majority Worlds have all empirically challenged a “Western” understanding of agency as a universal human ability to act independently (Punch 2016). The often limited agency of children described by the authors shows that agency is not independent of the “space–time geography” the children live in. Especially in hierarchical situations, children are likely to perform only “thin” or even “collaborative” agency that helps to support and reproduce the given structures. These empirical challenges are not limited to an understanding of agency in the Majority Worlds but help to question the underlying notion of agency for “both” worlds.

2.3 Theoretical Challenges: Agency with and After Giddens

Empirical analysis from the Majority Worlds challenges the notion of agency as a universal human feature independent of society and its structures. This also questions the state of agency as a theoretical concept: “Children and young people’s agency should certainly be a contested and scrutinised concept rather than one which is taken-for-granted, unproblematised or assumed inherently to be positive and desired by all children and young people” (Tisdall and Punch 2012, p. 256). While for many years researchers engaged in Childhood Studies relied on a more intuitive than reflective understanding of agency, it is only recently that the discussions on agency within broader social theory have been acknowledged as a possible resource for an advanced understanding of agency.

In this vein, Bordonaro and Payne (2012) question concepts that ascribe a somehow “special” quality to children’s agency, characterizing it as especially “thin,” collaborative, or weak. In their special issue of *Children’s Geographies*, they collect a number of papers that reflect on the ambiguity of agency. Not all of them stick to the editors’ theoretical framework, but using different cases of interventions with African children and young people, they are nevertheless able to show.

... examples of agency amongst children and youth which is in stark contrast to established and normative conceptions about childhood and moral and social ideals about the kind of behaviour young people should demonstrate, the activities they should be engaged in, and the spaces and places deemed appropriate for them to inhabit. (Bordonaro and Payne 2012, p. 366)

Jeffrey (2012, pp. 249–250) even used the term “negative agency” when reviewing current literature on children’s agency. In particular, he focused on young people acting “antisocially” (e.g., by showing violent behavior toward marginalized groups). Jeffrey concluded that their agency might be called “negative” in two ways: first, the anthropologists have not appreciated these kinds of behavior, and second, they have not even labeled these actions as an effect of “agency.”

Examples like these force researchers to ask themselves what they do and do not regard as agency. Often these decisions are driven by unconscious normative assumptions about what children and young people are and should be like. While some follow a romantic and Marxist notion of children and young people liberating themselves, others deploy a more neoliberalist idea of the child as an autonomous and responsible subject (Bordonaro and Payne 2012, p. 366). Either way, Bordonaro and Payne’s claim for “a discussion about what *kind* of agency is deemed appropriate for children and youth” (ibid., p. 368, emphasis in original) is more than justified. They themselves object to the common practice of “quantifying” agency, assuming that it might be possible and desirable to have as much agency as possible. Instead they argue for a social understanding of agency that is also open for practices that do not contribute to self-liberation or greater participation.

This point is stressed further by Valentine (2011) when questioning the legitimacy of the dominant liberal understanding of agency that has also been criticized within the debate around children’s citizenship. If children – and especially young children (Moran-Ellis 2013) – lack the necessary competencies to “exercise” agency, this says more about the implicit normative criteria introduced by liberal models than about their actual agency, Valentine believes. Instead of regarding children as the same rational actors as adults, Valentine pleads for a social instead of a liberal understanding of agency. She herself starts with a critical review of Anthony Giddens’ theory to find the social definition of agency she is calling for.

Indeed it will be difficult to bypass Giddens’ work. Whenever agency has been theorized explicitly within Childhood Studies, this has usually happened in reference to his “The Constitution of Society” (1984). The book plays a vital role within social theory. With the statement that social structure has a dual character, it marks a turning point in the discussion on agency. That means that “structure” is a medium as well as a result of individuals’ actions. Accordingly, social structure does not exist outside of human agency but is reproduced and changed by individuals’ actions. This presupposes an individual that is able to act according to his or her contingent decisions. Even though the outcome of individuals’ actions may not fit their intentions, they are able to make a change to social realities. In order to make these changes – and this is why Giddens regards structure as being dual – individuals are dependent on social structures.

Although Giddens’ theory of agency takes an important step away from a voluntaristic notion of agency as a universal and presocial human capacity to a truly social understanding of agency, it has been criticized in many different ways. From a childhood perspective, it has especially been argued that while structure is said to have a dual nature, the social “is often disavowed in favour of either structure or agency, and in such ways that either totalise, globalise and universalise structure

or individualise, localise and particularise agency” (Oswell 2013, p. 50). This way, Giddens maintains that the idea of a twofold social reality reproduces the great divide of modern social theory that lies between agency and structure, micro and macro, and the individual and the social (Fuchs 2001, p. 25). Also, in Giddens’ work, agency itself is simply taken for granted and never really explained. Relying on “more-or-less conscious, rational and self-interested practice” (Valentine 2011, p. 351), Giddens individualizes and rationalizes agency in a way that is quite likely to exclude children and childhood. Critiques like these have led to a number of alternative approaches to agency.

2.4 Bringing Childhood Back into the Analysis: Toward a Relational Understanding of Agency

Although these efforts to theorize agency *after* Giddens are quite different in detail, they all have in common a struggle to find an understanding of agency that overcomes his dualism. Although not all of these writers explicitly use the term “relational” themselves to label their theories, it may well serve to describe a great number of recent contributions (Esser 2016). Relational social theory criticizes a dualist or even dichotomist understanding of the social as can still be found in Childhood Studies, where children and their agency are regarded as being opposed to adults and “their” society. Instead, relational social theories explain the social on the basis of relations. This means that they do not start from self-identical preexisting actors that connect themselves to others by acting. Instead everything is about the relations between those actors. These relations never form a rigid structure but build dynamic and always situational networks. A relational approach to the problem of the social also helps to bring childhood back into the analysis. If, in a liberal notion, agency is regarded as a general human property, there is no longer any possibility to differentiate between children and adults. Agency is something which every adult or child simply “has” because of his or her anthropological status as a human being, regardless of social positions. As stated above, one recurring question in Childhood Studies remains how agency may be ascribed to children while they are often powerless and vulnerable within a society dominated by adults (Tisdall and Punch 2012, p. 256). Relational theories allow us to address this issue differently by arguing beyond a dichotomy of agency and structure. They also help to go beyond the question of whether children, as competent actors, are limited or empowered by structure. Instead, the analysis is about relations between different actors with different properties and the agency they gain within social networks. While substantialist notions of agency have to explain existing differences in agency psychologically, by stating that children’s capacities are not as developed as adults’, relational theories of agency are able to explain differences between the generations socially. These explanations affect different but interconnected fields such as the formation of the children’s subjectivities, the materiality and messiness of agency, and its intersectionality.

Agency and the formation of the subject: According to Giddens' theory of agency, individuals (re)produce structures and are at the same time dependent on the resources they gain from these structures. This is what he called the "duality of structure" (1984). One of the main points of critique was that this duality is only true for structure, not for the individuals as social actors. This is why Hays (1994) pleads for a "weaker" understanding of social structure according to which subjects do not only produce structure but are also themselves produced *by* structure. Secondly, structure does not just limit subjects but also the very origin of reasonable social action. This understanding of structure leads to a concept that regards agency as more "than action that is un-structured, individual, subjective, random and implying absolute freedom" (Hays 1994, p. 58).

Valentine draws the conclusion which these insights lead to regarding childhood and children's agency. She states that "childhood studies tends to assume an 'outside' to the social, or to a space in which children can claim the benefits of agency but not the obligations and ambivalences of political subjectivity" (Valentine 2011, p. 353). Alternatively, she argues that children find themselves within society and that their agency is therefore inflicted by social powers and forces. When being constructed and constructing themselves as child/agent, they adopt practices of subjectification that are accessible to them as (child) members of their social worlds. From a critical Foucauldian point of view, this may be regarded as an act of oppression, but relational social theory also stresses that, at the same time, it is this relatedness that makes human beings social and thus has to be acknowledged as a precondition for certain kinds of social agency.

Agency as a messy and material phenomenon: A second train of thought is also concerned about subjectification but puts efforts into decentring agency from human subjects as its bearers. Much of the theoretical and empirical work draws on actor network theory (ANT) as developed by Latour, Law, and others within science and technology studies (STS) (e.g., Latour 2005). According to ANT, the social is made up of relations between different actors. These "actors" only become what they are within the relations they are actually bound into. The resulting networks are messy and make up children as hybrid actors within multilateral relations (Esser 2013a; Kraftl 2013). One of the earliest empirical examples within this emerging field of research was presented by Bernard Place (2000) in his study on children's bodies in an intensive care unit. He analyzes what he calls a "technomorphic body" (Place 2000, p. 179) in which heterogeneous elements (such as the heart, blood pressure, oxygen mask, and incubator) are concentrated. Together they form an assemblage which may be "worked on" by nurses and other staff. What results is "a sense of agency which is both dispersed, or distributed but also fractured, or disarticulated" (Oswell 2013, p. 62). First, this means that technical devices may become part of children's bodies as well as part of their agency. Second, this allows one "to consider 'childhood' as a circulated, contested image, 'the child' as constructed through particular regimes of power and knowledge, 'child parts' as constituent elements which have an effect on the regulation and the life of children, and children as a collectivity endowed with capacity" (Oswell 2013, p. 74). This means that children's agency is not independent but produced in relation to other agencies.

A messy and material sense of agency also puts emphasis on the importance of the body (Prout 2000). Using an approach that is based on new practice theories, Bollig and Kelle (2014) describe agency as an effect of practices in which children take part. Thus, agency depends on incorporated practices that have to be performed bodily. In a similar vein, Woodyer (2008) argues about the practice of doing research in Children's Geographies. She criticizes a dominant equation of agency "with (heard) voice, refuting the possibility that it may be exercised via other means such as embodied action" (Woodyer 2008, p. 352). In order to understand and extend the agency of children, she sets up a methodological agenda which is rooted in ethnomethodology. This implies taking part in the field and documenting the researcher's own physical experiences and involvement when writing field diaries, as well as making the physical side of the social visible by using video techniques.

Agency and intersecting identities: Intersectionalism is another emerging field in Children's Geographies but with respect to agency nevertheless worth considering. With Childhood Studies' strong emphasis on the generational order (Alanen 2009) and the difference between children and adults, other categories that might influence the agency of specific children have often been ignored. There is a significant parallel between Gender and Childhood Studies, which both concentrated on one feature of the social order that was especially important to them. But in the same way that women's social identities are not just defined by being female, children's social identities should not be reduced to being "underage." Thus, theories of intersectionality and interdependency as have been developed within gender, queer, and postcolonial studies may help gain insight into the multiple dimensions of the social order that affect children's agency. Konstantoni has shown how getting access to certain friendship networks within Scottish early childcare settings depends on different categories such as age or origin. Children would be allowed to belong to certain networks or prevented from joining them, because they were identified as having certain attributes. These categories were never stable, and the same children that were powerful in one moment could in the next moment "be in situations that prevented them from exercising agency if they were the recipient of another child's choice of friend or if they were considered 'different' to the powerful and dominant group" (Konstantoni 2012, p. 344).

Many of the empirical and theoretical challenges of traditional concepts of agency have pointed to the need for "analysis of the differences between children" (Valentine 2011, p. 354). The empirical examples of "ambiguous" agencies in the Majority and Minority Worlds have shown that a traditional liberal understanding of agency not only marginalizes children as a social group but also excludes some of them in a different way from others. In particular, it has been older, educated, white, male children that were likely to achieve agency in this rational and individualistic manner as they will be able to take over parts of this Western adult habitus. On the other hand, a concept of agency that is sensitive to differences between children will not require them to "have the social privileges that have traditionally been understood as bestowing adult agency" (ibid., p. 355).

Agency as an analytical and political concept: In contrast to substantialist and liberal concepts that have previously shaped the understanding of agency in

Childhood Studies, relational concepts regard agency not as a human property but as a social achievement. At the same time, these relational concepts have an understanding of the social as not being determined by the great divides of social theory – such as micro versus macro, individual versus society, agency versus structure, private versus public, or children versus adults. Instead, they put emphasis on the networked and material character of the social. Beyond the great divide, agency may never be “thick” or “thin” and “collaborative” or “revolutionary” in an analytical sense as this would again reproduce a sense of children as individuals that have less or more agency *in opposition to* a certain structure. This also implies a critique of concepts of agency that are motivated politically rather than analytically (Oswell 2013, p. 38). Some seek a promising way out of the normative trap by deploying an analytical concept of agency derived from backgrounds such as ethnomethodology, practice theory, science and technology studies or network theories. Others also claim to overcome a “liberal” understanding of agency but at the same time try to maintain the participatory impetus by favoring more normative theories from social movement studies or recognition theory. In either way, it is important not to conflate the *analysis* of children's agency with the justified goal of *promoting* their agency. As an analytical concept, children's agency is not limited by intergenerational relations but produced within social relations that are shaped by processes of generational ordering.

3 Agency in Organizations of the Welfare State

In a relational sense, agency is always located and produced in certain social relations. Neither the individual actor nor society as a whole exists prior to these. This also questions the common assumption of children as being prior to society, while adults represent the established social order and society. It is also critical to the conclusion that children's agency is performed *against* institutions and an institutionalization of childhood. Whereas relational theories are cautious about big, overarching concepts such as “the welfare state” and “society,” “organization” seems to be a site of the everyday construction of agency that is much more accessible to research. That is why this article addresses agency *in* organizations of the welfare state and reviews recent literature that is able to show how children's agency is produced within these intergenerational relations. Looking into children's agency in welfare organizations from a relational point of view also means challenging established managerial approaches in organization studies that regard organizations as tools of their management and therefore exclude children. An institutional understanding alternatively regards organizations as “communities of practice” (Wenger 1998). *All* members – children and adults – are involved in different communities and shape the realities of their organization by taking part in formal and informal practices that construct the organization. In this sense, children have to be recognized as members of the organizations. Although they are not all within a relational framework, there are many recent empirical studies offering evidence of the agency which children experience and exercise within organizations.

The second part of this chapter first discusses literature on institutionalized childhoods and questions common notions according to which organizations limit children's agency. This leads to a number of recent analyses of professionals' attitudes toward children's agency and participation that will be presented in a second step. Thirdly, several studies that go beyond the adult-child dichotomy will be explored.

3.1 Institutionalized Childhoods and Limited Agency?

In the Minority World – and also in many parts of the Majority World – childhood is subjected to a wide range of interventions by the welfare state as well as the welfare society. While this rising public awareness is usually regarded as being positive for children, there are objections toward an institutionalization of children's everyday lives that is resulting from this trend. An increasing amount of children's time and space is structured through public or private organizations. Whereas compulsory schooling was the main reason for the institutionalization of childhood during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, today it is children's leisure time that is structured and "enriched" through organizations that provide extracurricular sporting, cultural, and leisure opportunities (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014). This process is often criticized as a "colonization" of children's everyday lives. According to substantialist or "liberal" notions of agency of the kind critically reviewed above, this might limit children's opportunity for "free play" and therefore their agency.

At the same time, there is evidence that access to organized leisure activities is highly unequal and that middle-class children are much more likely to participate in them than children from the working classes (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014, p. 613). In addition to this, it has been shown how these extracurricular "enrichment" activities work in favor of transferring cultural capital to children that will be an advantage to them when competing with other, less privileged children (Vincent and Ball 2007). One might argue that while these "recreational" organizations limit children's actual agency, they at least might have a positive impact on their later life.

Enrichment activities and leisure organizations usually work according to a modular principle. Certain modules are individually "booked" in order to enrich an individual child's everyday life. At the same time, there are a number of "special" institutions such as boarding schools, psychiatry (and other clinics), prisons (or similar institutions for juvenile delinquents), and residential child care units that embrace a comparatively big proportion of children's everyday lives. Young people living within such organizations are commonly described as being "institutionalized" (Polvere 2014) and experiencing what Goffman called "total institutions." Polvere analyzed young people from the United States who lived in multiple institutions, including residential facilities and inpatient psychiatric hospitals; she concluded that they mainly experienced agency either in opposing the oppressing institution or in collaborating with it because they regarded resistance as useless (*ibid.*, p. 190).

From a relational perspective, both implicit assumptions have to be considered critically: (1) First, the fundamental difference assumed to exist between special institutionalized childhoods and youths, on the one hand, and normal family

childhoods, on the other, has to be questioned as it is founded in a dichotomy between private and public that relational social theory tries to overcome. Living within organizations of public education and care does not necessarily mean having an everyday life that is more totally institutionalized than living in a family home. While families may turn out to be quite “total” and even violent, organizations in which children live do not have to be as “total” as one might imagine. For example, there are urban and integrated residential child care units in Germany that arrange an everyday life enriched with many activities “bought in addition” from different providers outside of the unit for and with the children living there that very much resembles middle-class childhoods (Esser 2013b). (2) Second, organizations – no matter if they are more “total” or more “modular” (leisure oriented) – may not be regarded as limiting children’s agency per se. From a relational point of view, they are part of the social and, as such, sites of the production of actors and certain kinds of agency. The empirical question is what kind of agencies and actors are produced in organizational relations.

3.2 Professionals’ Attitudes Toward Children’s Agency

A popular strand of research on children’s agency within welfare organizations is devoted to the interactions between professionals and children. The studies are mainly motivated by the observation that children’s participation in social services and other organizations is widely acknowledged but in practice nevertheless only very rarely realized (Cairns 2006). One assumed reason for this is that children are often regarded as vulnerable within the welfare system. This is because professionals often have the obligation to protect children. Their need to protection again is not naturally or anthropologically given but due to children’s weak positions in society. This leads to a paradoxical situation: while child and youth welfare is there to protect children, in doing so it is at risk of reproducing their need to protection (Warming 2006). Regarding this, Horwath et al. (2012) warn against false promises of participation. Having interviewed children and young people who had got in touch with social services on experiencing violence, they reported that many children had been promised a higher degree of participation than they would actually have later on. The authors claim that unredeemed promises of being able to participate in decisions that affect them intensify the young people’s feelings of powerlessness they already had before in abusive situations (Horwath et al. 2012, p. 160).

Eriksson (2012) conducted semi-structured interviews with children who were subject to welfare interventions in Sweden because they had experienced domestic violence. The interviewed children tended to describe the social workers’ attitude toward them as either overprotective or as expecting “adult” behavior of them, without granting them equal rights. This is in line with the results of Clara Iversen’s study (2014) who, like Eriksson, also analyzed children’s agency in domestic violence interventions in Sweden, but interviewed the social workers working on the cases. Iversen concludes that the social workers “reproduce an order of *predetermined participation*” (Iversen 2014, p. 286, original emphasis) that

acknowledges children's contributions only insofar as they fit into the agenda of the institution. In a similar vein, Katz (2013) criticizes social workers' attitudes toward children who take a caring role toward their abused mothers, saying that they are generally stigmatized for showing "unchildish" behavior which potentially overburdens and harms them. Katz has quite a substantialist understanding of agency in mother-child relationships, focusing on children's acts of support and caring but not – for example – on practices of denying care as this would be regarded as children's "usual" behavior. However, she makes an interesting point in her suggestion to "create a space where children's agency in parent-child relationships may be recognised and not automatically seen as negative" (Katz 2013, p. 10). This, she argues, would make it possible to estimate the positive as well as the negative outcomes of children's caring responsibilities for each child individually.

The studies mentioned above offer an insight into how professionals working in welfare services address children. They mainly conclude that children's agency is limited by social workers who only value children's comments as long as they are in line with their own agenda. But relational approaches make it necessary to go beyond the relationship between individual adults and children and regard organizations as more than just containers for individual professional-child communication. Taking this into account, Pinkney (2011) encourages child-related services to develop into "listening organizations." She also asks why methods introduced to ensure children's participation often fail in practice, observing that while adults are naturally supposed to be competent, children first have to prove that they are able to make "proper" decisions for themselves and their lives. But Pinkney concludes that this turns out to be difficult. Because of a liberal notion of agency working in practice, this is especially the case when children are upset and justify their point of view emotionally and not rationally (Pinkney 2011, p. 40). Social workers themselves are trapped because they do not want to use their institutional power on children but at the same time are afraid of using it. This is why Pinkney does not argue for another tool to ensure children's participation but for a change of organizational culture toward a (more) listening organization.

3.3 Organizations and Agency Beyond the Adult-Child Dichotomy

Pinkney's insistence on the importance of organizational culture hints at the fact that children's agency is not just about individual professional attitudes and their willingness or unwillingness to let them participate. A focus on verbal one-to-one communication between a professional who represents "the" institution, "the" welfare system, or adult society vis-à-vis an individual with some level of agency would be far too narrow. A number of mostly ethnographic studies provide evidence of the many organizational practices that are beyond the scope of an adult-child dichotomy. Among these is Punch and McIntosh (2014), and Emond's research on the meaning of food in everyday life at Scottish residential childcare units. They show how the organizations they observed adopt middle-class practices of having "family

meals” around the table in order to provide proper child care and what might be regarded as a decent home for children (see also Esser 2013b). However, for the children, this would lead to

... some tension between food routines providing a sense of security and predictability that could be calming and help children orient themselves during the transition into care, and the acknowledgement that having a meal on a regular basis and sitting around a table may be an alien and uncomfortable, perhaps traumatic, experience for the majority of the children entering care. (Punch and McIntosh 2014, p. 77)

Punch and McIntosh also point out that this spread of middle-class family practices to welfare organizations might at the same time be confusing for some members of staff who also have to adopt ways of doing food that are new to them. In this sense, both the children and members of staff are “participants” of certain organizational practices (Bollig and Kelle 2014), and being bewildered by these might not arise from being a child or an adult but from being a member of another class or culture (Kohli et al. 2010).

This is one respect in which the adult–child dichotomy within organizations is blurred. Further empirical evidence may be found when children were eager to care for staff by making them a cup of tea or a snack. This questions common-sense notions of care according to which adults are caregivers and children care receivers. Nevertheless, more relational approaches to care, as they have been outlined above, question this dichotomy of some people just giving and others just receiving care in favor of a model that stresses our general human connectedness and dependency. In her study in a Cambodian orphanage, Emond (2010) is able to show how caring practices between children are not only part of their everyday lives but also morally valued by them. In this way, children were deeply engaged in the organizational task of producing care for children. This also means that peer relations are never outside the organization but are a core part of them as “communities of practice” (Wenger 1998). This aspect is further explored in ethnographic studies of play practices by Corsaro (2005) and Esser (2009). Corsaro shows how children in Early Childhood Education do not achieve agency individually but instead produce it collectively by taking part in joint action. In his ethnography of a German play scheme for primary school children, Esser claims that children’s agency is not just produced collectively in peer groups. The “collective” (Latour) on which agency depends is composed far more in relation to such different actors as same- and different-sex peers, adults, material objects on the playground, formal and informal rules, and so on.

4 Conclusion: Toward a Relational Understanding of Children’s Agency in Welfare Organizations

Until now, “agency” remains one of the key concepts for Childhood Studies as an interdisciplinary field of research. This is an expression of the shared effort to regard children “as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the

lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live” (Prout and James 1990, p. 8). However, common notions of agency as a universal human capacity have been highly contested during recent years. With ethnographies carried out mainly in the Majority World, Children’s Geographers have helped reveal the Western and individualizing character of the dominant liberal understanding of agency. They have shown empirically that, despite the universalist claim of agency being a universal human property, the idea of independent actors who are capable of affecting the world around them according to their own principles is quite exclusive and prevents many children in a weaker social position from having any agency at all.

Although these studies offer valuable insights into different childhoods and children’s agency across the world as an analytical term, “agency” remains highly contested. Alternatives that have been proposed to liberal notions of agency range from the assumption of “thin” agency (opposed to “thick” agency and resulting in only small changes to the social world) to a “collaborative” agency with which children contribute to maintaining their own inferior social position. But these popular modifications of substantialist concepts of agency offer limited satisfaction insofar as they reproduce their liberal logic by assuming that children might be able to exercise either more or less agency (quantitative) or better or worse agency (qualitative). “Thin” and “collaborative” agency remains on the other side of the coin from a “thick” and “enacted” agency as assumed by the criticized liberal notions of agency.

The problems with agency lie deeper in its foundations in social theory. From the very beginning, the study of children’s agency was motivated by an attempt to relate children to society in a certain “active” way and regard them as more than “just the passive subjects of social structures and processes” (Prout and James 1990, p. 8). This assumption is based on the idea of a twofold social reality with freely acting individuals, on the one hand, and oppressing social structures, on the other. What is reproduced here is a great divide (Fuchs 2001, p. 25) characteristic for a contemporary modern understanding of the social that separates micro from macro, individuals from society, agency from structure, and children from the adult world. In many empirical studies, children’s agency is understood as being opposed to society and structure, which are again represented by adults.

In contrast to this, there have been some recent attempts in Childhood Studies and Children’s Geographies to link in with broader social theory in order to solve the problem at its theoretical roots (e.g., Kraftl 2013; Oswell 2013). In this vein, relational approaches seem to be especially promising. According to a relational understanding, agency is not in opposition to, and limited by, structures but produced *within* social relations. Therefore, children are not regarded as social outsiders but as members of society, and their different positions within society and the resulting agency are the objects of empirical analysis. These positions are not only different from adult ones. Children are not solely and sufficiently defined through being a child but will have different agency when being positioned or positioning themselves as belonging to a certain gender, class, age group, or whatever might become important in a certain context. Not only does this constitute differences between

individual children (Konstantoni 2012), the same children may also have different agencies in different social relations (James and Prout 1996, p. 50).

A relational approach would particularly help to gain a more sophisticated understanding of children's agency in organizations. As children's participation in welfare organizations has a great impact on their everyday lives, there are a number of recent empirical studies on the subject. Much may be learned from them about how adult professionals, as representatives of social structures, limit or corrupt children's agency. At the same time, there are a number of studies that go beyond the child–adult dichotomy and paint a more distributed and relational picture of an agency in organizations that is produced within a bigger network of different human and nonhuman actors (such as rules and regulations, spaces and times, shared practices and items of knowledge).

A relational approach stresses not only the distributed and networked character of agency within organizations but also how organizations are linked to other sites of the social. Bell and Aggleton (2012, p. 395), for example, point out how NGOs' interventions to prevent health-endangering sexual behavior among young people in rural Uganda are intertwined in local authorities' restrictive actions toward young people's sexualities as well as young people's sexual practices, which follow quite different rules. Last but not least, an analysis of children's agency in welfare organizations does not only have to be aware of those organizations directly and explicitly addressing children. Fernqvist (2011) has pointed to the fact that children's agency is also produced by organizations which are part of welfare states and societies but do not address children at all. Fernqvist analyzes the case of decisions on financial aid which in the Swedish welfare system – and not only there – are negotiated completely without the direct participation of children although they are highly affected by their outcome.

This means that children's agency has also to be analyzed where children are not directly addressed but nevertheless are (e.g., as members of their family) related to organizations that have an effect on their everyday lives. According to a relational approach, intergenerational relations are not limited to face-to-face interactions between children and adults. They are related to each other through a whole network of multiple human as well as nonhuman actors. Rules and regulations but also money and class-related practices may work as agents that are involved in intergenerational relationships in which children's agency is produced.

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Abstract

A wide range of theoretical and philosophical arguments have been made about what constitutes intergenerational justice and how it should be achieved. Theories of intergenerational justice can help stimulate the imagination about possible futures and ways of being, and they can also (depending on which approach or approaches one finds influential) serve as a locus for shaping political demands or forms of advocacy/activism. This chapter considers two key contributions to the field of intergenerational justice – the work of John Rawls and Amartya Sen – and their implications for present and future generations. Rawls’ particular ideas about equality of liberty and opportunity are singularly influential in modern

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political thought and debates about social justice. Sen's work on human freedom, functionings and capabilities has been more prominent in recent years among policy makers and economists. His ideas have had a significant impact on how development is understood and measured around the world, most notably through the United Nations Human Development Index. The high profile of both theories subjects them to considerable critique and interpretation, not least in relation to the prominence of contemporary social policy challenges such as globalisation, sustainable development and debates about fairness between generations. It is this idea of intergenerational justice that is our chief interest. To grapple with this concept, however, it is first important to understand what a theory of justice is and what it means for people alive today. In this chapter we outline the basic components of a theory of justice and consider both Rawls' and Sen's ideas about justice among contemporaries. The chapter also looks at the challenges posed by thinking intergenerationally, and how Rawls, Sen and others have applied their theories to make a case for principles of intergenerational justice.

Keywords

Intergenerational justice · Rawls · Sen · Capability approach

1 Introduction

It is a common trope in political and policy rhetoric for children to be described as “the future.” However, the nature of the “future” that children and young people will experience later in their lives is highly dependent upon the state of the world that they inherit from current adult generations. In diverse international contexts, there is growing concern and even alarm that prior and current generations have made choices that will severely curtail the ability of future generations to pursue their interests and to lead livable lives (Vanderbeck and Worth 2015). Notions of “intergenerational justice” (or closely related, if not always precisely analogous, notions of “intergenerational equity” or “intergenerational fairness”) are often invoked to signify the sense that the relationships between people of different generations presently alive and their successors and (in some formulations) even their ancestors demonstrate significant elements of injustice. Calls for more careful attention to issues of intergenerational justice have emerged in relation to issues of national debt (e.g., governments in aging countries in the Minority World accused of overspending to appease an older electorate, leaving a substantial debt to be paid by younger and future workers in those societies), health and social welfare provision (e.g., the erosion in health services and other institutions that are key to promoting present and future well-being), housing policy (e.g., the pursuit of housing policies that contribute to inflated housing costs, making access to the housing market prohibitive for many younger people), education (e.g., disinvestment in education as a result of policies of imposed austerity that will serve to limit future opportunities for children and young people or that leave them with crippling debt burdens as a

result of pursuing higher education), and environment (e.g., the depletion of scarce natural resources and the impacts of human-induced climate change as a result of current and past habits of overconsumption).

A wide range of theoretical and philosophical arguments have been made about what constitutes intergenerational justice and how it should be achieved (Gosseries and Meyer 2009). Theory and philosophy are of course often critiqued for being too abstracted from the “real world” to be entirely useful. However, McKinnon (2012, p. 3) in her recent writing regarding approaches to intergenerational justice in relation to the problem of global climate change acknowledges that although these forms of theory will likely never be put directly into practice, nevertheless “it still matters enormously that we know what (these approaches) are, and why they are justified” (McKinnon 2012, p. 3). Theories of intergenerational justice can help stimulate the imagination about possible futures and ways of being, and they can also (depending on which approach or approaches one finds influential) serve as a locus for shaping political demands or forms of advocacy/activism. Indeed, while there is no direct pathway between theory and practice, these theories have had some influence in, for instance, guiding policy makers in some countries to begin to consider legal and institutional reforms to better promote intergenerational justice. This movement between theory and practice is to some degree evident, for example, in the appointment of the Ombudsman for Future Generations in Hungary, the Future Generations Commissioner in Wales, and parliamentary commissions in Israel and Finland, and moves within several countries to inscribe considerations of intergenerational justice within their constitutional arrangements (countries with forms of institutional intergenerational representation currently include Canada, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Israel, New Zealand, and Wales) (Fulop 2016, p. 198).

This chapter considers two key contributions to the field of intergenerational justice – the work of John Rawls and Amartya Sen – and their implications for present and future generations. Rawls’ particular ideas about equality of liberty and opportunity are singularly influential in modern political thought and debates about social justice (Gosseries 2008; Gutwald et al. 2014; Piachaud 2008; Wolff 2008). Sen’s work on human freedom, functionings, and capabilities has been more prominent in recent years among policy makers and economists (Brighouse and Robeyns 2010). His ideas have had a significant impact on how development is understood and measured around the world, most notably through the United Nations Human Development Index (UNDP 2017).

The high profile of both theories subjects them to considerable critique and interpretation, not least in relation to the prominence of contemporary social policy challenges such as globalization, sustainable development, and debates about fairness between generations. It is this idea of intergenerational justice that is our chief interest. To grapple with this concept, however, it is first important to understand what a theory of justice is and what it means for people alive today. In this chapter we outline the basic components of a theory of justice and consider both Rawls’ and Sen’s ideas about justice among contemporaries. We also look at the challenges posed by thinking intergenerationally and how Rawls, Sen, and others have applied their theories to make a case for principles of intergenerational justice.

2 Theories of Justice

Most modern theories of justice are concerned with the distribution of things, but the specification of what is to be distributed and how it should be distributed depends on the theorist (Wissenburg 1999). Following Gutwald et al. (2014) and Page (2007), we suggest that any theory of justice needs to address the following key questions:

1. What is to be distributed?
2. By what principles should it be distributed?
3. On what basis?
4. For whom?

The first question is about the “currency of justice” (Cohen 1989), that is, whatever metric one chooses to use to measure who has more or less and what is just and unjust. Frequently used metrics include welfare, access to certain resources, and human rights. The second question is about what one believes to be just principles, for example, the egalitarian principle that certain things should be equally distributed across society or the libertarian principle of free and fair exchange. The third question is about how principles of justice are grounded in supporting arguments or particular philosophical models. Rawls’ theory, as discussed below, offers an archetypal example of a model of justice in the original position and veil of ignorance. The final question is about the scope of justice: the people whom one believes should benefit from and be responsible for the fair distribution of things according to shared principles of justice. This may be an isolated tribe, or a nation-state, or applied to questions of global governance.

3 A Rawlsian View of Social Justice

Rawls’ seminal work *A Theory of Justice* (1971) is primarily concerned with establishing a firm foundation for principles of justice. Rawls sees justice as emanating from a system of cooperation for mutual advantage, building on the social contract philosophical tradition of Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. He uses the original position as a heuristic device for thinking about principles of justice that all people would agree to in a fair status quo. A fundamental assumption in Rawls’ theory is that people making decisions are not just “rational” actors seeking to maximize their own welfare but “reasonable” members of a shared justice community with some notion of accountability and fairness. This already implies something of Rawls’ view on the scope of justice, but this point will be returned to below.

The original position is a hypothetical scenario in which Rawls imagines people agreeing to principles of justice under a veil of ignorance, without knowing anything about what kind of society they will live in or what their place will be within that society. In the original position, it would be impossible to make decisions to gain advantage over others, since, if you do not know who you are, you cannot know what would be to your advantage. Rawls argues that this approach enables us to

think about *justice as fairness*, i.e., shared principles that balance self-interest with a consideration of what must be acceptable to all.

From this vantage point, Rawls offers two principles of justice as the basis for social organization (1993a, p. 291):

1. Each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties which is compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all.
2. Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions. First, they must be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they must be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society.

The first of these, *the liberty principle*, has greater weight. In prioritizing liberty, Rawls distinguishes his theory from deep-seated utilitarian notions of justice as “the greatest happiness for the greatest number.” He emphatically rejects the idea that anyone’s human freedom can be subordinated for the sake of overall improvements in social welfare, for example, through the use of slavery to advance economic development. “Each member of society is thought to have an inviolability founded on justice. . . which even the welfare of everyone else cannot override” (1971, pp. 24–25).

The second principle, *the difference principle*, is Rawls’ distinctive position on in/equality. He offers an alternative way of thinking about advancing social welfare according to the *maximin rule*: just policy options are those which offer the least-worst outcome for the least advantaged members of society. Rawls argues that this rule would be chosen by people in the original position because the veil of ignorance means they cannot guess what advantages or disadvantages they might have, so they would make risk-averse decisions and would not consent to any arrangement where even a minority of people live perpetually in absolute poverty. They, after all, might find themselves in that minority. The difference principle is not, strictly speaking, an egalitarian principle of justice. Rawls believes inequality is acceptable within an overall scheme of social cooperation that does not infringe on liberty, that provides equality of opportunity in the pursuit of social and economic goods, and that improves conditions for the poor, for example, by enabling economic growth and development.

For Rawls, the scope of justice is chiefly to do with the creation and maintenance of just institutions that form the basic structure of society; in his words, “the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation” (1971, p. 6). He envisages shared justice communities as defined by a common political system and social apparatus that can uphold the principles of justice, typically as territorial nation states. This “thin statist” approach (Kuper 2000) gives rise to different interpretations of Rawls’ theory in the context of global justice. Rawls himself asserts in *The Law of Peoples* (1993b) that alternative principles apply in matters of global governance, thus limiting the scope of his original theory to domestic concerns, but this is one of the most divisive and debated aspects of his work (Brown 2010; Langhelle 2000).

Rawls' metric for measuring social progress toward justice is the distribution of "natural" and "social" *primary goods*, a notion that encompasses things that are essential for all human beings or "goods that anyone would want regardless of whatever else they wanted" (Robeyns and Brighouse 2010, p. 1). Natural primary goods are things that support bodily health and mental well-being, such as basic nourishment. Social primary goods include "rights, liberties and opportunities, income and wealth, and the social basis of self-respect" (Rawls 1971, p. 54). To summarize, then, Rawls proposes that these primary goods should be distributed first and foremost according to the principle of equal liberty and then the principle of equality of opportunity, for the greatest benefit to the least advantaged members of society. His justification is that people would agree to this in the original position under a veil of ignorance. This theory is intended to serve as the basis for the design and operation of social institutions in liberal nation-states.

4 A Capability View of Social Justice

Sen's thinking about social justice originates in his dissatisfaction with Rawls' metric of justice, the index of primary goods, and with resource-based approaches to measuring people's welfare in general. In his 1979 Tanner lecture "Equality of what?", Sen (1980) argues that social difference is significant in determining what people are able to do with the resources that they have. In other words, an equal share of resources is not the same as equal quality of life. For example, two people eating the same diet might experience better or worse health outcomes depending on their nutritional needs. He stresses the relevance of variation in (i) personal conversion factors, personal characteristics such as gender and disability; (ii) social conversion factors, which influence the availability of options; and (iii) environmental conversion factors, such as climate, geography, and epidemiology (Piachaud 2008; Robeyns 2005).

Sen proposes that a complete theory of justice must factor in the conversion of resources into well-being, to consider not only what people have access to but what they are actually able to do, be, and achieve. He introduces two key concepts to advance this idea (1980, 1993, 2009):

1. *Functionings* are different aspects of human experience that people have reason to value, such as being well nourished, participating in community life, and having particular skills.
2. *Capabilities* are the opportunities that people have to lead a good life, derived from the sum of all the functionings they are able to achieve if they so choose.

For Sen, it is the capability to achieve valuable functionings that should be the key concern of distributive justice. A person's capability, in this sense, depends on his or her personal, social, and environmental resources and on conversion factors which impact his or her ability to use resources for achieving functionings (Lessmann and Rauschmayer 2013). Sen's capability approach is a pluralist view of welfare: he accepts that people may experience and have reason to value very

different standards of living and proposes that the metric of justice is the capability to choose. Distributive justice, thus, requires differential distributions of resources. This shifts the focus of policy from income and resource measures such as GDP, to concepts like multiple deprivation and social exclusion (Burchardt 2008). This capability approach indicates that the ends of justice should be understood in terms of people's effective opportunities to undertake the actions and activities that they want to engage in and be whom they want to be (Robeyns 2005).

Another major departure from Rawls is Sen's objection to ideal theory, in which philosophers propose an abstract model of justice and regard institutions (e.g., laws) as the sole focus of justice. He thinks Rawls' and others' faith in a perfect "transcendental institutional" solution is misplaced. Instead, Sen proposes a comparison or "realization-focused" approach to justice, in which different policy options are measured against each other and the object is the removal of existing injustice. He argues: "justice cannot be indifferent to the lives that people can actually live" (2009, p. 18). This is his grounding for the capability approach, with its focus on human doings and beings and the enhancement of choice.

Sen also differs from Rawls in his view on the scope of justice. He is critical of Rawls' position on matters of global governance, which he sees as "ignoring the possibly adverse effects on people beyond the borders of each country from the actions and choices in this country, without any institutional necessity to hear the voices of the affected people elsewhere" (2009, p. 90). However, he does acknowledge the over-simplicity of presuming such a thing as a global society. Rather, the capability approach is of global relevance as it reflects basic human needs, but how these are met depends on different domestic contexts (Piachaud 2008). It is not based on the assumption of a social contract in a clearly defined society, which allows for greater flexibility in considering questions of scope and scale. Brown (2010) argues that through this approach, Sen "offers us a paradigm of what it means to be a global impartial spectator" by engaging in practical terms to compare the impacts of different policies on the lives that people manage to live.

Sen does however seem to agree with Rawls on the importance of liberty (Piachaud 2008). He writes of Rawls' first principle of justice (2009, p. 59) that:

...the more general claim that lies behind [it] is that liberty cannot be reduced to being only a facility that complements other facilities (such as economic opulence); there is something very special about the place of personal liberty in human lives.

Liberty, or freedom, is a significant grounding principle in Sen's idea of justice. He distinguishes between freedom as the *opportunity* to pursue particular objectives that people have reason to value and freedom as the *process* of choice itself. Sen argues that the process of choice – freedom of thought, association, and so on – is vital to the capability approach. He credits Rawls with advancing the idea that people are not merely self-serving and rational but capable of choice through public reasoning and notions of fairness, though he is more taken with Smith's (2009 [1759]) idea of the "impartial spectator" than Rawls' elaborately constructed original position as the basis for this. Liberty and public reasoning are essential to Sen's theory because he does not

presume to specify which functionings and capabilities comprise the metric of justice, but he instead argues that this is context dependent and a matter for democratic deliberation in any given society.

Writing from a feminist perspective, Martha Nussbaum develops and in some ways diverges from Sen's thinking on capabilities. She is widely cited in literature that applies the capability approach to questions of social policy. Nussbaum argues that Sen's pluralist view of freedom is too vague and that the capability approach *can* lend itself to a "normative conception of social justice," by defining those capabilities that are most important to protect. She proposes a set of ten central human capabilities for this purpose (2003, pp. 41–42):

1. **Life:** Living to the end of a human life of normal length
2. **Bodily health:** Living in good health with adequate nourishment and shelter
3. **Bodily integrity:** Freedom of movement, freedom from assault, and reproductive rights
4. **Senses, imagination, and thought:** Freedom of thought, reason, and expression
5. **Emotions:** Being able to have attachments and fully experience feelings without fear
6. **Practical reason:** Being able to form a conception of good and reflect on your life
7. **Affiliation:** Being able to associate, interact, and empathize and being treated as an equal
8. **Other species:** Living with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and nature
9. **Play:** Being able to laugh, play, and enjoy recreational activities
10. **Control over one's environment:** An equal basis for political and material rights

Nussbaum acknowledges that this account is political, intended to direct social policy change for the benefit of women, and she also anticipates that it will be contested and remade. But, she argues, some definite account is needed to realize the capability approach as a vision of, and concrete demand for, social justice.

On the basis of the conceptual and theoretical aspects of the capability approach developed by Sen and Nussbaum, Robeyns (2005) concludes the main characteristics of the capability approach to justice to be "its interdisciplinary character and the focus on the plural or multidimensional aspects of well-being," which "highlights the difference between means and ends, and between substantive freedoms (capabilities) and outcomes (achieved functionings)" (p. 111). Thus capability justice focuses on the worthwhile end of justice, rather than on the means to this end.

5 Intergenerational Questions

Earlier in this chapter, we outlined four key questions that any theory of justice needs to address: questions regarding the currency, principles, model, and scope of justice. Piachaud (2008, p. 50) has three additional questions for social policies that seek to be fair:

1. What is a fair starting point?
2. What is just and unjust about the present distribution of resources?
3. What is the relevance of the future?

These are inherently intergenerational questions, bringing focus to the relationship between the past, present, and future of human societies. How can these considerations be factored into existing theories of justice? Where models of justice support ethical first principles, intergenerational questions ought not to substantively alter them, yet moral problems that transcend time and space, such as climate change, often present a considerable challenge to the theory (Pichaud et al. 2009). Barry (1999, p. 100) contends that intergenerational issues are the perfect test case for ideal theories of justice, such as Rawls', because "the core idea of universalism" is "that place and time do not provide a morally relevant basis on which to differentiate the weight given to the interests of different people." Assuming that the main principles and grounding for justice should be constant, two questions remain. It is clear that intergenerational justice is fundamentally about the scope of justice, demanding that "remoteness in time has...no more significance than remoteness in space" when one asks: *justice for whom?* (Parfit 1984, p. 357). Yet the implications of this assertion are testing, both in thinking through culpability and reparation for historical injustice and in imagining obligations to future people and societies about whom nothing is known. Then there is the currency question, "Intergenerational justice of what?" (Page 2007). This is perhaps the most debated aspect of intergenerational justice, and there are no easy answers.

There are a number of challenges posed by thinking intergenerationally, particularly if intergenerational justice is taken in its broadest sense to refer not only to the different generations alive today but to chronological generations in the past and distant future. This raises important questions about how far obligations to future people reach, what can be done for their benefit without imposing excessive economizing on the generations alive today, and where the motivation comes from if there is no basis in social cooperation and practical accountability. When thinking about the currency of justice, there is considerable guesswork involved in acting in the best interests of future generations when it is unknowable what societies and natural systems they will live in, what technologies they will have access to, and what they will value (Gutwald et al. 2014). It is possible to make some predictions, such as modeling the impact of climate change, but threshold effects and nonlinearities mean that people are always faced with planning for an uncertain future (Leach et al. 2010). There is also the *nonidentity problem*, a philosophical dilemma that results from the decisions that are made today influencing the very existence of future people (Parfit 1984). It is difficult to determine an ethical principle for choosing between, for example, welfare-maximizing and resource-conserving policy options that have different implications for future population size and quality of life. The Rawlsian and capability approaches to social justice offer two different perspectives, both helpful, on how we might address some of these challenges.

6 A Rawlsian View of Intergenerational Justice

Rawls states that the problem of justice between generations “subjects any ethical theory to severe if not impossible tests” (1971, p. 251). Yet, his model of justice appears sensitive to intergenerationality because he stipulates that people in the original position “do not know to which generation they belong, or... the stage of civilization of their society” (ibid., p. 254). This suggests that under a veil of ignorance, people would choose principles of justice that benefit all generations. Rawls recognized however that the principles he proposes for justice among contemporaries, in particular the difference principle and the maximin rule, make less sense when applied across generations. Specifically, he highlights the “natural fact” of economic benefit improving over time and the impossibility of retrospective redistributive justice for the least advantaged earlier generations. He also notes that there is no proviso in the maximin rule to take account of the needs of future generations.

To address this problem, Rawls suggests an additional *just savings principle*. This is the idea that people in the original position would agree to a principle of justice that improves the long-term prospects of the least advantaged in society over future generations, i.e., they agree to build, save, and set aside resources for future use. The priority of equal liberty is the basis for the just savings principle, as Rawls believes it is this resource accumulation that enables development to reach a stage where institutions of justice can be established and maintained. Rawls does not stipulate a just rate of saving but does state that more should be expected of wealthier societies at times when the burden of saving is less. The presumed currency of these just savings is primary goods, though there is considerable debate about which resources should be saved for the future and which may be substitutable as societies’ needs and wants change. In particular, the literature on sustainability advocates for the inclusion of environmental goods or natural capital as the primary object of just savings (Dobson 1998; Langhelle 2000; Norton 1999; Singer 1988), though this is an extension of Rawls’ original theory.

Rawls’ approach is helpful in addressing the question of motivation for putting principles of intergenerational justice into practice. Rawls makes the case that “every generation, except possibly the first, gains when a reasonable rate of saving is maintained” (ibid., p. 256). He originally stipulates that people in the original position (i) represent family lines, who care about their immediate descendants, and (ii) adopt principles that they would wish their predecessors to have followed (p. 255). This seems to include the assumption that human intuitions about justice involve “some intergenerational altruism due partly to the fact that the succession of generations is also linked to biological parent-to-child relations” (Gosseries 2008, p. 65). Rawls also argues that people will consider that their choices must seem reasonable to their immediate descendants and the next generation as a whole. His grounding of the just savings principle therefore rests on the idea that contemporaries in any society factor the claims of adjacent generations into their notion of fairness and on the idea that it is in everyone’s best interests to improve society in the long run.

Later, in response to criticism that his argument about caring for descendants is inconsistent with the disinterested logic of the original position (Barry 1977; Daniels 1975; Heath 1997; Okin 1989), Rawls removes the stipulation about family lines. His revised and simplified justification for just savings in *Political Liberalism* (1993a, p. 274) is noteworthy because it implies that people will adopt policies that benefit the next generation, even if they have no particular attachment to them, in the interests of harmonious social relations. As Gauthier (1986, p. 299) observes: “Mutually beneficial co-operation directly involves persons of different but overlapping generations, but this creates indirect co-operative links extending throughout history.” Wissenberg (1999) suggests that this is Rawls’ most important contribution to intergenerational justice with a far-reaching application across all liberal theories, because it establishes a rational and reasonable basis for social cooperation among adjacent generations. He contends that without the just savings principle, society would lack a basis of trust essential for stability and that in Rawls’ revised justification “the contract rests upon generational mutual consent and not upon one-sided promises” (p. 179).

An especially interesting feature of Rawls’ idea of just savings is that he argues they are only called for insofar as they enable the necessary conditions for the realization of human liberty: “Once just institutions are firmly established and all the basic liberties effectively realized, the net accumulation asked for falls to zero” (1971, p. 255). In other words, intergenerational justice is about a duty to establish and maintain just institutions. This idea is of fundamental importance because it envisages a limit to the utility of resource accumulation, beyond which excessive wealth does not serve the demands of justice. Rawls argues that “we are not bound to go on maximising indefinitely. . . . It is a mistake to believe that a just and good society must wait upon a high material standard of life” and states that wealth beyond the needs of justice “is more likely to be a hindrance, a meaningless distraction at best if not a temptation to indulgence and emptiness” (ibid., p. 258). In this point he again rejects the utilitarian principle that justice means maximizing welfare over time. He also cautions against high rates of saving that impose excessive hardships on present generations, where the first principles of justice have not yet been met.

There is considerable debate about applying Rawls’ theory in an intergenerational context. Arguing from a communitarian perspective, Thompson (2009) suggests that a stronger foundation for preserving wealth, resources, and sound institutions for future people can be found by considering what she calls the lifetime-transcending interests of current people (i.e., their interests in seeing that particular ideas, practices, opportunities, identities, etc., are preserved into the future) than in a notion of rights held by those not yet born. Economists such as Arrow (1973), Sollow (1974), Arrhenius (1999), and Alvarez-Cuadrado and Long (2009) have modeled the implications of Rawls’ theory to consider whether principles such as the maximin criterion and just savings really do as they say and maximize the welfare of the least advantaged members of society over time. Some scholars question whether the practical implications of Rawls’ theory are substantively different from a utility-maximizing approach, as just savings focus on aggregate resources and not redistribution (Arrow ibid.;

Gosseries 2008; Vanderheiden 2008). Others note that, unmodified, the maximin criterion seems to support zero or negative savings (Alvarez-Cuadrado & Long *ibid.*), which suggests a paradoxical relationship between Rawls' principles of intra- and intergenerational justice. A particular challenge is the effect of a "defecting" (Arrhenius *ibid.*) or "free-rider" generation (Heath 1997). This is a very real social policy concern in many Minority World nations, where the impact of consumer lifestyles on climate change and low rates of savings are perceived as an intergenerational injustice. While Heath is optimistic that the "effective threat" of noncooperation from adjacent generations means all are likely to cooperate in conserving resources (p. 371), Arrhenius argues that generations can and do deplete resources with relative impunity.

For critics who think that Rawls' principles of justice allow too much inequality among contemporaries, his just savings principle offers an alternative distributive logic. Gosseries (2008) argues Rawls is proposing two distinct phases of human development in which different principles determine the demands of justice. In the accumulation phase, intergenerational justice necessitates some present sacrifice in the service of a better minimum standard of living in future generations and achieving basic liberties for all. Gosseries is particularly interested in Rawls' contention that accumulation is only necessary up to a certain point, after which the "steady-state" phase begins. Gaspart and Gosseries (2007) modify the just savings principle to stipulate that in this phase, savings should be prohibited and instead used for the benefit of the least well-off members of the present generation. Otherwise, the surplus will only continue to benefit the most advantaged members of society and their offspring. This is a departure from Rawls, as it extends the demands of intergenerational justice beyond the establishment of social institutions and the removal of extreme poverty, toward an egalitarian distribution of primary goods.

A Rawlsian approach to intergenerational justice that incorporates these re-readings and developments of his theory might restate the principles of justice as follows:

1. Each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties which is compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all.
2. Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy four conditions:
 - (i) They are permissible in the service of advancing development, to support the establishment and maintenance of just institutions and secure basic liberties.
 - (ii) They must enable each generation to produce and to save resources for the benefit of the next generation, without imposing excessive hardship.
 - (iii) They must be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.
 - (iv) They must be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society.
3. Where basic liberties have been realized, productive surplus should be redistributed for the benefit of the least advantaged members of the generations alive today, in a manner consistent with the conservation of resources for future generations.

This restatement retains Rawls' focus on the importance of liberty and access to resources, and his defense of social and economic inequalities insofar as they increase productivity and support development, but places a greater emphasis on just savings as well as resource conservation and redistribution in advanced economies. Although the just savings principle is about an aggregate saving across the whole of a society, Rawls explicitly states that savings should not impose an excessive burden and that he would expect more of wealthier societies: a logical extension of this argument therefore is to expect a higher rate of saving from the wealthiest members of current generations, consistent with the difference principle.

7 A Capability View of Intergenerational Justice

Sen's theory has received less attention in the intergenerational context, yet several scholars including Sen himself have explored links between the capability approach and sustainable development (Crabtree 2013; Gutwald et al. 2014; Peeters and Sterckx 2013; Rauschmayer et al. 2011; Sen 2009, 2013). Sen (2013, p. 8) argues that "the concept of sustainable development must necessarily include consideration of inter-generational justice." Sustainable development is a contested concept that comes back to the question *intergenerational justice of what?* As Barry (1999, pp. 105–106) states, it is an "irreducibly normative" proposition because "the root idea of sustainability is the conservation of what matters for future generations, its definition is inescapably bound up with one's conception of what matters." With the capability approach, Sen offers a currency of intergenerational justice that is better equipped to meet the uncertainties of the future than welfare or resource-based measures.

Sen applauds the ethical force of the Brundtland report's (1987, p. 8) definition of sustainable development, which for the first time "combined consideration of inter-generational justice with a concern for the poor in each generation" (2013, p. 8). Yet, he argues that the capability approach somewhat shifts the emphasis of sustainable development:

The idea of sustainable development can be broadened from the formulations proposed by Brundtland... to encompass the preservation and expansion of the substantive freedoms and capabilities of people today without compromising the ability of future generations to have similar or more freedoms. (Sen 2014)

By focusing on capabilities rather than needs, Sen does not presume to guess what will be in the best interests of future generations but rather advances a liberty-oriented view of intergenerational justice premised on expanding and sustaining people's ability to choose. This capability approach to sustainable development is about sustaining freedoms – the opportunities to choose a valuable life – for both current and future generations (Lessmann and Rauschmayer 2013).

Adapting Sen's idea, some scholars have expanded the capability justice approach as a theory of sustainable development. Gutwald et al. (2014) argue that

this approach lends itself to a threshold conception of justice, because “enhancing human capabilities now and in the future means to protect a wide range of valuable functionings” (p. 362). This is consistent with a pluralist view of human society and sustainability that upholds the conservation of options, for future generations to have the opportunity to meet their own needs “according to their own conception of what constitutes a good life” (Barry *ibid.* p. 104, Norton 1999; Paterson 2001; Vanderheiden 2008).

Page (2007) considers the capability approach specifically in relation to intergenerational justice and climate change. He notes that while neither Sen nor Nussbaum has systematically applied their theories to the question of distribution between generations, the capability approach can be extended by (i) recognizing an “ecological functioning capability” and (ii) acknowledging the impact of existing persons on the functionings and capabilities of others, including successive generations (p. 464). Page argues that a logical extension of Sen’s position on the conservation of options is the preservation of “the capability to experience life in an environment devoid of dangerous environmental impacts.” He also makes the case that insofar as “climate change will affect the capabilities of both existing and future people” (*ibid.*), compensation is already due to those who will experience a tangible reduction in the options available to them.

Piachaud (2008) suggests that one way to meaningfully apply the capability approach in an intergenerational context is to identify certain vital capabilities that are prioritized as those most crucial for people’s future prospects. Anderson (1999) observes that Sen’s theory does not address the question of *which* capabilities society has an obligation to equalize and makes a case for democratic equality as the object of social policy to enable people to have access to a wide range of functionings and capabilities. Neuberger and Fraser (1993) suggest that life, bodily health, and civil liberties are of special significance, while Page (*ibid.*) similarly identifies bodily health and integrity and would additionally like to see ecological functioning as a vital capability. These diverse interpretations illustrate some of the difficulties of applying Sen’s “intentionally incomplete” theory of capabilities to questions of social policy (Burchardt 2008, p. 209).

Nussbaum (2006) differs from Sen, in adopting Rawls’ original position as an appropriate rationale for intergenerational justice in the distribution of central human capabilities. Yet Watene (2013) argues that this is inconsistent with how she has identified her ten central human capabilities in the first place. Nussbaum’s philosophy is grounded in Aristotelian ethics of compassion and benevolence and the importance of human dignity. In an intergenerational context, this would seem to support a stronger argument about caring for the lives that future generations are able to live, rather than reverting to Rawls’ position on intergenerational cooperation as mutual advantage (p. 29). Watene argues that the capability approach may alternatively be developed in an intergenerational context by building future generations into basic assumptions and starting points, not treating them as a separate case, recognizing the ways in which our values might limit future options, discussing obligations to future generations, and applying capability theory to address “tragic conflicts” such as climate change and sea level rise (pp. 35–36).

Employing Sen's (2013) freedom-oriented definition of sustainable development as "development that prompts the capabilities of present people without compromising capabilities of future generations" (p11), Scholtes (2010) suggests that the conceptualization of sustainability should extend contingent, particular valuations of nature into the space of the options of others, especially those of future generations. The capability approach to development, for Scholtes, promises the accessibility and reflectiveness of reasons for dealing with nature and makes the valuational reference of these reasons and the formulation of environmental problems acceptable in the space of public deliberation and social value formation. In this way, "the reasons for and against alternative ways of dealing with nature are made explicit and, thereby, accessible to those who would be affected" (p. 303) in the future.

Also based on Sen's definition, Lessmann and Rauschmayer (2013, p. 100) consider the implications of replacing needs with capabilities in the Brundtland concept of sustainability. They suggest two key links: the first between an individual's ways of life (a selected set of capabilities and functionings) and the systemic (or macro-) level and the second between current and future generations. They propose a four-step model to address these links:

1. How available resources and conversion factors contribute to individual capabilities
2. How achieved functionings affect the ecological, economic, and social systems
3. How the systems will change over time
4. How these changes will impact on the capabilities of future generations, via resources and conversion factors

This model can be used to better understand the conditions of (un)sustainable development. However, because the model is multidimensional and dynamic and depends on individuals, it is difficult to operate in practice. Lessmann and Rauschmayer (2013) suggest that it might be used to focus on capabilities and the natural environment and by institutions responsible for sustainable development.

In a more recent theoretical study, the capability approach is combined with a transition management and practice approach by Rauschmayer et al. (2015) in their understanding of the governance of sustainability transitions. They point out that although the capability approach is able to differentiate between self- and other-regarding motivations, and the latter are important to any move toward intergenerational justice, it cannot identify causal relations between individual and societal changes. When combined with transition management, which is developed to infer societal transitions, and a practice approach which is able to describe how practices come about and change at the societal level, this heuristic assemblage can be of use to describe, explain, assess, and interrelate sustainable development at multiple levels.

To summarize, the capability approach seems to have particular appeal to scholars interested in the links between ideal theory and policies for sustainable development. The basis of its appeal is its non-prescriptive focus on the conservation of options, which comfortably extends the scope of justice to future generations. However, the incompleteness of this theory also gives rise to difficulty and

differences of interpretation with regard to the relative importance of ecological and social resources, the primacy of nature, and the order of our obligations to future generations in preserving their opportunities to lead good lives.

8 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed John Rawls' contractarian approach and Amartya Sen's capability approach to social justice and their intergenerational implications, particularly in the context of sustainable development. These distinctive approaches sometimes divide commentators, while others see Rawls and Sen's theories of justice as incomplete and perhaps complementary (Brighthouse and Robeyns 2010). For example, Paterson (2001) indicates that the establishment and maintenance of Rawlsian just institutions using the "veil of ignorance" device includes (i) conservation of options, (ii) conservation of quality, and (iii) conservation of access. Yet without the capability approach, how do we realize the conservation of options? Criticizing the Rawlsian difference principle, Norton (1999, pp. 132–133) argues that "...it seems reasonable to think of our obligation to the future as including, in addition to maintaining a fair savings rate, an obligation to maintain a non-/diminishing range of choices and opportunities to pursue certain valued interests and activities." This is not to say that the capability approach is superior to the Rawlsian just saving principle, rather, that both approaches should be taken into consideration when assessing intergenerational problems.

The introductory section to this chapter suggested that, although theories of intergenerational justice are unlikely to be put directly into practice in any straightforward way, they are nevertheless still potentially influential for shaping political, advocacy, and activist priorities. For example, the think-tank Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (FRFG) includes both academic and practitioners in developing messages about the obligation of societies to consider and promote intergenerational justice. In promoting messages about the obligation "to do right by our children," the FRFG (2011) has advocated that there are three core obligations that every generation owes to the ones that follow:

- **Diverse options:** A responsibility to ensure that future generations have the ability to make choices about how they live in the world they inherit. Preserving diversity of choice, and not diminishing the range of natural and cultural resources available, is the only way to give future generations the flexibility they deserve.
- **Environmental quality:** A responsibility to pass on a world that has not been damaged by our actions and a related responsibility to repair the actions of the past.
- **Equal access:** A responsibility to give equal access to public resources – both to our neighbors today and our children tomorrow. Shared resources aren't ours to destroy as we see it but should be passed on.

While this formulation is in no sense theoretically “pure,” one can see the influence, interplay, and synthesis of diverse approaches to intergenerational justice in this form of political claim. Although sometimes still operating at a high level of abstraction, debates over how intergenerational justice is theorized matter beyond the walls of academia.

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Part III

Friendship, Peer Group Relations, and Sexualities

Michael Windzio

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Abstract

With a special focus on immigrant families, this chapter elaborates on the relationship between assimilation, multiculturalism, spatial segregation, and social networks. Different outcomes of immigrant integration are explained by the model of intergenerational integration, which combines micro- and macro-level analyses in one comprehensive framework. Individual or family-related investment decisions play a crucial role in this model, but also ethnic boundaries, which are closely related to ethnically mixed or segregated social networks. Following an overview of empirical studies on inter- and intra-ethnic ties in

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social networks, the intergenerational interdependence of these ties, and the effect of residential segregation, it will be argued that latent or manifest ethnic conflict can be a result of ethnic boundaries and inequalities.

Keywords

Social networks · Integration · Assimilation · Segregation · Ethnic conflict

1 Introduction

Social integration is a core concept in sociology; it is also important in the geographic and anthropological analysis of migration. But despite its centrality, the concept is not clearly defined. The concept of assimilation, in contrast, is well elaborated and meets the requirements of formal logical representation (Windzio and Wingers 2014b). Assimilation is usually rejected by multiculturalists who employ arguments of the theory of justice and social capital to justify their call for protection and maintenance of immigrants' cultures of origin. Regardless of the normative implications of multiculturalism or assimilation, both concepts relate to different modes of incorporation of immigrant families (Berry 1997). These modes result in different outcomes at the macro-level: assimilation means the absorption of immigrant families into the mainstream or a melting pot, where the mainstream changes while ethnic origin loses its significance (Alba and Nee 2003). In the multicultural mode, in contrast, differences between ethnic and cultural groups are preserved and often reproduce themselves over generations. In empirical research, the difference between assimilation and multiculturalism depends on the measurable outcome of how bright or blurred boundaries between ethnic and cultural groups are and how important ascribed collective identities are relative to the individual choice of values and cultural orientations.

The aim of this chapter is to show how social network analysis can be applied to investigate the brightness or the blurredness of ethnic, cultural, or religious boundaries (see also Wimmer and Lewis 2010). These boundaries determine the path into the receiving society, but at the same time they are also a result of a specific mode of integration of immigrant families. Social networks are related to forms of social integration, such as inter- or intra-ethnic, family related, or spatially segregated. "Spatially segregated" refers to the degree of residential segregation, spatial clustering of immigrant or ethnic groups, and the resulting ethnic, cultural, or religious homogeneity of social networks. Ethnic group boundaries tend to remain intact if social networks consist mainly of intra-ethnic ties. As a result, the existence and visibility of distinct groups and the concentration of its members in focal points is one condition of ethnic boundaries. Ethnically homogeneous social networks, in particular, friendship ties and marriage relations, tend to rather reinforce boundaries than to facilitate their blurring; they inhibit interethnic and interracial contact and, thereby also, the reduction of prejudice (Allport 1954).

It will be argued in this chapter that social network analysis is an appropriate research paradigm for analyzing the degree of social assimilation of immigrant

families and for the question of whether boundaries between groups lose their significance. If there is a correspondence of residential segregation with the propensity to form intra-ethnic ties, residential segregation affects not just individuals but households as “clusters” – and thus also most families. Doubtlessly, the notion of ghettos or “parallel societies” (Verkuyten 2014, p. 4) would be much less important in the debate on immigrant families' integration if spatial distance had no effect on ties in social networks. Until now, however, combining both objects of research – residential segregation and social networks – is a rather new paradigm. It is also a new approach to combine data on social networks of children and adolescents with data on networks of their parents in the analysis of intergenerational interdependencies of integration, that is, whether the ethnic and cultural segregation of networks of children's parents have an effect on segregation of their children's networks.

In Sects. 2 and 3, different perspectives on immigrant families' incorporation will be discussed, particularly assimilation, multiculturalism, and intergenerational integration. Section 4 highlights the importance of the social network perspective in the analysis of integration and assimilation; an overview of empirical studies on immigrant and ethnic minority networks will be provided in Sect. 5. In urban sociology and geography, the spatial distribution of ethnic groups and resources is an important factor of integration and inequality, but also in studies on network formation, as discussed in Sect. 6. Following arguments of neo-functionalism, the correspondence of persistent ethnic-cultural boundaries with the likelihood of ethnic conflicts will be described in Sect. 7.

2 Incorporation, Integration, Assimilation, and Multiculturalism

A basic difference between assimilation theory and multiculturalism is the view on ethnic group boundaries and to policies related to these boundaries (Wimmer 2013). What does multiculturalism mean in this context? Multiculturalism can be defined as a normative theory about the value of immigrants' cultures of origin and the assumption of positive effects on social integration. This theory is often combined with policy recommendations to maintain these cultures in the receiving country. Non-assimilation and multiculturalism imply that group boundaries persist (Wimmer 2013, p. 177) and that distinct ethnic groups tend to reproduce themselves over generations. The result of assimilation, in contrast, is a melting-pot-like society where ethnic traditions may be visible, but lose their social significance, and where ethnic boundaries become blurred (Alba and Nee 2003). Social significance refers to the effect of ethnic characteristics on placement in the social structure, the acquisition of cultural capital, and the ethnic composition of network ties.

While the universalistic and individualistic philosophical tradition has focused on the individual as well as on equal and universal rights, multiculturalists highlighted the importance of social embeddedness and the direct transfer of culture and values within families (Murphy 2012). Straight assimilation of immigrants would imply

that families discard their cultural resources and try to acquire new ones, but are then disadvantaged in transferring cultural capital to their children. Moreover, while *universalism* assumes that moral standards can be justified by rational arguments and should therefore be accepted by anybody if he or she meets the high standard of the categorical imperative, the tradition of *communitarianism* has emphasized the importance of micro-level social networks: moral behavior appears in direct social interaction and in daily transactions, and is not based on abstract rules and maxims (Wieviorka 1998). Since face-to-face social interaction and daily collaboration are embedded in cultural contexts, multiculturalists are interested in maintaining immigrants' culture of origin. From this perspective, assimilation is regarded rather as a threat and not as a path to successful integration.

Modern assimilation theory takes a different position in assuming the existence of a non-arbitrary *social production function* in the host society (Lindenberg 1996) to which immigrant families should orient themselves when they invest into cultural and social capital. This means, in other words, that immigrants should acquire specific resources and opt for particular alternatives in order to accumulate appropriate capital. Such capital can be successfully reinvested in the receiving context to achieve upward mobility, social prestige, and well-being. Paul Collier recently developed a similar concept, the "social model," as a "... combination of institutions, rules, norms, and organization of a country" (Collier 2013). In the context of the host country, a limited, specific, and non-arbitrary set of activities corresponds with an enduring and sustainable placement in the middle class. Provided that such a type of social production function has been institutionalized, assimilationists recommend assimilative investments. This does not mean that investments into the ethnic groups cannot lead to upward mobility (Breton 1964), but in the end, the benefit of ethnic group investments usually remains lower than that of investment into receiving-context capital (Esser 2010).

Similar to earlier versions of assimilation theory (Gordon 1964), Hartmut Esser distinguished between four different dimensions of assimilation (Esser 2004). He assumes a non-deterministic association between these dimensions in a way that one dimension facilitates assimilation in the following dimension. From a life course perspective, it becomes obvious that there are also feedback loops, if, for example, ethnically mixed social networks during early childhood come along with assimilation in the cultural dimension through exposure to the host-country language. If immigrant children establish contact with their native peers, it is easier for them to gain access to host-country language, to the stock of relevant knowledge, and to other aspects that can accelerate or facilitate the process of acculturation.

The first dimension in Esser's assimilation model is *cultural* or *cognitive assimilation*, also referred to as *acculturation*. In line with the dominant social production function, a necessary condition for performing successfully in the host countries' institutions and organizations is usually the ability to fluently speak the language and to have familiarity with basic behavioral standards. *Structural assimilation* compares the positions of immigrants and natives in the inequality structure, but also with regard to legal status, for instance, whether immigrants become naturalized and thereby acquire equal rights. In a third dimension, *social assimilation*, immigrants

establish ties to host-country members, ranging from friendship and social support relationships to intermarriage. The fourth dimension in Esser's (2004) model is related to *identification* with the culture and the Constitution or the Basic Law of the host country. In this respect, a big issue is whether one can still identify a cultural mainstream, or whether the host country is culturally pluralized. If the latter is the case, it critically differentiates whether identification is either based on individual preferences, or based on membership in a particular ethnic or cultural group. One could call the former *liberal-individual pluralism* and the latter *multiculturalism*. Alba and Nee's definition of assimilation emphasizes the blurring of ethnic boundaries, when, in other words, ethnic categories have lost their significance, even though ethnic origin is still identifiable. Alba and Nee (2003) emphasize that the cultural mainstream of modern western societies has always been dynamic and pluralistic. If seen in this light, assimilation means that it is the *individual* who decides on his or her lifestyle, also on which norms are agreed upon and which values in life should be pursued. This individualistic formulation of assimilation in pluralistic societies implies that individuals can easily leave their group of origin, their ethnic or cultural group, their social class, or even their families, provided that they are endowed with cognitive and cultural but also economic resources enabling them to do so (Murphy 2012). Surely, individuals cannot easily discharge their cultural origins or their habitus, but we observe on the other hand how efficiently educational institutions can change or even shape identities and thereby drive individualization and assimilation over generations (Windzio 2013b).

Different orientations toward assimilation and individualism sometimes come along with intergenerational conflicts, for example, when parents try to prevent their first- or second-generation adolescents from assimilating to the receiving context, who, in turn, defy social control by their families and their ethnic community. A "dissonant acculturation" (Portes and Rumbaut 2006) can also happen the other way around, when first-generation immigrants are oriented toward acculturation in the host country while their adolescent children tend to ethnic retention or re-ethnicization. Aside from that, over the last decades, a long running trend can be observed toward upward mobility into the middle classes. Albeit sociology of education has shown a still significant degree of intergenerational reproduction of social inequality in many western countries, for which education systems do not currently compensate (Teltemann and Windzio 2013), one should not neglect the enormous performance of the education state as an *equalizer* (Weymann 2014). The education system makes obviously an important contribution to assimilation and individualization.

An exit option out of an ethnic, cultural, or religious group at moderate costs, as claimed in liberal multiculturalist approaches (Murphy 2012), is crucial for individual assimilation into a pluralistic mainstream (Alba and Nee 2003). If such an exit from a group happens, new networks must be established. Individuals can hardly exist without a minimum level of social embeddedness. If the previous network was dominated by ties within the individual's own ethnic group or within the extended family, and the individual now decides on a different lifestyle and on leaving this group (and maybe also the family), this often leads to a different ethnic, cultural, or

lifestyle-related composition of persons in the individual's social network. In addition to the willingness of groups in letting individuals go, the possibility to leave a group depends on the resources acquired in the education system which are related to the social production function of the host country, but also on the *openness* of the majority (Murphy 2012).

3 The Model of Intergenerational Integration

Esser (2010) recently tried to subsume different assimilation theories in one comprehensive framework. He applies a formal rational choice approach to the processes of immigrant incorporation and assumes in his model that immigrants and their descendants can opt for economic, cultural, and social capital investment (Bourdieu 1986) either in the host-country culture or in their own ethnic community. Investment into cultural capital of the ethnic community means, for instance, that language skills and basic behavioral practices of the immigrant's own ethnic group are favored over investment into host-country language acquisition and lifestyles. Provided that there still is a dominant social production function which regularly stimulates behavior favorable to the production of wealth, receiving country investment will be on average more beneficial than investment into the ethnic context (Esser 2010). At the same time, however, the risk of not getting the benefit of receiving country investment is high if immigrants are not aware of behavioral standards and appropriate sources of information. In addition, if immigrants perceive hostility from the receiving society, successful investment becomes less likely. Why should immigrants invest into host-country social capital if ethnic boundaries tend to exclude them from host-country networks anyway? Furthermore, investment into host-country capital is obviously more costly if immigrants have to learn a foreign language and if they have to overcome or to cross ethnic boundaries, given that such boundaries exist.

The interesting feature of Esser's model of intergenerational immigrant integration is that it is a micro-level social theory on investment decisions. However, it takes the context characteristics of the host society not only into account but regards them as crucial conditions. Context variables drive the decision on whether to invest into host-country capital or not. With increasing group size, an investment into the ethnic context becomes more beneficial, especially in the case of ethnic boundaries. When the group size passes a threshold, ethnic boundaries make receiving-context investments unlikely because of the low probability of success and the high costs. Since the model is on *intergenerational* integration, the family plays a decisive role: in many cases, parents decide on their children's investment if they opt for a particular school, residential location, or religious week-end lessons for their children.

If rates of immigration and absorption match, the immigrant group exists as a dynamic equilibrium (Esser 2010; Collier 2013). Absorption is then a typical pattern. Many role models signify that successful assimilation is a common opportunity. If ethnic boundaries become rigid, in contrast, absorption becomes unlikely, and the ethnic group maintains its group identity. Thereby, the value of host-country capital

decreases when the size of the own ethnic group increases. The group then offers an alternative where group-related cultural and social capital is valued high. As a consequence of ethnic boundaries, a group reproduces itself over time and generations because the improbable gain from receiving-context investment does not outweigh the costs of “working through barriers” (Kogan 2007). Now, “rational” immigrants rather opt for ethnic-context rather than for receiving-context investment. But the ethnic-context capital will usually result in ethnic-social inequalities, because in most cases it does not provide the same economic value on industry and service-sector labor markets as the cultural capital of the receiving context. In Western capitalist societies where economic growth is based on science and innovation, following a different social production function or a different “social model” (Collier 2013, p. 33) might increase social ethnic inequalities because the type and level of acquired resources are different from the demand on middle-class labor markets. If ethnic capital provides a lower pay-off, as assumed by Esser (2010), then a society becomes ethnically stratified in the long run. *Social* conflicts will be increasingly perceived as *ethnic* conflicts in the public, for example, through media reports on strikes of particular occupational groups, when certain jobs tend to be held by people of particular ethnicities. Furthermore, if economic or labor-related conflicts are framed in terms of ethnic conflicts (see Sect. 6), this will result in brighter ethnic boundaries.

4 Social Integration, Assimilation, and the Social Networks Approach

Structural assimilation (Esser 2004) – in other words, the *equalization* of educational degrees and positions in the social structure – does not necessarily imply that ethnic conflicts become unlikely. If groups become more similar with regard to income, they might also become more sensitive to small status differences if the yardsticks for inequalities and perceived discrimination change correspondingly (Verkuyten 2014, p. 74). At the same time, however, homophily with regard to race, ethnic origin, or religion is a strong driving force toward homogeneous social networks.

The concept of homophily means that “birds of a feather flock together” (McPherson, Smith-Lowin, and Cook 2001): persons or groups who are more similar to each other with regard to significant characteristics are more inclined toward socializing with each other. So the mechanism of homophily facilitates ethnic boundaries. The existence of these boundaries does not lead to conflict by itself, but is at least a precondition (see Sect. 7). A socioeconomic equalization of immigrants and natives or different ethnic groups is not incompatible with multiculturalism. It is possible that assimilation is completed with regard to the structural or socioeconomic dimension, but at the same time not with regard to the social one, namely, the network-related dimension. Most multiculturalists would not regard ethnic segregation in networks as a problem (Murphy 2012), while assimilationists would argue that the ethnic mix of network ties would result in ethnically diverse social

relationships and provide great opportunities for interethnic marriages. The long-term result would then be amalgamation, which can be in line with a general cultural mix in a society and not just with a one-sided, straight-line assimilation of immigrants (Alba and Nee 2003).

Multiculturalism, in contrast, usually implies that ethnic boundaries remain intact. As we know from social identity theory (Tajfel 1978), it is rather easy to socially construct distinct groups and to trigger competition, if not even conflict, between them. But the starting point of a cumulative process of boundary spanning (Wimmer 2013) is often hard to identify. In many cases, immigrants respond to hostility by ethnic re-identification and ethnic retention. This also appears in the form of symbolic distinction, for example, by ostentatiously presenting ethnic or religious symbols in the public space. If this is motivated by a response to hostility or stigmatization (Lamont and Mizrahi 2012) rather than by an intrinsic interest in showing these symbols, then it is an act of communication, a statement that the person lives on the other side of an ethnic, religious, or cultural boundary. If social networks were ethnically, culturally, and religiously mixed, in contrast, which would imply that friendships and networks of social support as well as marriages regularly cross boundaries and thereby blur them in the long run, such behavior would mark *individual* identity, but group boundaries, often expressed by showing distinctive symbols, were negligible. Social networks are thus an important analytical tool for analyzing the existence and the magnitude of ethnic boundaries and the degree of how social interactions are regulated by these boundaries. At the micro-level, ties in social networks can be a good indicator of the degree of ethnic, religious, or cultural boundaries.

5 Social Network Studies: An Overview

Since the 1980s, researchers increasingly applied methods of social network analysis in studies on immigrant integration or interethnic ties in social networks (Hallinan and Teixeira 1987). A social network is based on relational data arranged in a matrix where, in case of the graphical representation in Fig. 1, rows denote actors (called “vertices” or “nodes” in network terminology) who send ties to others, who are arranged in the columns of the matrix. Figure 1 is a network of friendship nomination in a school class of 4th graders.

As we will see in the following section(s), social networks can be analyzed with regard to the degree of ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic *homophily*, which means that actors with similar characteristics have a higher propensity to establish a tie.

5.1 Ethnic Segregation in Peer Networks

One of the early studies on opportunity structures for interracial friendships was conducted by Moody (2001). Using the Add Health data, he showed that in moderately ethnically heterogeneous schools, friendship segregation of 12–17-year-old

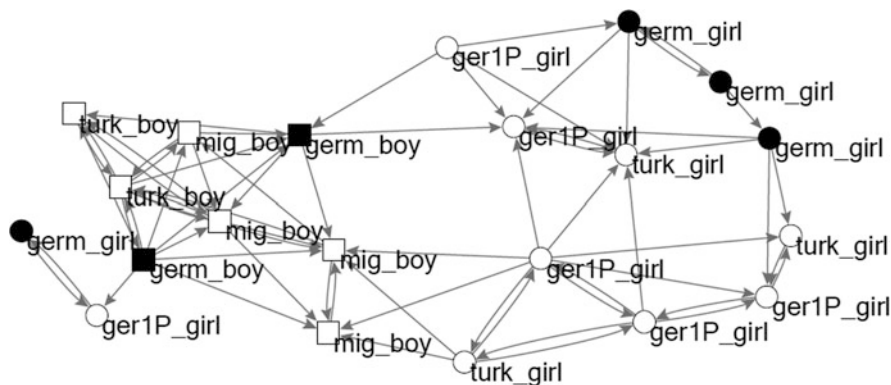


Fig. 1 Graph of a 4th grade class

adolescents is strong, but declines at the highest levels of heterogeneity. He explains this result with contact theory (Allport 1954) because in heterogeneous schools interethnic contact is highly probable, while the opportunity structure for intra-ethnic contact is low. Moreover, he found that ethnic or racial segregation of network ties is low in schools that offer extracurricular activities, where ethnic groups and races mix within extracurricular groups. Accordingly, families' choice on a specific type of school has an impact on the opportunity of interethnic friendship ties and social assimilation.

Quillian and Campbell (2003) used the same dataset in order to analyze forms of social assimilation among students. They argued that schools are a part of the overall society and therefore might reflect patterns of segregation, ethnic-social distance, and prejudice rooted in the wider society. Following the arguments of segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Rumbaut 2006), they focused on children of the new immigration wave(s) of the 1960s, namely, Asians, Hispanics, and immigrants from the Caribbean. According to the traditional theory of assimilation, the in-group preference (homophily) should decline in the younger, more recent generations. Segmented assimilation theory, in contrast, has criticized classical assimilation models for ignoring differences between immigrant groups. Quillian and Campbell (2003) therefore applied the segmented assimilation model to friendship ties and social networks. They expected that Asians and Hispanics do not show assimilation across generations but rather that there might be a tendency toward social exclusion. On the other hand, Asian families often dispose of valuable cultural capital. They might have a high preference for intra-ethnic friendship ties, but nevertheless tend toward out-group friendships with selected groups. Moreover, the traditional assimilation model ignores that skin color is an important characteristic, especially in the group of black Hispanic immigrants. In the context of racial discrimination in the USA, it can be expected that black Hispanic immigrants are similar to African Americans in their pattern of friendship ties. Empirical results show indeed the important role of skin color for the choice of friendships. It

is interesting that black Hispanics have strongly increased odds of being friends with African Americans. Immigrants from Asian countries show a high preference for their own group, but also orientate a part of their social contacts toward native whites. Furthermore, the authors used information on first, second, and third-plus generations and test whether the magnitude of the group-related odds of friendship varies over generations (Quillian and Campbell 2003). The empirical approach was to estimate interaction effects between different groups of race or ethnic origin of the receiver of a network tie with generation (1st, 2nd, and 3rd plus). Then they correlated the odds of friendship selection for all 36 sender and receiver pairs across generations. They did the same for 24 sender-receiver pairs with a Hispanic or Asian sender involved. Both analyses show strong correlations of at least 0.80 and 0.88. Accordingly, it is not likely that degrees of interethnic segregation of friendship ties will substantially decrease in the near future.

Studies on ethnic segregation of ties in social networks further investigate the mechanisms of ethnic network segregation. Stark and Flache used data from the Dutch city of Arnhem and analyzed degrees of ethnic segregation in social networks of adolescents in schools. If one controls for similarity in other cultural and socioeconomic characteristics, one probably could, in the end, explain ethnic segregation by underlying covariates (Stark and Flache 2012). In a subsequent study, this has been described as the “by-product hypothesis” (Smith, Maas, and van Tubergen 2014a). In their own analysis, Smith et al. also controlled for a couple of lifestyle characteristics such as leisure activities (going out, reading, computer games), but also substance abuse and delinquency. Even though leisure activities, lifestyle indicators, and socioeconomic status were controlled for, they still found a considerable degree of ethnic segregation in the networks.

In a study on multiplex networks of fourth graders in German primary schools, Windzio analyzed friendship networks as well as networks of joint schoolwork completion (Windzio 2013a). He found that dyads of Turkish pupils show a higher tendency toward a tie in a schoolwork network compared with dyads of native German pupils. This can be interpreted as a higher inclination of Turkish pupils to use the social capital in their network when it comes to scholastic issues. However, if the network is rearranged in the analysis and only ties to other pupils who also have higher levels of objectified cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) – as measured by the number of books at home – are analyzed, then the effect becomes negative. This means that, on the one hand, Turkish pupils are interested in homework or schoolwork collaboration with their co-ethnic peers but, on the other hand, do not get access to other peers whose parents have a high level of cultural capital.

5.2 Multiplexity and the Intergenerational Interdependence of Networks

While most studies are based on the analysis of friendship networks, network ties can also extend to other social dimensions. In social network theory, this is described

as multiplexity. Friendship can be an ambiguous and vague concept, so *actual behavior* related to other persons, such as visiting them at their home or inviting them to one's birthday party, might be a more valid measurement of social ties. Windzio (2012) analyzed the impact of ties among 10-year-old children's parents in regard to children's invitations to birthday parties. His argument followed Coleman's concept of social capital in neighborhoods. In Coleman's view, social capital is increased by contact among children's parents (Coleman 1990). Network ties among parents generate social norms and facilitate their enforcement among their children. Children who meet during leisure time are exposed to a lower degree of social control if their parents do not have regular contact with one another. But if they do have regular contact, children's parents can debate and discuss norms and then coordinate their sanctioning behavior accordingly. Moreover, adult role models that turned out to have a positive and preventative effect on deviant and delinquent behavior (Wilson 1987) might also be important for the integration of immigrants. Ethnic inequalities make it unlikely that immigrant children's parents show the habitus of, e.g., high-status service-sector professionals. If the degree of ethnic and social segregation in birthday party networks were low, birthday parties could be an opportunity for immigrant children to get in contact with adult role models, and this could facilitate acculturation. More importantly, birthday parties involve the exchange of goods, to which Clarke (2007) observes that "... networks of gifts and children are circulated in rounds of reciprocity" (Clarke 2007, p. 266). From the parents' point of view, exchanging gifts and children creates obligations of reciprocity in the future. Awareness of that kind of bonding with another person is one important aspect of social integration. Results show that contact among children's parents is strongly decreased in *interethnic* networks, and at the same time, parental contact has a significantly positive effect on joining alters' birthday parties. This finding remains robust if the sample is limited only to those dyads of children who nominated each other as friends (Windzio 2012). In a recent study, this result has been corroborated by using instrumental variable methods to decompose the causal effects: parental contact on children's birthday party attendance and, vice versa, and children's birthday party attendance on contact among children's parents show independent causal effects (Windzio 2015). These results reveal that the effect of children's birthday parties on contact among their parents seems to be even somewhat stronger than the other way around. Accordingly, ethnic segregation in the parental generation inhibits involvement of immigrants in such kind of exchange network. Smith et al. (2014b) showed that ethnic-cultural traditions are often important to immigrant parents. The higher the importance of in-group traditions, the lower the number of out-group friends their children have, even though the effect is not particularly strong (Smith et al. 2014b).

The concept of multiplexity was also important in the study of Windzio and Bicer (2013). The authors developed their arguments on the basis of the low- and high-cost hypothesis. In low-cost situations, actors can more easily realize their personal preferences, whereas in high-cost situations, they have to take the social context into account. If there is a tendency toward ethnic segregation in social networks for whatever reason, this segregation must be overcome by comparatively high investment in activities

enabling immigrants to cross these ethnic boundaries (Windzio and Bicer 2013). Boundary crossing might carry higher costs than ties in friendship networks which are not affected by ethnic or social boundaries. In other words, ethnic boundaries become more rigid the more important, the closer, the more intensive, and the more significant a social relationship is. For instance, friendship nomination, which is the most frequently used indicator in surveys, is a low-cost situation. The intensity of the relationship increases if two students spend their leisure time together and increases even more if ego and alter regularly visit each other at home. Finally, contact among children's parents might be the most costly dimension of social interaction because parents do not regularly meet each other in focal points, such as that of the school class. Empirical results show that the degree of ethnic segregation in social networks is higher the more costly and "close" a network tie is – and also the more unlikely a beneficial outcome of one's investment is (Windzio and Bicer 2013).

Windzio and Wingens (2014a) analyzed religious group membership and religiousness as an additional factor that increases boundaries between immigrants and natives. In western immigration countries, ethnic and cultural homophily is an important issue (McPherson et al. 2001). If immigrants' culture of origin is preserved in a multicultural setting, the cultural groups tend to reproduce themselves over generations. Religion is a basic element of culture, as already shown by the classics of sociology, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Georg Simmel. According to McPherson's et al. (2001) theory of homophily, religion is one of the most important explanations for why persons interact with one another on the basis of shared characteristics. One result of immigration in many western countries is that there now is a considerable proportion of Muslims and, at the same time, we observe hostility toward this group. Albeit there are many different subforms of Islamic faith, most Muslims share some important elements of religious belief, such as the five pillars of Islam. In Islam, faith is rather indisputable and non-believing is a taboo. In contrast to vaguely defined "cultural" characteristics that are inappropriate to categorize ethnic groups (Wimmer 2013), religious belief based on revealed scriptures tends at least to some degree of codification. The norm-generating function of revealed scriptures is obvious in case of the Sunnah in Islam, even though Islamic scholars have debated for centuries on the details of particular norms. As in most monotheistic religions, non-believers or believers in other religions are considered to be wrong (Windzio and Wingens 2014a), and sometimes religions even recommend to avoid close contact with people who are not co-believers – which is an issue in the Quran as well (e.g., Surah 3: 28; 3:118; 5: 51). Religions usually include moral systems, and shared belief in the sacred increases the trust in the other person and distrust in non-believers. From this perspective, if revealed scriptures are taken literally – which is not just a marginal phenomenon for Muslim immigrants (Koopmans 2014) – religious boundary spanning follows an inherent logic and is not just a response to stigmatization (Lamont and Mizrahi 2012).

Taking these arguments together, one could expect that religious homophily has an independent effect on network ties. In fact, the study by Windzio and Wingens (2014a) found evidence that already in the population of 10-year-old children, there

is religious homophily in terms of membership in the same religious group and regular attendance or nonattendance at worship. The same religious denomination and similar frequencies of worship attendance do not only increase the propensity of friendship but also correspond with higher propensities of ego's visits at alter's home during leisure time – which usually involves children's parents who allow their children to bring their peers and to share the families' zone of privacy.

The result of religious homophily is important because other studies primarily highlight the integrative consequences of religion and religious group membership (Foley and Hoge 2007), which is true to an extent, when newly arriving immigrants regard religious organizations as a first focal point for establishing contact with co-believers and creating social capital that can be helpful in the process of initial integration. In the long run, however, a strong belief in a specific religion or affiliation with a particular religious group can increase social boundaries, especially if there is a high tendency toward intergenerational transmission of religious norms within families (Munniksmma, Flache, Verkuyten, and Veenstra 2012). In this way, religion can be integrative from an individual perspective, while it is not necessarily integrative at the level of the overall social system when it increases segregation in networks. Results from a recent longitudinal network study align well with the argument that religiousness corresponds with social boundaries (Cheadle and Schwadel 2012). The authors found out that friendships are often selected on the basis of similar religious perspectives, and the effect of socialization on religious service attendance by one's friends tends to be even stronger than the selection effect. Consequently, adolescents tend to come under the influence of their religious friends.

6 Spatial Segregation, Social Networks, and Group Boundaries

Spatial segregation of residential locations is an important topic in urban sociology and geography. In the classical model of Thomas Schelling, segregation is an unintended consequence of, for example, exogenous shocks that trigger a cascade of sorting processes, even if attitudes of majority and minority groups are in favor of integration (Schelling 1978). In addition to such small-distance internal migration processes, also incoming immigrants contribute to segregation when their migration decisions as well as their initial incorporation into the host country are embedded in dense intra-ethnic networks. R. J. Sampson recently pointed to the network effects of inter-neighborhood residential mobility, when areas are linked together by mobility. He found evidence of highly selective migration flows, but also of diffusion of criminality due to the relocation of persons and households from deprived neighborhoods (Sampson 2013). Such empirical results raise the question about the effects of spatial segregation on social networks. A high concentration of immigrants in neighborhoods is a crucial condition of the incorporation process if it strongly determines the opportunity structure of ties in social networks – which is the case when network ties depend on spatial distance.

Residential segregation affects families and households as collective units. The opportunity for ties in networks is thus severely restricted from the individual's point of view. As a result of spatial segregation, the mode of integration would tend rather to multiculturalism than to social assimilation. However, residential segregation by itself is not relevant for immigrant families' integration. Rather, it is often assumed that residential segregation corresponds with dense intra-ethnic networks in neighborhoods. But is there an effect of spatial proximity on networks?

In recent years, spatial locations have received increasing attention in social network analysis (Adams, Faust, and Lovasi 2012). Using data from the Add Health longitudinal survey collected between 1994 and 1995, Mouw and Entwisle (2006) analyzed the effects of spatial segregation on friendship ties in adolescents' social networks. They expected effects of homophily and deliberate choice of network ties according to actors' preferences, but also effects of the opportunity structure. The latter depends on the ethnic composition of the student population in the school as well as that of the respective neighborhood. If two students live close to each other, the probability of establishing a tie in the social network might be increased since adolescents' activity space is not randomly distributed across the neighborhood, but concentrated on focal points: adolescents follow their daily routines, for example, waiting for the school bus at a particular bus stop, and have many opportunities to meet, to get in touch with, and to make friends. Mouw and Entwisle (2006) describe this as the "bus-stop" effect. If cities are spatially segregated with regard to immigrant or ethnic origin, the bus-stop effect will also increase the tendency toward intra-ethnic friendship ties. Using geocoded data, Mouw and Entwisle (2006) measured the bus-stop effect as a distance of less than 250 m between ego's and alter's places of residence. Since the network approach is focused not only on dyads but also on triads, which goes back to Georg Simmel's analysis of interdependencies between persons, there is also an "indirect bus-stop" effect: if ego and alter share a friend who lives less than 250 m away from alter, this shared friendship with a third person also increases the likelihood of getting in touch and becoming friends. In their exponential random graph (p^*) model for ties in social networks, they found evidence of the direct as well as the indirect bus-stop effect (Mouw and Entwisle 2006). Small-scale spatial segregation across neighborhoods is thus an important opportunity structure for becoming friends. However, the effect of ethnic segregation in US metropolitan areas – where segregation is considerably high – has an even stronger effect than that of small-scale segregation. Around 30% of black and white racial friendship segregation and between 33% and 37% of overall racial friendship segregation in schools are attributable to residential segregation *across* school catchment districts in US metropolitan areas. This means that the spatial opportunity structure has quite a strong effect on the ethnic or racial segregation of friendships.

Effects of proximity have also been analyzed by using a distance interaction function: depending on the type of relation, the probability of a network tie decreases with increasing distance. But it has also been shown that endogenous network effects remain important even though a spatial embeddedness of ties exists (Preciado, Snijders, Burk, Stattin, and Kerr 2012). Other studies corroborate the result that weak or strong ties in social networks depend on geographic distance (Hipp and Perrin 2009) or local

infrastructure that helps to overcome longer distances (Hipp et al. 2012). Moreover, the presence or absence of social ties in a spatial unit can be used to construct neighborhoods as *social* entities, which must not necessarily be identical with administrative units (Hipp et al. 2012). Finally, relevant outcomes such as drug use and co-offending can also be predicted by spatial proximity (Schaefer 2012).

Researchers often complain about the scarcity of data on both social networks and spatial information (Adams et al. 2012). In the ideal case, the available information on residential locations is based on geocodes (Mouw and Entwisle 2006), but many studies must rely on subjective assessments of who lives rather close (Windzio 2012; Kruse et al. 2016). Irrespective of the data quality, to date, studies on visits-at-home networks are exceptional (Windzio and Bicer 2013; Windzio and Wings 2014a). In this dimension, children establish network ties which explicitly involve their parents, who give access to their private sphere. Mutual visits in a families' household are thus rather "close" ties. In contrast to the low-cost situation of friendship nomination, spatial distance must be bridged. In addition to the higher costs of such a close tie, spatial distance and ethnic residential segregation considerably increase the segregation of ties in visits-at-home networks.

Only few studies address the social mechanisms by which spatial proximity increases the probability of a network tie (Mouw and Entwisle 2006). Mechanism-based sociological explanations try to open the black box between two corresponding variables and to dissect the causal influences between them (Hedström 2005). A *social mechanism* is the antonym of variable-based sociology, where researchers establish correlations between cause C and effect E without giving meaningful theoretical arguments of why they expect a correlation. A mechanism-based explanation, in contrast, highlights why E is likely to occur if conditions C_1 , C_2 , and C_3 are present. In this spirit, just modeling a direct effect of spatial proximity on ties in visits-at-home networks does not unravel the content of the "black box." Rather, the analysis should be driven by meaningful ideas of how actors establish ties in this specific network type. Mouw and Entwisle (2006) point to such a mechanism when they interpret their effects of small-scale residential segregation as the "bus-stop effect." Future research should focus more on the properties of focus points and how social networks are structured by daily routines which follow clearly nonrandom patterns in time and space.

7 Group Boundaries and Ethnic Conflict – A Value-Added Theory on the Role of Social Inequality

In the preceding sections, we focused on ethnic boundaries and segregation of ties in networks. The presence of ethnic boundaries does not necessarily result in ethnic conflict. Neil J. Smelser's theory of collective behavior highlights how ethnic conflict as a group-related collective behavior can evolve (Smelser 1962). Smelser's model assumes a stepwise *value-added* process, starting at the first level with the *structural conduciveness* of a social system for conflict. Structural conduciveness is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for conflict: it just refers to the issue of whether a system is prone to collective behavior of a particular type.

In the case of ethnic, cultural, or religious conflict, structural conduciveness relates to the simple question of whether there are actually different ethnic groups present in a social system. If this is not so, intergroup conflict is not possible. Immigrant incorporation in terms of successful assimilation and the blurring of ethnic boundaries – which means that ethnic characteristics and ethnic origin have lost their significance for social interaction and placement in the inequality structure – implies that the social system is not prone to ethnic conflict. The next step in the value-added process is called *structural strain* due to ethnic inequalities. If there are different ethnic groups and if there is ethnic inequality, for example, with regard to socioeconomic characteristics, ethnic conflicts are not only possible, there is even some structural tension. However, if individual and collective actors do not share a common interpretation of the causes of inequalities, the system is not prone to ethnic conflicts, even though the first steps in the value-added process are already taken. A third step is the growth and the spread of a *generalized belief* in the origin of these inequalities. Are there ethnic boundaries? Is there another group to blame for the ethnic inequalities? If these three conditions are met, ethnic conflict is still latent, but quite likely. If there are, then, *precipitating factors* – this is the fourth level – namely, events that serve as catalysts when, for example, ethnic boundaries become relevant in specific situations, perhaps a criminal offense and an overreaction by the police, and if then, at the fifth level, the actors are able to *mobilize participants* for collective action, then an ethnic conflict is apparent. The question is, at level six, how institutions of formal and informal *control* respond to the conflict and whether social control is able to solve or, at least, to settle it down. According to this model, ethnic boundaries are necessary conditions for ethnic conflict, but ethnic boundaries are also a result of conflict at the same time (Esser 2010). Here, conflict does not necessarily mean that there are violent collective riots in the streets. There are many different and also subtle forms of ethnic conflict, for example, discrimination. In a sense, the boundary-spanning mechanism can be regarded as a self-reinforcing process, which is quite a pessimistic view on the development of immigrant incorporation. These arguments can easily be applied to the multiculturalist approach to immigrant incorporation. When ethnic groups remain visible and reproduce themselves over generations – which also depends on the intergenerational transmission of culture and (non-)assimilationist attitudes within families – there is at least structural conduciveness or susceptibility in a social system to ethnic conflict. If some groups then follow their own social production function within their own ethnic community and if this social production function results in ethnic inequalities, ethnic stratification and segregation of ties in networks, ethnic conflict is not unlikely.

8 Conclusion

As argued in this chapter, it is the ethnic composition of social networks of friendship or intermarriage which could, in the long run, lead to the dissolution and blurring of ethnic boundaries. This would require assimilation of the ethnic groups, but not into a fixed cultural pattern, but into a dynamic and ever-changing mainstream of the host society. This fits to the definition of assimilation in the work of Alba and Nee (2003):

while integration is a broad concept which comprises different modes such as assimilation and multiculturalism, assimilation is defined as the decreasing relevance and significance of ethnic characteristics and the dissolution of ethnic boundaries. Societies remain culturally diverse, and there will be a multitude of different lifestyles, but it is primarily the *individual* who creates this diversity by making his or her own deliberate choice. Different investment strategies and, in the end, also social inequality result from different ways of how individuals orient their investment toward the dominant social production function. It is an important difference whether inequality is based on individual opportunities and individual decisions or whether there are group-specific practices. The latter will surely persist, especially if some immigrant groups follow a decidedly anti-assimilation policy. Regarding social integration at the systemic level, individualism and liberal-individual pluralism are conditions of individualized processes of status attainment. Social inequality is not a problem per se, for instance, if it results from individual choices and a randomized process of opening and closing of opportunities over an individual's life course. The scandal behind social inequality is its collective component, especially in terms of the intergenerational reproduction, but also, of course, in terms of ethnic group membership. Both cases indicate that individualization is not yet completed – as it will rarely be regarding the impact of parental resources on the educational carriers of their children. With respect to ethnic group differences, the scandal becomes even more severe if social conflicts become interwoven with ethnic boundaries. On the surface, it is hard to disentangle the pure social component from a conflict that appears as an ethnic one, or at least seems to strongly correspond with ethnic distinctions. Assimilation into a diverse, pluralistic, and individualistic mainstream along with individual decisions on an investment according to a given social production function could probably break the value-added process of collective behavior in terms of ethnic conflicts. In the long run, ethnically mixed social networks and high rates of intermarriage might be more in favor of systemic integration than an active maintenance of group boundaries. It has been shown by several studies that the intergenerational interdependence of networks in families and the spatial segregation of families and households as collective actors do have an impact on the ethnic, cultural, and religious composition of network ties and thereby play a crucial role in the integration process.

The vast majority of these studies present geographically specific effects. It is an open question whether their results can be generalized and transferred to other areas. For instance, degrees of residential segregation in the USA are much higher than in Germany or in the Netherlands. It is thus conceivable that the effects of spatial segregation and distance on immigrant families' ties in networks differ as well. On the other hand, the assumed mechanisms are rather basic and simple, and yet there aren't any compelling arguments of why conclusions drawn from these studies should be country specific (Kruse et al. 2016). Nevertheless, future research should rely more on internationally comparable data in order to identify distinctive features at the regional or national level, which could probably moderate the basic mechanisms. In this regard, projects such as "Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey in Four European Countries (CILS4EU)" surely will enhance our insight.

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Abstract

Digital media such as mobile phones, social media, and the Internet are entrenched in adolescents' lives. Since these tools have become an integral part of adolescents' interaction and communication with peers, they should be considered a social context in which development unfolds. During adolescence,

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youth are faced with the key tasks of adjusting to their developing sexualities as well as forming intimate relationships. Recent findings suggest that youth use digital media in the service of these developmental tasks. They utilize information available online as well as peer interactions to cope with and adjust to their changing bodies and sexualities. Adolescents also engage in sexting and other related behaviors, which have been found to afford healthy development while simultaneously imposing considerable risks. They also use digital tools such as social media to maintain friendships, develop romantic relationships, and even pursue interactions with strangers. Findings have shown that digital media can provide youth opportunities in the pursuit of developmental tasks, but they also come with risks. Nonetheless, many scholars believe that the risks are not intrinsic to the digital tools themselves but may relate to individual or contextual factors. The implications of these findings are discussed and questions for future research are identified.

Keywords

Digital media · Development · Sexuality · Intimacy · Peer relations

1 Introduction

Most youth today have lived their lives entrenched in digital media and have never known a world without Google or Wikipedia. Survey data on US adolescents ages 12–17 revealed that 92% are online at least daily, 74% can access the Internet via their mobile device, and 93% have access to the Internet at home (Lenhart 2015; Madden et al. 2013). The figures are similar in other Western nations as indicated by the EU Kids Online report (2014), which collects data from 33 European countries and reported that youth ages 11–16 years are beginning to use digital media at younger ages, that most have access to the Internet in their bedroom, and that 41% use a smart device to access the Internet (EU Kids Online 2014). As digital media have become an indispensable element of young people's geographies, it is important to understand the role they play during their development. To address these questions, this chapter begins by briefly describing the digital landscape and then presenting the developmental framework that we will use to describe the implications of media for youth. Given that most of the extant research has focused on older children between 13 and 17 years, this chapter focuses on this age group; following conventions in developmental psychology, we refer to the children as either adolescents or youth. In the latter part of the chapter, we examine how new digital contexts may relate to the development of sexuality and intimacy, which are fundamental issues during adolescence.

2 Digital Media: Form and Function

In this section, we briefly describe young people's digital geographies. The reader should note that this description is especially characteristic for youth living in technologically and economically more advanced countries (i.e., minority world).

Furthermore, the distinction between digital hardware and content is becoming more opaque, and so the type of application or content is more pertinent than the actual hardware or device from which it is accessed. Although youth use digital media for information, entertainment, and content creation, they primarily utilize them to communicate with their peers (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). It is unclear what the evolution of digital media will bring next, but the aforementioned report on European youth illustrated some of the more popular digital tools used in 2010 and 2014 (EU Kids Online 2014). Social media and instant messaging are the most prevalent, followed by watching video clips via platforms like YouTube. Yet even YouTube is frequently perceived as a form of communication or social media since youth share their stories and feelings with a network in a video-blog-type fashion. However, youth are far more likely to consume content posted on social media than to create content, and this has implications for understanding media's relation to development (Burke et al. 2010). It is ironical that parents often offer digital media as tools for school work, but youth are far more likely to report that they use them for communication or entertainment than for homework (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012).

Social media are a set of digital tools that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Typically, users create public and/or private profiles as well as develop social networks, with which they exchange information, ideas, pictures, and videos. Of course the nature of the interaction depends on the particular features afforded by a specific platform. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, and YouTube are all examples of social media platforms that are widely used by adolescents in Western countries within the minority world. Often the user base of a particular social media form varies based on factors such as age, ethnicity, and geographic location (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). For example, Facebook is not accessible in China, Syria, or Iran, and young people in China use alternative platforms such as Youku, Renren, and Sina Weibo, which are similar in nature to the aforementioned Western platforms (Qiu et al. 2013). These trends suggest that adolescents gravitate toward social media platforms where they can find peers with whom they can relate. Another popular application is instant messaging, which allows the exchange of private messages in real time among two or more users. Although it was initially an application on its own, nowadays it is integrated with other social media such as Facebook or even e-mail (e.g., Facebook Messenger, Gchat). Like other forms of digital communication, early versions used text-based messaging, but current versions allow for the exchange of more sophisticated content such as emoticons, images, and videos. Research indicates that adolescents use instant messaging to discuss day-to-day topics with their friends (Gross 2004). Blogging, microblogging, and video blogging are another form of social media but are distinct in that they are not used primarily for the purpose of communication or building social networks. Blogs consist of discrete entries, often referred to as posts, which are most frequently displayed in reverse chronological order – that is, the newer posts are seen first. The content of blogs are diverse and can include personal information and updates, entertainment, health, news, and politics. Similar to instant messaging, blogs started as text based but have moved toward including different

modes of content such as images and videos. The prevalence of video-based content has given rise to video blogs. Another variant is microblogs, such as Twitter, which limits users to brief messages containing 140 characters, individual images, or links. Twitter is used less frequently by adolescents compared to other forms of social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat (Lenhart 2015).

Text messaging, also known as texting, is another popular digital tool used by youth. Texting enables the exchange of short messages usually via mobile devices, often independent of social media platforms. In one study, 14- to 19-year-old adolescents reported that they spent just as much time texting as they did in face-to-face communication and that their social life would be substantially limited without it (Harris Interactive 2008).

Online gaming and virtual worlds blur the lines between entertainment and social media. Online gaming is a broad category with regard to design and functionality, but the defining characteristic is the ability to interact with others online, not the pattern of gameplay itself. Games range from first-person shooter games, real-time strategy games, to massively multiplayer online games. Extant research has mostly examined games in connection with addiction or excessive use, aggression, and psychological well-being, topics that are beyond the scope of this chapter (see Griffiths et al. 2015; Ferguson et al. 2011; Seok and DaCosta 2012).

To better understand the role of digital communication in adolescents' development, it is important to consider the characteristics of these new communication contexts as compared to traditional face-to-face interactions. Disembodiment and anonymity are key elements of the digital landscape (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). Face-to-face cues such as body information and language, as well as facial expressions, are mostly absent in digital communication, making users disembodied. At the same time, audio, pictures, and images as well as video enable the sharing of some information relating to the body and the self. Additionally, there are cues relevant to digital communication such as response time or content that offer subtleties, which are similar to those found in face-to-face interactions. Anonymity was similarly more common in the early digital platforms that were largely text based and users could control the amount of identity information they shared; but many newer digital tools require identifiers (such as first and last name and e-mail address), which has greatly diminished online anonymity. Although online disembodiment and anonymity are more nuanced today, there remain blogs, microblogs, and virtual worlds (e.g., reddit, Second Life) which enable adolescents to be disembodied and anonymous. There is evidence that the anonymity afforded by a digital platform may moderate youths' disinhibition and self-disclosure, key elements of youth identity and intimacy development (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012).

3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this chapter draws from a seminal paper by psychologist John P. Hill regarding adolescent development. Although this form of theoretical framework originating in developmental psychology has not commonly been

used in research on children's and youth geographies, it nevertheless has the potential to enhance understandings of important issues and themes for research in this area. In his work, Hill (1983) noted that adolescence is a period of considerable biological, cognitive, and social change. Furthermore, he proposed that to understand adolescent development, research must consider the fundamental changes, adolescent psychosocial tasks (e.g., intimacy, sexuality, autonomy, achievement, and identity), and key contexts in which these changes occur (Hill 1983; Steinberg 2008). The psychosocial or developmental tasks are not universal; they depend on the sociocultural context in which they unfold (Havighurst 1972). Thus, the importance of sexuality, identity, intimacy, and autonomy during adolescence is especially true of individuals living in the minority world. Within such a psychological framework, the emphasis is on individualistic advancements as well as the socio-cultural contexts within which they occur. Developmental scholars have stressed the importance of adolescents' social contexts including peer groups, families, and schools for their psychosocial development. The peer group becomes increasingly critical during adolescence (Brown 2004), and some have suggested that digital media should be considered as another social context in which peer relationships develop (Subrahmanyam et al. 2006). As this chapter shows, digital contexts present adolescents in the minority world with opportunities to interact with peers, advance intimate relationships, and develop their sexuality (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012).

Given the interactive nature of digital media, users are in effect constructing and shaping their digital contexts. In other words, young people create their own online contexts and communities, which then shape the digital culture and behavior within. Therefore, users construct and co-construct their digital contexts in a cyclical fashion. Subrahmanyam et al. (2006) referred to this as the "co-construction model" of online contexts, and we adopt it as an additional theoretical framework for this chapter. Given that online contexts are co-constructed by users, Subrahmanyam et al. (2006) predicted that youths' online and offline experiences will be psychologically connected. Such a connectedness perspective was a departure from earlier theories of media influences, such as the media effects approach and the uses and gratifications theory. According to the media effects approach, media content directly influenced users' affect, cognition, and behaviors (e.g., Bandura et al. 1961). In contrast, the uses and gratifications theory proposed that people use media for different reasons (e.g., for information or entertainment), and it is their intent which predicts the nature of media use (Blumler and Katz 1974). Although the media effects approach is not very relevant to interactive digital media, the uses and gratifications theory has some application to digital media use, since research has shown that how and why youth use digital media can predict the associated outcomes (Burke et al. 2010). Adopting the co-construction framework, Subrahmanyam and colleagues (2006) have suggested that themes from adolescent development can be used to inform the study of youth's digital worlds. The sections below adopt this approach to examine how two key themes of adolescence – sexuality and intimacy – are played out in the digital sphere.

4 Sexuality Online

A key psychosocial task facing adolescents is adjusting to their developing sexuality. Adolescence is not the only phase when sexuality is relevant, but it is during this period that it becomes especially momentous. Adolescents are often occupied with an increased sex drive, associated cognitions, as well as corresponding behaviors, and they are faced with constructing their sexual selves (Steinberg 2008). Research suggests that adolescent sexual development may be associated with the context in which it occurs, just as with other aspects of development (Steinberg 2008). Although puberty and the sexual changes that occur with puberty are universal, the timing and particular sexual activities or behaviors that occur vary in different regions of the world. Most of the research on adolescent sexuality has been done on the youth in the minority world, and the reader should keep this in mind given that there are variations in sexual development in different regions of the world.

The evolution of sexuality is largely shaped by peers and romantic partners; this is not surprising since peer relations also become increasingly important during adolescence in most sociocultural contexts. Peers influence social norms, offer information, and support when it comes to the construction of one's sexual self and subsequent sexual behaviors. There are gender norms and perceptions within peer groups however. Males explain that those to whom they report their first sexual experience, typically male peers, are overwhelmingly approving; and girls are more likely to receive disapproval or mixed feelings from their peers (Steinberg 2008). Although adolescents typically explored sexuality within the context of romantic relationships, in recent years there has been a disassociation between the two, at least in Western contexts. Digital media have enabled the disassociation as they provide opportunities for sexual exploration; for instance, Czech adolescents in one study reported engaging in their first sexual experience online (Šmahel 2003). Other research has shed light on youths' use of digital media in the service of their developing sexuality. Through a systematic examination of US-based online chat rooms for adolescents, Subrahmanyam and colleagues (2006) found that sexual comments were very frequent, at the rate of one a minute. Many of the digital conversations were comprised of sexual themes, and up to 20% of all nicknames were sexualized in some form or another (Subrahmanyam et al. 2006). Within online contexts, sexualized nicknames may serve a similar function as the offline behavior of wearing provocative clothing. Another form of digital exploration is accessing pornography and sexually explicit content, and it is noteworthy that adolescents are the largest consumers of online pornography (Peter and Valkenburg 2006); given the concerns raised about youths' use of pornography, this topic is examined in a separate section below.

4.1 Establishing the Sexual Self

In Western contexts, the transition from childhood to adulthood is marked by an emphasis on autonomy, and adolescents strive to establish their roles in society

independent of parental supervision (Steinberg 2008). They are also faced with the task of establishing a sense of self- or a personal identity (Erikson 1968), which includes the sexual self. As noted in the earlier section, adolescents have to adjust to the physical and sexual changes brought on by puberty and negotiate the development of their sexualities. In-depth analysis of online adolescent health forums in English suggest that adolescents use the anonymous venues to obtain information related to their sexual health and to develop their sexual selves (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). Online health contexts might be especially valuable for youth in the majority world, who do not have access to offline health resources. For instance, in a study of 15- to 18-year-olds living in Accra, Ghana, 53% reported that they had searched for health information online, and the most frequently searched topics included sexually transmitted diseases and sexual abuse, along with diet/nutrition, fitness, and exercise (Borzekowski et al. 2006).

Accessing pornography or sexually explicit content is another means of obtaining sexual information as well as achieving sexual arousal and is discussed in a separate section. In addition to the development of one's sexual self, adolescents need to develop a sense of autonomy particularly from their parents and families. One way they may accomplish this is by engaging in sexual behavior since having a sexual relationship is a reflection of adult-like independence. Some scholars have suspected that because some of the traditional markers of adulthood may be delayed in technologically more advanced settings within the minority world (e.g., having one's own home or income tends to come later in life), adolescents within those contexts may feel pressured to become sexually active at a younger age (Steinberg 2008; Gray and Steinberg 1999; Arnett 2000; Miller and Fox 1987). Perhaps youths' consumption of pornography represents the development of autonomy symbolically in the absence of an actual sexual relationship. Evidence for this possibility comes from Peter and Valkenburg's (2006) finding that Dutch girls who did not engage in sexual behavior consumed more pornography than their more sexually experienced peers.

Chat rooms are not as prevalent as they once were, and newer digital contexts enable interactions using text, as well as pictures and videos. Not surprisingly, youth have developed new ways of exploring their sexuality within these contexts. One such behavior that has received widespread attention in the minority world is sexting, which is the "distribution of text messages, one's own photographs, or one's own video with sexual content, which occurs via virtual electronic media, especially the Internet" (Kopecky 2012, p. 39). Survey data suggested that at least 20% of US and European adolescents have shared or posted nude or semi-nude pictures or videos of themselves (Livingstone et al. 2011; National Campaign to prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and Cosmogirl.com 2008).

Although the electronic exchange of sexually infused content may well be a manifestation of adolescents' developing sexuality, it is worth examining their perception, predictors of the behavior, as well as the relationship to sociocultural norms. For instance, data on 14,946 adolescents, between the ages of 11 and 16 years, suggests that time spent online and age were predictive of sexting across many European countries (Baumgartner et al. 2014). Specifically, more time spent online and older ages were predictive of increased sexting behaviors. With regard to perceptions about sexting,

a Western-based survey showed that some adolescents viewed sending nude images to romantic partners or others as being harmless and risk-free (National Campaign to prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and Cosmogirl.com 2008). Yet, sexting can present significant risks for youth, and in some countries, youth who engage in sexting run the risk of being charged with producing, possessing, and transmitting child pornography, which could result in felony convictions, lengthy prison sentences, as well as being registered as a sex offender. In 2008 and 2009, US law enforcement handled 3477 cases involving sexting, and in Australia, at least 32 teenagers were charged with child pornography-related offenses (Battersby 2008; Porter 2008). Although the legal implications of engaging in sexting behavior are serious depending on the country (more so in Western countries), many youth and their families are not fully aware of the risks (see Moran-Ellis 2012).

Research examining the function of sexting and its relation to well-being is sparse, and the results are mixed. There is speculation that sexting is a reflection of an intention to engage in offline sexual behavior. That is, adolescents may begin to engage their potential partner with risqué content, and this behavior may lead to sex offline (Rice et al. 2012). One cross-sectional study on adolescents and young adults found sexting to be associated with sexual risks such as sexually transmitted infections and unexpected pregnancies (Rice et al. 2012). A different cross-sectional study completed on emerging adults found no association between sexting behavior and well-being and/or sexual risk (Gordon-Messer et al. 2013). Sexting not only includes sharing nude photos of oneself with intimate partners but can also include the distribution of a peer's nude photos to other peers with or without consent. In one prominent case that occurred in the USA, a youth shared her nude image, and a peer disseminated the content to many others, which left her feeling so humiliated that she committed suicide (Toutant 2009).

Although digital media may provide useful tools for youth's exploration of sexuality and the development of the sexual self, there are clear dangers when these tasks are not pursued carefully. One's well-being, reputation, worldview, and social status may all be at risk. Given the social costs and the legal implications, an important issue is whether sexting and other related activities need to be sanctioned or whether they are a vital part of sexual development for adolescents in Western contexts. Since most reports on sexting are anecdotal, there is a clear need for additional empirical studies to assess how widespread it is in non-Western contexts and to examine its relation to development.

4.2 Sexually Explicit Content Online

The Internet has made pornographic or sexually explicit content significantly easier to access for individuals of all ages and therefore more likely to be relevant in development. Given adolescents' inexperience and developing sexual identity, it is feared that exposure to such content could distort their understanding of sexual norms and healthy behavior, especially if the exposure was unintentional (Greenfield 2004; Lo und Wei 2005; Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). Others have argued that

such exposure is an important part of sex education, particularly when actual experience is not adequate (Watson and Smith 2012). Research has found that adolescents' exposure to sexual media was predictive of sexual uncertainty, favorable attitudes toward sexual behavior outside of committed relationships, sexual objectification, sexual preoccupation, reduced sexual satisfaction, and sexual behavior at earlier ages (see Peter and Valkenburg 2006, 2009). Contextual variables specific to adolescence have been omitted from much of this research, but one study found that the negative relationship between pornography consumption and satisfaction was stronger for those who believed that their peers were sexually inexperienced (Peter and Valkenburg 2009). Along similar lines, peer groups discuss and shape their friends' consumption of pornographic content found online (Peter and Valkenburg 2009). Longitudinal research is necessary to understand the direction of influence between adolescents' use of sexually explicit pornographic material and sexual satisfaction and related variables. Furthermore, much of the research on youth use of pornography has been done in the Netherlands; even within the minority world, the Dutch hold much more liberal attitudes about sex as related to youth, and readers should keep this in mind when considering the implications of young people's exposure to sexually explicit content.

4.3 Sexual Minority Youth

Although it is clear that Western and European youth use the Internet to negotiate their developing sexuality and to construct their sexual selves, it is becoming apparent that digital technologies may present both opportunities and risks for those who may be struggling to come to terms with their sexual identity, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning (LGBQ) youth. These youth often feel ostracized and stigmatized due to their sexuality and identity and have been found to be at increased risk for health disparities, psychopathology, and poor psychosocial adjustment (Mustanski et al. 2014a). LGB youth, just like their non-LGB peers, need to accept their strong feelings of sexual arousal, and, the digital landscape offers a number of opportunities and resources to deal with their developing sexuality (Magee et al. 2012). The Internet is a treasure trove of sexual health information, and can serve as an important resource, especially as many school-based sexual education programs lack information about LGB sexual health (Magee et al. 2012). Similarly, sexually explicit content found online may help LGB youth develop a better understanding of their sexual attraction (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). Such content could help to validate their sexual feelings as normative in the face of stigma and thus help to promote healthy sexual development for LGB youth.

Connecting and interacting with online communities can also help LGB adolescents explore their identities as well as cope with the stigma they face. Coming to terms with one's sexual orientation is critical for self-acceptance and is related to well-being. Indeed, Savin-Williams (2005) suggested that the trend toward revealing one's sexuality earlier in life may be attributable to the growth and availability of virtual support and communities. Moreover, openness and transparency with one's

LGB identity was indicative of higher self-esteem and lower levels of depression, suggesting that online presentation of sexual identity may have the potential to buffer LGB adolescents from poor outcomes (Kosciw et al. 2014). In other words, digital media can offer a more controlled and safe environment for LGB youth to explore and develop their identities.

Although digital media present opportunities for sexual minority youth, there are risks as well. LGB youth often utilize digital tools like smartphone applications (e.g., Tinder, Hornet, Grindr) to meet sexual partners. Thus, digital tools present an important opportunity since these youth are often physically isolated from potential romantic partners. At the same time, there is some concern that using these digital tools can be risky and related to poor sexual health (Bauermeister et al. 2014; Liau et al. 2006). Alternatively, some speculate that the likelihood of making poor sexual health decisions may be a separate factor from how sexual partners are met (Mustanski et al. 2011). In other words, it may not be the accessibility offered by digital media but other risk-related factors. One survey reported that LGB adolescents were more likely to engage in sexting when compared to their heterosexual peers, likely attributable to their isolation (Rice et al. 2012). There is some concern that isolated LGB youth may be at an increased risk for online sexual solicitation due to reduced access to interested and similarly aged peers.

Gender identity and expression are distinct from sexuality, but transgender and gender-nonconforming youth utilize digital media in ways that are similar to their sexual minority peers (DeHaan et al. 2013). Nevertheless, accepting one's gender identity and navigating the intersectionality with sexuality is indeed predictive of well-being as well as sexual health (Mustanski et al. 2014b). Yet, coming to terms with one's gender identity can be particularly challenging due to the exposure to stigma-related stressors and the subsequent mental health consequences (Clark et al. 2014; Mustanski et al. 2014a). Complicating matters, transgender and gender-nonconforming young people often lack social support and therefore feel especially isolated (Simons et al. 2013). These issues can be somewhat ameliorated by digital media as they help provide access to social support and health-based resources and information, as well as a sense of belonging (DeHaan et al. 2013). The availability of health-related information may be critical for transgender youth, given the need to examine the risks and benefits of treatments including pubertal suppression, hormone replacement therapy, and gender reassignment surgery (see Tishelman et al. 2015). Furthermore, the depiction of transgender and gender-nonconforming people in both traditional and digital media may help young people feel less isolated and stigmatized, which in turn complements their ability to develop their identity (McInroy and Craig 2015).

In sum, digital media have become an important social context in the lives of youth, especially those living in Western and wealthier areas of the world. Like other social contexts such as the family and the peer group, these new digital social contexts have become relevant for development of adolescents' sexuality and gender identity. Youth use these contexts as tools to explore sexuality, develop a sexual self, cope with new and powerful sexual feelings, engage in sexual behavior, and access sexual health content. Their online sexual pursuits are reflective of their offline lives

and needs, and digital tools present unique opportunities for LGB youth who may otherwise lack access to information and support in their offline lives. However, it is important to keep in mind that although digital contexts may provide many opportunities to experiment and learn, sexuality is fundamentally tied to our bodies, and thus most sexual experimentation will have to occur offline for healthy development (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). These tools are also utilized by transgender and gender-nonconforming youth to access health-related content and resources, obtain much needed support, and explore and develop gender identities.

5 Intimacy Online

Adolescence is a time when friends and romantic partners become increasingly important in young people's lives. The shift toward more peer-based interactions tends to reflect the development of autonomy, communication, and interpersonal experiences (Brown 2004). In line with these increased needs, adolescents develop the ability to engage in intimate relationships by being open and honest and self-disclosing personal information. Self-disclosure appears to be a key factor as it allows adolescents to acquire much needed feedback from their peers which enables them to cope with issues that they face. Reflecting the increased importance of peers at this point, youth spend increasing amounts of time with peers, and peer networks such as cliques and crowds play a vital role in the development of intimacy and identity (Steinberg 2008). Consistent with their growing dependence on friends and romantic partners, peers are among the most important sources of social support (Brown 2004). Despite a rising need for peer-based support, the life of friendships may be reduced during adolescence. This may be because adolescents often choose friends who are similar to them and engage in the same activities, for better or worse. Yet adolescence is also a time of change and transformation, and so, as their identities and interests evolve, so do their friends and other peer networks.

5.1 Digital Media and Peer Relations

Peer communication is one of the most popular digital activities for youth of all ages and across the world (Lebom et al. 2013). Research now reveals that for US adolescents, online interactions are mostly with their offline peers, suggesting that they may be using digital tools to sustain current relationships that were formed offline (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). An early study of middle school students in Los Angeles found that most reported interacting with offline friends via private mediums such as instant messaging and that the content was ordinary, yet intimate (e.g., gossip) (Gross 2004). In a subsequent study with a diverse sample of urban teens in Los Angeles, participants used social media to communicate with peers they see often (i.e., offline friends) while simultaneously using them to keep in touch with friends they did not see often (Reich et al. 2012). These researchers also found that there were gender differences in participants' use of social media. Girls were more

likely to utilize social media to maintain already formed relationships, whereas boys were more likely to use the tools to flirt or form new relationships. To examine exactly who they interact with, these researchers asked adolescents to report the top ten people they interact with online and offline. They found that although the lists overlapped, there was some variance, suggesting that online and offline lives are not exact replicas of one another (Reich et al. 2012). What contributes to the variance is not especially clear, but participants may have used different social media differently and to service different developmental needs. For example, adolescents may use text messaging to interact with closer peers, social media platforms to stay connected with less intimate peers, and offline interactions for social support.

5.2 Costs and Benefits of Digital Interactions

There are a number of approaches when it comes to examining the costs and benefits associated with digital communication. The literature on minority world adolescents suggests that they are very willing to share personal information online and offer social support (Cerna and Smahel 2009). As such, a number of studies have explored the potential for virtual communities to play a supportive role for adolescents (Cerna and Smahel 2009; Dolev-Cohen and Barak 2013). Alternatively, some researchers have found negative relationships between online communication and well-being (Koles and Nagy 2012). One theory called the “rich-get-richer” phenomenon explains that adolescents with high-quality offline social networks were more likely to benefit from online communication (Kraut 2002; Davis 2012). Another framework is called the social compensation hypothesis, which posits that the digital context facilitates relationship formation, especially when youth struggle to form meaningful offline relationships (Peter et al. 2005). In line with the notion of a supportive virtual community, many researchers have found that digital interactions were predictive of increased social support, reduced social anxiety, improved self-esteem, and less social isolation (Davis 2012; Dolev-Cohen and Barak 2013). Contrary to these findings, others have found no relation between online communication and well-being (Gross 2004; Jelenchick et al. 2013). These mixed findings indicate that there could be a number of factors moderating the relation between digital interactions and well-being including methodology and assessment of media time and activities, the particular ways that digital tools are utilized (i.e., passive use versus active use), as well as the context in which they are used. It should be kept in mind again that the majority of this research has been with Western and European youth, and we know very little about the extent and implications of peer digital communication among youth in the majority world.

Social support offered online has been found to relate to a number of benefits for adolescents including better emotional support, self-disclosure, and therefore the development of intimacy, as well as reduced social anxiety (Quinn and Oldmeadow 2012). However, there is some concern that accessing social support online may lead to peer contagion. For example, an adolescent may be struggling with an eating disorder and therefore seek support online, but instead of finding support, he or she

may find a pro-anorexia site that validates the problematic behavior. Moreover, some sources of supposed support may encourage unhealthy coping mechanisms such as avoidance of professional help (Cerna and Smahel 2009).

An important question is whether the relation between digital media use and associated outcomes varies based on whether it is used for communication or not. One study with Taiwanese youth revealed that communicative activities were indicative of better well-being (Hwang et al. 2009). Similarly, the use of social media to engage a community was associated with an increased sense of belongingness (Quinn and Oldmeadow 2012) among Dutch youth. Social capital gains were also found to relate to online communication, and these findings suggest that offline gains may be attributable to online networking (Ahn 2012). Alternatively, a large Taiwanese study reported increased depressive mood among adolescents who used digital tools to socialize, but no such relation was found when digital media were used for noncommunicative purposes (e.g., entertainment) (Vandoninck et al. 2011). Counter to these findings, other researchers have found that online social networking could ameliorate issues associated with loneliness due to the accessibility of social support (Jelenchick et al. 2013). Overall the findings from these studies conducted in a few different countries suggest that youths' digital communicative activities may be positive associated with well-being.

Some scholars have examined the relation between social capital and digital media use. Part of the interest is attributable to the fact that social capital is related to a number of positive outcomes such as better overall health (Adler and Kwon 2002). Social capital is often described as a sum of resources that an individual gathers as a result of having a durable and meaningful social network, whether actual or virtual. However, there are two different forms of social capital: bridging and bonding capital (Putnam 2000). Relationships that can provide information, but not emotional support, are defined as bridging social capital (Putnam 2000). Given the nature of the Internet and virtual social ties, much work has been done on how digital media relates to bridging capital, but there is far less work done on bonding capital (Williams 2006). One unclear feature is how social capital is created when online and offline relationships are tied together, as is often the case for adolescents. One of the most pertinent variables in this discussion centers on the quality of online relationships.

Complicating matters, there are different kinds of online relationships. Research suggests that the youth use social media both for maintaining offline relationships as well as developing new friends (Ellison et al. 2006). An important question is how meaningful are relationships that simply occur online? Friendship quality is often described as a sum of perceived closeness, trust, and a certain understanding of each other. Researchers have examined the quality of online versus offline friendships and demonstrated that online friendships are often described as being lower in quality (Mesch and Talmud 2007). However, time together was also indicative of friendship quality, so much so that the reported variance between quality of online versus offline friendships was diminished when enough time was spent in the online friendship (Chan and Cheng 2004).

Thus it is possible that online friendships are not as meaningful as offline ones, but the research has not consistently defined an online friend. Some research has

defined friends by where they originate (Mesch and Talmud 2007). Thus, friends from relationships that begin online are treated as online friends, and those from interactions that begin offline are treated as offline friends. But in actuality, friendships may not be so distinct. Friendships that originate online may migrate to offline contexts or vice versa. Because the definition of an online friend is unclear, the findings are also not very consistent. The possibility of the friendships occurring online and offline simultaneously has also not been taken into account by many researchers. Antheunis et al. (2012) found that offline friends were the most meaningful but also found that mixed-mode friendships (ones that started online but migrated offline) were similar in quality. These results indicated that where the friendship started may not be as critical as the medium of communication. A number of other factors influence the quality of friendship, including proximity and commonalities (Antheunis et al. 2012). Ultimately, findings have shown that having online friends can increase one's perception of social support, offer an opportunity for emotional relief, increase social integration, offer an opportunity to explore one's identity, and extend one's social capital by helping to form a wider network (Ahn 2012; Dolev-Cohen and Barak 2013).

Although the youth use digital tools to interact with peers, not all their peer interactions are positive, and electronic means are often used to harass their peers. Cyberbullying is often described as aggression that is intentional, repeated, and typically carried out via a digital media against someone who may have trouble defending themselves (Kowalski et al. 2014). Although reported prevalence rates of digital victimization are quite varied, they generally range from 10% to 40% (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). Researchers have reported that electronic victimization may be especially malicious since the victim cannot escape the attacks, thousands of peers may witness it, and the content may be relatively permanent (Kowalski et al. 2014). Findings suggest that electronic peer victimization is related to a number of poor outcomes such as anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, and suicidal ideation (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). Moreover, offline victimization is highly correlated with online victimization (Kowalski et al. 2014), which is also consistent with the co-construction theoretical framework.

Another concern is that digital media provide new ways for youth to engage in problematic behavior, such as substance abuse, aggression, and rule breaking. Adolescent beliefs and behaviors are shaped by peer relationships, and this may be especially true when it comes to problematic or antisocial behavior (Dishion und Patterson 2006). Moreover, they tend to interact with other peers who are likely to engage in such antisocial behavior (see Ehreulich et al. 2014). Indeed, one of the best predictors of engaging in problematic behavior is the association with deviant peers (Brehwald and Prinstein 2011). In light of this, digital tools may magnify peer influence because they allow the youth to be in constant contact with their peers. Because of its popularity and discrete nature, text messaging may be the ideal medium for such influences. Covert antisocial behaviors are often coordinated by peers in a discrete fashion (e.g., via text messaging) (Dishion and Patterson 2006). Indeed covert behavior, such as relational peer victimization, becomes more prominent during adolescence. A cross-sectional study of adolescents' text messages

found that text messaging about problematic behavior was predictive of antisocial behavior (Ehreneich et al. 2014). It is unclear whether digital media are actually increasing the likelihood of engaging in antisocial behavior or are presenting an easy opportunity for youth who may be already inclined to do so, but it is certainly a useful tool. Additional research which measures and tracks the development of antisocial behavior over time is needed to clarify the role of digital tools in problematic behavior. This research has primarily been conducted in the minority world, and very little is known about how the youth in other contexts use digital tools for peer harassment and other antisocial behaviors.

A common theme in the foregoing is that digital media simultaneously offer both risks and opportunities to the youth. They can be used to maintain and improve social relations and therefore bolster their well-being. Alternatively, the cost of using digital media may reduce social well-being or increase the risk of being victimized online (Pea et al. 2012; Kowalski et al. 2014). Digital tools certainly have the capacity to allay difficulties while concurrently placing adolescents at risk. More research needs to be done in order to determine the personal or contextual factors that may predict whether a youth can benefit, or not, from the use of digital tools.

5.3 Romantic Pursuits and Digital Media

Romantic relationships are key to the development of intimacy during adolescence. Sexual and romantic relationships are especially intense during this phase, but they do not always develop concurrently (Miller and Benson 1999). Social and cultural contexts influence adolescent romantic relationships; for example, the age at which one starts dating is largely determined by what is culturally acceptable rather than physical maturity per se (Steinberg 2008). Nevertheless, findings suggest a clear trajectory of romantic relationships during adolescence – early dating is related to earlier sexual encounters and the number of encounters increases with age (Thornton 1990). Adolescents pursue romantic relationships in order to fulfill certain needs including the development of intimacy, autonomy, seeking safety and support, learning to love and interact, sharing validation, as well as physical and emotional satisfaction (Miller and Benson 1999). Since contexts tend to predict these behaviors, it is important to consider the potential role of digital media on romantic relationships.

Similar to friendships, adolescents utilize digital media to maintain and improve offline romantic relationships or establish strictly online relationships. Much of the discourse has been concerned with the relation between digital media and the quality as well as the development of romantic relationships. The disembodiment which sometimes comes with digital media may change self-presentation and thus make the interaction more about communication than physical attractiveness. As such, adolescents have reported that desirable qualities expressed via digital media include shared interests, proximity, and creativity, and unattractive qualities include passivity and aggressiveness (Šmahel and Vesela 2006; Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012). Digital tools may enable one to gather information about a potential partner's

desirable and less desirable qualities before the online interaction or meeting face to face. Although the exact prevalence of online romantic relationships at this point is not available, an earlier qualitative study on 16 Czech adolescents found that 13 of the youth reported using the Internet to find potential romantic partners (Šmahel 2003). Researchers have previously also found that requests for potential romantic partners were the most frequent utterances in the US-based English-speaking chat rooms that they examined (Subrahmanyam et al. 2006). It is possible that the nature of chat rooms may have influenced the way offline behaviors establish themselves online. For example, chat rooms were public spaces where participants were disembodied and could be anonymous, and this might have increased the frequency or type of romantically infused communication, that is, sending a request to chat versus offering validation to a prospective partner that one already has rapport with.

Online dating sites and applications (e.g., Tinder, OkCupid) are another new digital context within the minority world. The data are sparse with regard to how often teens actually use these platforms to form romantic relationships. Šmahel and colleagues surveyed 2215 European adolescents and found that 43% reported that they had used an online dating site sometimes and that 23% had interacted with potential partners via a digital platform (Unpublished data from the World Internet Project: Czech Republic). There were no gender differences, and older adolescents were more likely to report using an online dating service. Interestingly, survey respondents also reported an array of reasons for using the sites – 22% were pursuing a serious relationship, 64% were looking for something less serious, and 46% were looking for something strictly virtual. These findings illustrate that many adolescents employ digital tools to fulfill their need to explore, have fun, and to potentially cultivate relationships of varying degrees of seriousness. In line with the uses and gratification theory, reasons for using the tool may actually be the pertinent factor (Blumler and Katz 1974); that is, if the adolescent is looking for simple romantic interactions or an exchange of validation, digital tools may serve that need quite well.

Although there is limited research on the prevalence of online dating as well as the content of the interactions, some suspect that social skills and difficulties forming relationships may play a role in youths' decisions to use them. In line with the richer-get-richer hypothesis, these difficulties will likely be overcome by socially adept adolescents, especially if they are interacting both online and offline with the partner (Kraut 2002). On the other hand, consistent with the social compensation hypothesis, those who experience difficulties forming romantic relationships, due to shyness or lack of access to partners, may actually benefit the most from digital tools (Peter et al. 2005). The perceived ease of disclosing information online may facilitate intimacy and attraction and may be particularly helpful for those with lower social skills. Likewise, the Internet offers access to a wide array of potential partners, and this can also be valuable if an adolescent is seeking a particular type of person. Opportunities like these would be especially critical to the formation of intimacy among sexual minority youth. One cross-sectional study surveyed 5091 US adolescents and found that those who identified as LGBTQ were more likely to have recently formed an online romantic relationship than their non-LGBTQ peers

(Korchmaros et al. 2015). Thus, it appears that digital romance, like online dating, may benefit those who struggle to form meaningful relationships offline (as suggested by the social compensation hypothesis) as well as those who do not struggle and can therefore overcome some of the barriers associated with digital communication (as suggested by the rich-get-richer hypothesis).

Digital tools have quite clearly widened adolescent's social networks and enabled them to keep in touch with friends and romantic partners alike. These tools have even afforded the formation of new relationships with peers from all over the world. There has been considerable concern surrounding the contact with strangers online, but at the time of writing this chapter, youth have been found to mostly communicate with peers they already know. Although digital tools undoubtedly allow adolescents in the minority world to develop intimacy with peers as well as romantic partners and autonomy from their parents, there are mixed results with regard to how these tools may relate to their social well-being. We know very little about how the youth in the majority world use digital tools for interaction and intimacy, and this is a pressing area for future research.

6 Conclusion

Given the ubiquitous nature of digital media in the lives of children and adolescents in the minority world, one expects that they will be an important influence in youth development. Yet, it has been somewhat difficult to get a clear picture since new technologies are capricious, and the popularity of the specific platforms used by youth keeps changing. Regardless, survey data suggest that adolescents use digital media largely to communicate and interact with their peers (EU Kids Online 2014; Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012; Subrahmanyam et al. 2008). It also appears that the particular communication affordance of a digital tool influences how they are used. Thus, within anonymous contexts, adolescents may be more likely to self-disclose online due to elements of disembodiment or disinhibition (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel 2012).

Understanding adolescents' development requires an appreciation of the context in which it occurs (Steinberg 2008). An important context during adolescence is the peer group (Brown 2004). Digital media have become a significant part of US and European adolescents' social context given that they allow youth to interact with their peers as well as romantic partners. Research also suggests that adolescents use these new media in the service of their developing sexuality and intimacy. Digital media seem to be particularly helpful when it comes to developing the sexual self and coping with the associated adjustment. They enable adolescents to learn about their maturing bodies while maintaining anonymity. Yet there are risks associated with youth accessing sexually explicit content and engaging in sexting behavior. These affordances and risks seem to be even more pronounced for sexual minority youth. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done to understand the implications of adolescent online sexual exploration, particularly as to whether exposure to sexual content may shape perceptions and behavior as well as how sexting may be predictive

of poor youth outcomes. Along with sexuality, intimacy and peer relations become especially salient during adolescence (Brown 2004). Survey data suggest that adolescents in the minority world utilize digital tools to stay in touch with their peers they already know as well as to form new relationships. It seems that digital media allow youth who are already thriving to thrive more but may also empower youth who are struggling socially by providing a new venue for interactions (Kraut 2002; Peter et al. 2005). At the same time research suggests that digital media are associated with positive outcomes such as increased social support (Dolev-Cohen and Barak 2013) as well as reduced social well-being (Pea et al. 2012). Similarly, digital media offer the ability to enrich current relationships (Cerna and Smahel 2009; Dolev-Cohen and Barak 2013), but there is also the risk of being victimized online (Kowalski et al. 2014).

These mixed results illustrate the broad and complex geographies of digital media use. Bear in mind also that they are mostly from work in the minority world, and the literature is silent with regard to how youth in the majority world use digital media for sexuality and intimacy. Regardless, it appears that different youth use these tools for many different reasons. Context and individual variables likely contribute to differences in use and potential effects. Also, adolescents are seemingly expanding their social networks, but it is unclear how this may influence their offline relationships. For example, is the notion and meaning of a friend changing due to the public nature of peer interaction on social media as well as the accessibility of peer-based information? Is there really a clear difference when it comes to the quality of support offered via digital media versus offline means, or have the findings been distorted by the varying ways in which support are measured? Perhaps adolescents are more concerned with the number of friends they have as opposed to the quality of these friendships. Alternatively, the ability to easily self-disclose online may actually contribute to more meaningful relationships. At a theoretical level, it is somewhat counterintuitive that both the rich-get-richer hypothesis and the social compensation hypothesis are supported by research on adolescent digital interactions (Kraut 2002; Davis 2012; Korchmaros et al. 2015). Thus, the challenge for researchers is to better understand how digital interaction might actually mediate youth development.

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Abstract

This chapter provides a critical overview of the debates on how new developments in the digital age, such as forms of social media, specifically social networking sites, are influencing the social, cultural, and geographical dimensions of young people's friendships. As a distinctive aspect of young people's lives, friendships are regarded as sites of companionship, support, and at times intimacy but can also be fraught with anxieties or difficulties. Social networking sites are new technological platforms that exist explicitly to facilitate the practice of friendship. However, there are diverse opinions in both the scholarly and popular literature on the extent to which these sites and other forms of social media are transforming the nature and meaning of contemporary friendship. A range of commentators also debate in sometimes quite polarizing terms whether the net effects of these new social media are positive and negative. This chapter explores how social media practices shape friendship for young people and argues that it is unproductive to take a binaristic view of the effects of

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social media as young people in the digital age are diverse in the ways they “do” friendship and in the ways they mobilize newer social resources that have opened up to them.

Keywords

Friendship · Social networking · Social network sites · Young people

1 Introduction

Young people in the twenty-first century are experiencing a rapidly changing technological landscape. One of the most significant developments of recent decades has been the growth in digital electronic technologies that have transformed patterns of human communication, both in terms of the range hardware products available (e.g., laptops, smartphones, tablet devices, smart watches) and applications such as Whatsapp, Viber, Skype, and Hike messenger as well as a diverse range social networking sites. The extensive use of these technologies by young people has, in turn, spawned a great deal of attention to their growing influence and impact on young people’s lives, identities, and relationalities. Broadly speaking, these digital spaces foster interactions that are interpersonal and draw on norms of everyday interaction in an online setting, norms which have both similarities and differences with the past. For example, if in earlier decades it was common for young people to have a “pen friend” or “pen pal,” where one would write letters via postal mail to a friend across a geographical distance with whom one rarely or never interacted in person, young people now often utilize digital spaces such as chat rooms and social media sites which are used to forge and maintain friendships albeit with a transformation in immediacy of communication and potentially bridging greater geographical boundaries. These technologies of communication indicate that it is possible, perhaps now more than ever, to conduct friendships across distances (Ellison et al. 2007), thus bridging social and geographical gaps. Yet paradoxically, these same technologies have been critiqued for exacerbating difference and promoting narcissistic and shallow associations. As Miller (2011, p. 167) highlights in his discussion of one highly popular social media platform, Facebook, “In conversations about Facebook, there is a common theme that pertains to a fear of the modern. This is the fear that we are all becoming more superficial, that Facebook *friends* represent a kind of inflation that diminishes the value of prior or true friendship.” Miller, goes on to posit that conversely, “We can also theorize about how Facebook can proliferate friendship without diminishing it by observing that Facebook clearly provides greater efficiencies in friendship.” (ibid). By this token, social networking sites have become integral to the “doing of friendship” (Nayak 2013) by young people, especially in the current age of social media (Hampton et al. 2012) in which digital and new media technologies are changing the experience of young adulthood. The question, then, is not so much if social media is a major feature of many young people’s lives as this is largely acknowledged as a reality given the ubiquity of these

technologies across the world. Rather, an emerging question arises of how this technology “does” friendship and how could the latter be measured particularly in a period when the ambiguity surrounding what constitutes a friend is increasingly becoming topical.

While social media has become a staple of many young people’s lives internationally, there has been a range of pressing issues raised by the media and scholars in relation to young people. However, it could be said that the anxieties and fears surrounding young peoples’ use of social media overlooks the key desire for social connection and the electronic devices then are not an “addiction” but rather a means to an end – friendship. Given that world’s cultures are replete with stories of friendships, it is odd that this is as underrepresented as it is not simply in geography but in other disciplines. There are a few exceptions to this, for example in Leib’s (2010) theorization of friendship as a public policy concern. Leib makes a claim for friendship, arguing that as an institution much like marriage, it must be taken into more consideration by laws and legal institutions. He delineates a set of criteria, though not exhaustive, for potential use by legislators to aid in answering the question of what constitutes a friend. These are voluntariness, intimacy, trust, solidarity, exclusivity, reciprocity, warmth, mutual assistance, equality, duration over time, and conflict and modalities of conflict resolution. Of course, however, the meanings of “friend” and “friendship” vary both temporally and spatially, and no one set of criteria could be said to be universally applicable.

Michael Eve (2002) posits two reasons for the relative paucity of engagement with friendship in social and geographical sciences. The first of these involves the association of friendship with dyadic and informal relations, and the second concerns the nature of the modern world. In his view, the social structure of “traditional” societies was/is based on personal relations “where one is not supposed to ‘use’ friends, where the ideology of merit is strong, and ‘nepotism’ is disapproved of” (Eve 2002, p. 389). The suggestion made that friendship is simply a dyadic relationship is an approach that is criticized by Eve who focuses on its importance within a group context and chains of connections. To say then that social science has not critically engaged with friendship is to deny the existing work on this topic, which has in turn shed light on geographical dimensions of friendship (even if friendship has not been a major focus for geographers). Drawing on diverse disciplines, this chapter seeks to bring into view digital spaces in and through which friendships are made and maintained by young people.

2 Friendship in the Digital Age: The Debates

Digital technologies and social media sites have altered ideas of friendship and relationship practices for young people in innumerable ways. Existing research on this dynamic relationship between social media and young people is largely divided between optimistic and pessimistic accounts of the impact of these technologies on young people’s lives.

Friendship, as an interpersonal and, at times, intimate relationship, has received scarce scholarly attention particularly in human geography with the exception of a small number of studies (e.g., Bunnell et al. (2012); Neal and Vincent (2013)). For reasons discussed previously, friendship has also been relatively marginal to the mainstream sociological literature. There are new analytical windows opening up with the view to examining the temporal and spatial reconfigurations of social and human relations through digital forms and one of the ways in which this can productively take place in through the combination of the sociological discourses with work in social geography. An engagement with other perspectives and disciplines will offer a more complex and nuanced theorization of digital technologies in relation to human relations and geographies rather a binaristic view which either overstates or reduces the role of new media.

In *Born Digital*, John Galfrey and Urs Gasser (2008) identify three digital groups in their analysis of how friendship patterns have altered as a result of increased online activity:

1. *Digital natives*, composed of children who were born into and raised in the digital world;
2. *Digital settlers*, comprised of those who grew up in an analogue world but have helped shape the contours of digital environments; and
3. *Digital immigrants*, composed of those who have learned to use digital technologies later in life but who are not as highly dependent on this compared to their counterparts.

They argue that a clear distinction between online and offline world by and large does not apply to contemporary young people, classified as digital natives, as this is a group who have been born into and have grown in a digital world. They argue that their approaches to human relationships are different to digital settlers and immigrants in many ways, and friendship is just one relationship which is approached in a different manner. Since the launch of social networking site Facebook in 2004, and its rapid subsequent growth, social networking sites have come to fuel, document and detail millions of relationships globally. The explosion of Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Tumblr, Google +, Friends Reunited, Gaydar, and Instagram, VK, and Weibo, to name some key examples, has been widely acknowledged as platforms widely engaged with by young people (Livingstone and Brake 2010; Nayak and Kehily 2013) to facilitate forms of self-representation, peer interactions, and hubs of interpersonal communications. Both smaller-scale qualitative studies and larger-scale surveys conducted in diverse contexts are largely in agreement that social media has become deeply embedded in the lives of young people. Yet, the bulk of studies into social network sites and friendship have focused predominantly on adolescent groups. Boyd's (2008) ethnographic study was an important contribution to youth studies and practices in relation to social media use but was confined to users under 18 years of age. There is also an emerging body of research on the relationship between digital technologies and ethnicity, race, and religion (Everett 2009; Nakamura and Chow-White 2013). However, there remains a limited

understanding of the multidimensional relationship between online “life” and practices and their merging into physical spaces which has significant implications for geographers and other social scientists today.

Moreover, there have been a number of issues that have moved into the academic limelight related to the perceived effects of social media such as privacy; an increase in cyber-bullying (Sellgren 2014); an allegedly narcissistic fascination with posting selfies as a means of displaying one’s self (Coulthard 2013); isolation from the real world (Turkle 2011); and the risk of sexual harassment (Palfrey and Gasser 2008). New digital technologies have come to be a major bone of contention from educators, media, and the state who frequently debate how and if these should be regulated (Thorne 2009). In their review of social networking sites, Livingstone and Brake (2010) comment extensively on the rewards and risks of this medium for young peoples’ well-being and how these spaces function as one of play, creativity, flirtation, and opportunities. They also highlight the need to balance anxieties held by adults about the trend of digital friendships. The positive picture painted of these new digital expressions run counter to media and even cinematic depictions of the latter as sites for sexual harassment, grooming, or unsolicited out-of-control house parties amongst other negative potentialities. This can be seen in the film *Project X* (2012), partly based on a true story, where details of a house party go viral and in a matter of minutes, the power of social media manifests in the hundreds of students who descend on and trash the property while the parents are out of town. This escalates rather quickly and eventually riot police are called to quell the commotion.

In a recent American late-night talk show and news satire television program, the subject of online harassment and revenge porn is surveyed and the segment which ends with a parody of how the Internet is used both as a tool and as a weapon (*Last Night with John Oliver* 2015). Drawing on old AOL (American Online) commercials, the parody casts two male actors in a 1990s get-up who explain to male viewers how, due to the immediacy and convenience of the Internet, they can harass females in a much shorter timeframe. While this is an entertainment broadcast, it illustrated how the perils of the Internet noted by many commentators have a gendered dimension to this. It illustrates how pictures and videos of young women are posted on pornographic sites by ex-boyfriends, who until recently often did so with impunity, without fear of any kind of prosecution. As Ridley (2015) explains for the UK context, “the Malicious Communications Act has been the main legislation used to try to tackle revenge porn offenders – along with others Protection from Harassment Act – as there was no specific law forbidding it.” This, along with other forms of online harassment such as cyberbullying, has severe consequences: for example, in some case the posting of such material has led to victim humiliation, death threats, and suicide attempts. Though as of 2015 after calls from campaigners and politicians, a new clause was added to the Criminal Justice and Courts Bill which under English and Welsh law legally classified revenge porn as a criminal offense. Other countries are considering taking similar actions as digital spaces become a battleground for sexism, racism, and other ideologies. Ideas about gender and race, among other vectors of social difference, are configured through social media so in one sense, gender and race are processed and produced continually in

these digital spaces. Boyd (2013, p. 210) discusses this in her study of online teen friendships in which she found that “clearly dominant racial groups went unmarked, but labels like ‘the blacks,’ ‘the Chinese people,’ ‘the Hispanics,’ ‘the Mexicans,’ ‘the white people,’ and so forth were regularly employed to define social groupings. Substitutes were employed so as to avoid being labeled racist as Boyd goes on to explain that ‘the word’ ‘urban’ signals ‘black’ when referring to a set of tastes or practices.” The formalization of raced online communities such as Black Twitter and Ya Native, among a number of others, along with online hate groups as reviewed by Jessie Daniel’s (2009) *Cyber Racism: White Supremacy Online and the New Attack on Civil Right* are just a few examples of how race is represented and produced in digital spaces.

With the growing range of interventions and positions taken on the role of digital technologies in youth culture, one thing that has been absent from these studies has been a discussion of how to study the multifaceted complexities of these digital spaces and spatialities in specific empirical settings. For while Facebook is the most visited social networking site in the world, there are regional preferences for example in India, Fropper, indiandost, and wayn.com are a few examples of popular social networking sites with the view to friendship. On these Indian sites, users can access other people’s profiles and choose from a drop-down menu for preferences based on location, gender, and age. The practices and access to social media differ according to geographical location in addition to other markers, and this is only lately gaining traction in recent geographic research. Given the immensity of digital technological forms, in particular social media, being woven into the fabric of young peoples’ daily routines and rhythms, it is important to ask what does this technology holds for how young people relate to each other and how they understand their own identities. This digital environment has now become an iconic space of young people’s sociality, not unlike drive-in cinemas in 1950s America or the shopping mall in the 1980 and 1990s (Vanderbeck and Johnson 2000). However, it is also important to understand that cyberspace has not replaced material space in any straightforward way but rather there is an overlap of social spaces across both offline and online worlds.

The importance of spaces to “hang out” has been much commented on by urban planners and other commentators (e.g., Oldenburg 1998). Whereas the archetypes of these spaces to “hang out” for youth in different eras have included “drive-ins” and “shopping malls,” for the current generation of young people, described as millennials by popular media and some social scientists (Strauss and Howe 2000) or other descriptors such as “cyberkids,” “google generation,” “n-geners” (Holmes 2011) arguably flock to social media for more or less the same reasons as their predecessors which is to congregate, gather, play, and to socialize. And this is not exclusive to virtual life as this form of digital media becomes a mode and means to real social life with material effects so online worlds arguably become just as “real” as physical worlds. Broadly speaking then, young people’s engagement with social media can be theorized as a tool to find, form, and cultivate friendships. In a leading ethnographic study on young people’s social media practices, Ito and Eds (2010) found that friendships and shared interests were the main motivation in their engagement with new media. While fears of control and exploitation (Schor 2014; Livingstone

and Brake 2010) are valid, the media narrative is dominated by this fear especially in relation to young people. As Livingstone (2008) points out, “Popular and media discourses all too often reflect a puzzled dismay that young people live in such a different world from the (nostalgically remembered) youth of today’s adults. Media panics amplify the social anxieties associated with social networking.” This commonly held view then does not recognize the diverse and diffuse ways in which social media are utilized as the ways in which digital spaces influence the latter are very complex and this is significant, particularly in terms of human relationships. Moreover, a competent navigation of the social media landscape by young people indicates that while their identities are performed and edited across audiences, it also requires an ability to move around in what Manuel Castells (2001) calls a “technical geography of social media.” This type of performance in a way affords a temporal sense of place as young people take on a spirit of play and become adept performing with various dimensions of this technology.

3 Social Media and Friendship

Following Anoop Nayak’s (2014) claim that social networking sites are spaces for the “doing of friendship,” it is useful to look at how this particular form of digital media is defined. Boyd and Ellison (2007, p. 211) consider social networking sites (SNS) to be:

web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

This definition has been critiqued by David Beer (2008, p. 519) for its limited analytical value and broadness. Beer argues instead for the term “Web 2.0” where the emphasis is placed on practices of networking and the effects of social media use on society rather than the uses society has for social media. Additionally, the dichotomy posited by Boyd and Ellison (2007) between physical friendships which exist in real space and time and virtual friendships which exist solely in digitally mediated interactions is rendered problematic by Beer (2008), who contends that online socialities are often translated in physical ones and vice versa. This adds color to the debates about the future of new media and the distinction between online and offline, where it could be argued that this distinction is increasingly being rendered obsolete. Another example of the merging between offline and online is the newly popularized trend of measuring world populations to include not just countries but “user populations” of social media. In a Youtube video showcasing the power of social and mobile, Erik Qualman, author of *Socialnomics* (2012), shows the top ten world populations in his 2015 Youtube video as follows: 1 – Facebook, 2 – China, 3–India, 4 – TenCent, 5 – Whatsapp, 6 – Google +,

7 – LinkedIn, 8 – United States, 9 – Instagram, and 10 – Twitter. In other words, such is the sheer immensity of social media and mobile technologies that these sites, he argues, can be conceived of as populated territories in their own right and not in opposition to the physical world. Although claims about the production of territories in this manner are problematic in that they imply occupation by a group or an institution, of a bounded space in which social relations and infrastructures are bordered. This is somewhat paradoxical as social media, as a digital territory, is elsewhere largely conceptualized as transcending borders yet to frame SNS in such a territorialized manner seems to set up different, yet similar social dynamics as that of a physical territory and its attendant inclusions and exclusions.

Most of these sites are free of charge and open to new members; however, how these are managed, edited, and controlled varies according to users. For example, one user may post content and block certain other “friends” from their viewing this particular post for a number of reasons hence creating a hierarchy of sorts within their contact list. Given that social media provides a form of participatory infrastructure, what is shared and to whom can be regarded as a process of inclusion and exclusion. Deborah Chambers (2013, p. 94) gives an account of these types of process in her description of MySpace, where a feature called “Top Friends” compelled users “to declare their most intimate friends or so-called ‘bestest friends’It confirms young peoples’ need for acceptance and affirmation. The Top Friends feature encourages young people to create a friendship hierarchy or friendship ranking by listing up to 24 names on a grid and ordering them from first to last. This generates all sorts of drama. . .” The intricacies and complications of real-world friendships cannot be neatly mapped onto social network sites yet such rankings interpellate friends in such a fixed and abstract manner that invariably these have offline consequences such as “social drama” (Ito et al. 2010). This is a term that can refer to gossip, tensions, cliques, choosing sides, and eventual fall outs. What social media is then regarded as doing is exacerbating the asymmetries of friendship.

The question of how friendship is defined on social networking sites is one which is frequently addressed in media. Indeed, adding a friend onto a list of contacts is by no means an indication of any kind of relation but rather, this is an example of a practice employed to expand one’s social network. Boyd’s (2006) and Dwyer’s (2007) works put forward a distinction between friendship as a close relation between two people and online friendships as superficial. Madianou and Miller (2013, p. 169) develop the concept of polymedia “to understand the consequences of digital media in the context of interpersonal communication” and as a way of capturing the radical transformation in human communication which arguably has only taken place in the last few years. Yet, beyond a limited number of studies, there are no distinct theoretical frameworks to study social media, its practices, and the complex relationship between this and real-life relationships. In trying to understand if social media strengthens or weakens friendship ties, Ellison et al. (2011) found that American undergraduates possessed a mean of 300 Facebook “friends,” but that 25 are considered “actual” friends. This, along with the private groups created on social media, point to a process of gradation in friendship (mirroring a distinction made between “friends” and “acquaintances” that has had currency in some

contexts). However, this also brings into focus the critique frequently leveled against social media, that is, are these “actual” friends authentic and/or real? The exchange and dissemination of self-disclosure publicly might be conceived of as a way of accessing social capital (Ellison et al. 2011), but the production and reproduction of interpersonal bonds is far from being a straightforward process. The participation of young people in social media life is indeed a complex one which suggests a wide range of social, cultural, political, and economic geographies. Furthermore, a young person may be on cross-connected platforms but representing themselves differently on these. Scholarly discussions must consider how these new social media practices allow and disallow discrete spheres of life, arguably a more helpful approach than fixating on whether a friendship is “real” by some historical standard. It is therefore imperative to capture and analyze the fields of social media as dynamic sociocultural and geographical systems rather than fixed types. While this may prove to be a daunting challenge for scholars, it is an area worthy of serious and concerted research efforts.

The advent of the social media age has been characterized as altering the social scene of young people significantly, particularly in regards to the definition of “friend.” Where this term traditionally implied one had at some point face-to-face interaction with the person deemed a “friend,” today it includes a person we may have never met in person. Though this chapter does not make the claim that social media has revolutionized friendship, the ease of convenience with which one can accumulate Facebook friends or Twitter followers has not only heralded a new era of digital jargon with the use of emojis to convey a particular emotion, verb constructions such as “to friend,” “unfriend,” and acronyms such as FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), LOL (laugh out loud), “netizen” among many others. It has also sparked heated discussions about what friendship actually means in this age: what is it, who are “real” friends, and how do these friendships shape identities? “Authenticity,” as one value by which friendship tends to be judged, is one which has been frequently pitted against real-life relationships and in arguments against use of social media, for example through questions such as how authentic are the posts by a user on a SNS. The question, though, of the standards by which authenticity can be judged is an important one to consider as this varies among individuals, and the lines between what is perceived as “real” and “fake” are often fuzzy and contested. Indeed, friendships take time and their formation and maintenance is a process: as Aristotle (1987) once articulated, “The desire for friendship comes quickly. Friendship does not” (quoted in Pattakos 2010). Social media users through their practices such as clicking a “like,” posting or retweeting a comment, sending a friend request raises questions about how young people prize friendships, when compared to the age before social media. Arguably, the ubiquity of digital spaces, while on one hand has bridged geographical distances has ironically created more distance. To maintain constant connectivity in which one manages a multitude of connections is to be in a state of flux where one must balance the quantity versus the quality of friends and friendships. Indeed, to be constantly connected is the dominant narrative of sorts and to depict a stylized virtual identity is an imperative for the majority of young people worldwide. While agency, choice, preference, and proclivities would paint a more

prosaic picture, there is broadly speaking a collective need to be connected and a deviation from this has material effects such as social ostracism and invisibility. As Blatterer (2010) says, online visibility is pursued at the expense of privacy. To take the position of being “Facebook-free, a Twitter quitter, or Insta-invisible” (Selfie 2014) is not one that many young people consider viable because to do so would risk social invisibility or place them in a disadvantaged position (Bobkowski and Smith 2013; Turkle 2011).

Yet despite the ongoing anxieties about the effects of social media on social relations and traditional ties, there is growing evidence to suggest that digital spaces are important ones for “doing friendships.” According to Chambers (2013, p. 84), “Social network site engagement tends to involve co-present relationships within peer groups, confirming the *spatial* embeddedness of online social ties for teenagers.” Ito et al’s (2010) landmark study attests to the role of social media in developing social relations in the school environment and is one of the more significant studies in exploring young people’s friendships. In this, 23 case studies were conducted on the experiences of digital media use among young people, aged 12–18, across the United States. The researchers observed that social media platforms act as a site from which negotiations of one’s status take place in and out of school environments. This is not restricted to one platform but across multiple channels and technologies, for example mobile phones, private messaging, texting, as well as through other electronic devices.

3.1 Friends or Followers: The Impact of Social Media on Friendship

In an attempt to navigate the tricky terrain of digital spaces, the chapter now turn to contemporary debates which position social networking as either empowering or risky. By examining the research literature on actual young peoples’ experiences of social media, it has been found that their active engagement is a strategic one in which social capital is built by organizing the various levels of friendship and expanding on social media’s potential for self-expression (Ellison et al. 2010a, b).

It may seem safe to say that digital media usage emerges as a centripetal, but not the ultimate, defining standard by which a friendship is measured for young people but a distinction should be made between friends and friendship. As Blatterer (2014, p. 45) explains, “In this social media age of ours we can confidently add that knowing of each other, or simply appearing on someone’s Facebook page is good enough to be identified as a friend. What hasn’t changed, however, is that friendship connotes the kind of intimacy that friends in the broad sense can do without.” Friendship on Facebook then could be understood as offering a different layer of intimacy which is less interdependent on two people and a more fleeting form of social connection. As SNS exponentially increase our capacity to create and communicate with larger volumes of networks, friends may become more amplified in the web of human sociality.

Given the immense proliferation of social network use, not only by young people but by virtually most age groups, it is not surprising that there is a rich and growing body of scholarly work on this in addition to novels such as *Rich Kids of Instagram* (Sloan 2014), television shows such as *Selfie*, and even in films such as *Men, Women and Children* (2014) which casts a spotlight on the debilitating effects of social media on personal relationships. What these works have in common is the underlying notion that narcissism, superficiality, and shallowness, more often than not, are the dominant perceptions of social media. The danger with this however is an oversimplification which does not take into account the affordances that permit young people to develop. Boyd and Ellison (2007) have identified four broad areas of research on this theme. The first of these concerns friendship performance and “impression management” in which research explores how users manage their profiles and how these influence friendship formations (Boyd 2008). While the act of misrepresenting oneself whether it is, for example, standing by a luxury car that the person does not own or photoshopping one’s appearance may be conceived of as a deceptive practice, another way of exploring this, according to Boyd, is that impression management is a way of expressing an idealized or higher version of oneself.

The second area looks at the structure of networks (Hogan 2008) and how the processing of data from SNS into useful information for example to predict consumer trends. While SNS generates an enormous amount of personal data that can potentially be valuable for businesses and organizations (as represented by attempts to harness and use the so-called Big Data generated online), the continually expanding volumes of data make it almost impossible for useful information to be collected with a certain timeframe. Beyond data collection and presentation, there has been little analysis on different groups or underlying structures of a social network according to Malika and Malik (2011). The third area looks at the closing gap between offline and online networks. These studies argue that social network sites are used to both maintain and expand on connections to existing offline relationships (Ellison et al. 2007). It could be argued that to look at offline and online relationships as discrete processes is inappropriate but rather young people can be seen to be customizing their friendships through both digital and face-to-face modalities.

Finally, the fourth area addresses issues of privacy and the extent to which personal information posted on social network sites can potentially expose users to identity theft or online harassment (NCPSS 2015). This is a polarizing debate with scholars arguing on one hand that the general public is demanding more stringent online privacy and protection (Madden 2012) and on the other, a widespread acceptance that, to quote Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, “privacy is dead” and that open sharing of personal details renders privacy an illusion (Debatin 2011). Enhanced regulation is one of the more effective ways of dealing with privacy issues but while social media use will continue to soar, user attitudes and strategies such as restricting networks and limiting access will help towards lessening the risks to privacy.

The seeming ubiquity of social networking sites is a widely acknowledged notion but despite claims to universal access, there exists a digital divide as access to these

sites is spatially and socially uneven. That being said, it is enormously popular as Adams (2005) says, this has led to a far-reaching construction of the self as the process of socialization has shifted from focusing on one-to-one ties to multiple connections. As Warf (2014, p. 300) elucidates, “the geographies of everyday life have become greatly complicated, often involving complicated webs of interpersonal interactions filled by wormholes and tunnels, a notion that mirrors the rhizomatic structure of the Internet and resembles the origami-like spatialities of post-structuralism.”

3.2 Social Media and Community

This section considers the ways in which forms of “community” can be considered to be produced via young people’s uses of social media. That new communication technologies have collapsed the distances between places is not a novel idea. The sheer ubiquity of mobile phones, digital devices, and the Internet is now the norm and has in turn enabled new online communities through platforms such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Youtube, and so on. The social practices of blogging and tweeting which involve posting images, narratives, and content on various platforms takes place within communities and also produces them. For example as Crampton (2007, p. 96) says, “Bloggers link to each other, comment on each other’s sites, mention each other in their blogs, create ‘fansigns’ (buttons or cool graphics mentioning the site’s name, or webcam pictures with the site’s name inscribed somewhere on the body) thus creating friendships and mutual support.” A diverse array of connection techniques such as status updates, profile descriptions, comments, group messages, geotagging, uploading videos, picture tagging, hashtagging, live tweeting, instant messaging, and “liking” are just some of the ways in which friendships are constructed. Through presenting edited versions of one’s self, young people engage in a process of self and public reflexivity which is validated by their peers, or depending on their privacy settings, by the wider public through practices such as liking and commenting. This act of inscription as interacting with other virtual identities is a millennial version of Benedict Anderson’s (1991) coinage, the “imagined community,” that emerges as a product of the imbrication of social media, practices, and people. In his explanation, the ties of a people extend beyond their geographical confines and national communities only become real when the members see them as real. Such was the power of this conception that it can be readily adopted and included in discussions on online communities fostered by social media. For example the “Chilean Winter” youth protests (Valenzuela et al. 2012) in which high-school and college students organized themselves through social media to demand changes in education and energy policy could be viewed as a digitally mediated form of community. The rise of the Arab Spring protests in 2011, which inspired a revolution across the Middle East, is a highly cited example of the power of social media in its critical function of connecting activists and disseminating real-time information. As a form of community building in which Arab members from different countries congregated to revolt

against brutality and unjust acts by the government, this was a globally significant event which highlighted how the new platforms of social media played a particular role of communication and how young people in their organizing demonstrated political entrepreneurship in ways which would have been nowhere near possible decades ago (Howard and Hussain 2013). Another example is the Occupy Wall Street movement which was “born on the Internet, diffused by the Internet, and maintained its presence on the Internet” (Castells 2012, p. 168) to protest social and economic inequalities and in which social media was located as a key driver of the protests alongside human actors.

If social media has been heralded as opening a new era of communications and exponentially increasing the power of young people, for example, through political activism as seen above, it also raises the fraught question of whether young people’s participation in online communities is necessarily a positive thing. Earlier in 2011, the world had witnessed the Twitter and Facebook revolution in the Middle East and Occupy protests worldwide but then not too shortly after, the same technologies were used to other ends, for example the London Riots in 2011. The role of online networks and community groups were cited by the mass media as a key tool in organizing unrest and uproar in certain locations across the capitals and some parts of the UK (Halliday 2012) and the media coverage of these events presented heightened moral panics particularly in relation to young people. This was a largely simplistic picture of the events and technologically deterministic, given that the political and capitalist underpinnings of these riots were largely ignored in the media coverage which was, in turn, predominantly focused on the dangers and exploitation of social media by young people. A social research inquiry conducted by The Guardian newspaper and the London School of Economics largely reject the notion of social media exploitation and state that “Contrary to widespread speculation at the time, the social media sites Facebook and Twitter were not used in any significant way by rioters. In contrast, the free messaging service available on Blackberry phones – known as “BBM” – was used extensively to communicate, share information and plan in advance of riots.” (2011, p. 4). The study goes on to suggest that “Despite the attention paid to social media by government and the press. . . . traditional media, particularly television, played a large part. More than 100 of the project’s 270 interviewees referred to hearing about the riots via pictures on television news – more than Twitter, texts, Facebook, or BBM. Some rioters also said the dramatic nature of the TV coverage tempted them to get involved with the unrest.” (2011, p. 33).

There is no shortage of reports from many contexts, driven by a sense of moral panic, commenting on perceived addiction or extreme usage from think-tanks, organizations, and the media. To name a few examples, cyberbullying, revenge porn, exposure to sexual predators, peer surveillance, shaming, and online harassment are some of the main dangers that commentators have identified and decried in relation to young peoples’ use of social networking sites and participation in online communities. Another often commented consequence to emerge from high social media usage is the heightened anxiety of using a digital acronym FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) and social isolation but one that is shared by the many who are “alone together” (Turkle 2011). The heightened concerns for the safety of children and

young people is such that “Safer Internet Day” was launched in 2011 in the UK to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology globally (UK Safer Internet Centre 2015). Charities such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) have conducted qualitative studies on the impact of digital technologies, specifically sexting, a practice which involves the “exchange of sexual messages or images” and “creating, sharing and forwarding sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images” (Lilley et al. 2014) for young people (see also Moran-Ellis 2012). The rapid distribution of these types of pictures can augment feelings of distress and shame and in many respects can be seen as more damaging than offline bullying because of its fluid dissemination. Studies have shown that young people reporting cyberbullying are likely to be socially anxious, depressed, or demonstrate poor academic performance (Hinduja and Patchin 2010; Raskaukas and Stoltz 2009). Scholars have broadly categorized cyberbullying in two ways. First, there is direct bullying (Stassen Berger 2007) in which cyberbullies attack victims explicitly verbally, nonverbally, or physically, for example, by sending a virus or infected material to the victim’s electronic devices. The second category is indirect or “behind my back” (Stassen Berger 2007, p. 95) cyberbullying, which takes place through gossip, sending out sensitive information, or hacking the victim’s account and sending out emails that tarnishes the victim. There are differences in the effects on victims and while it may seem an obvious choice to compare cyberbullying to offline bullying, there are distinctions of the former in that the bullying does not take place in a material space such as the schoolyard or classroom and bullies can reach victims online any time after or even during school hours. While media literacy training, parental supervision, and platform provider assistance are just a few ways of dealing with the phenomenon of cyberbullying, studies of parental and platform mediation have been scarce to date save for a few exceptions such as studies by Shin (2013) and Warren (2015).

These may be a few of the dangers facing young people when navigating these digital environments but on the other hand, social media as part of this environment, enables a type of social support and interaction that would not have been possible before the age of the Internet, as seen in the earlier discussion on youth activism. However, this interaction can vary according to the type of social media platform, for instance as Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) propose that the levels of self-disclosure and self-presentation in blogs would be higher than a platform such as Wikipedia. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 62) propose the following typology of social platforms which they classify into six groups: blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), content communities (e.g., Youtube), virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life), collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), and virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft). It could be said that a common feature across all these groups is that these enable different types of sociality, and hence different forms of “community.” Communications that take place repeatedly in these digital spaces extend into more than just social relationships – they can translate into feelings of community, belonging, and friendship. This can be heard not just in digital jargon but in everyday vocabularies, for example in phrases such as “Hit me up on Facebook” or “Get at me on twitter” “which are used when trying to

rekindle an old friendship or build a new contact, whether personal or professional. Indeed, there are gains to be had in both personal and professional spheres of young people's lives through engagement with social media. For example, this was attested by LinkedIn, a social networking site primarily targeted towards working professionals, who recently lowered its age limit for member subscriptions to 13 years of age in a bid to attract career-oriented teenagers and to enable them to research university choices. While this move was criticized from the current users who expressed discomfort at this younger demographic joining a professional network and by columnists for demonstrating a "distasteful failure to allow children to be children by inflicting upon them the inherent melancholy of the knowledge that one's destiny is merely that of a wage slave in a riddled service-based economy" (Cosslett 2013), it was concurrently met with praise, for example, by Dr Bernie Hogan of the Oxford Internet Institute who says that young people would be able to "differentiate between the public profile they want for employment [and] the personal profile they share on Facebook with their friends and family" (BBC 2013).

The possibilities for creativity and greater self-expression have also increased exponentially as social media has produced a generation of young people who, no longer reliant on content producers in old media such as television, film, and radio, write and produce their own content and if successful, go on to become digital media stars. Whether as Youtube sensations, fashion video bloggers or digital activists (The Guardian 2014), social network sites have created platforms for young people who in turn have gained access to lucrative career opportunities which may not have historically been available to them.

Earlier in the chapter, there was reference made to the advantages of electronic technologies in providing a tool for young people to sustain their friendship networks over longer distances. Moreover, the usage of this as a means of constructing the self is in direct contrast to theoretical models of an autonomous subject. In fact, many of the pro-social media arguments hinge on the notion that the latter allows for a sociality which in turn enhances the importance of relationalities, thereby presenting a different form of the self than that which is portrayed in some accounts of the self. Adams (2005) expands on this idea as the "boundless self," one which is not tied down to physical and temporal limits of the body or geographies that bound by the insidious effects of scale and distance. There is a body of literature which holds that social media replicates emotional depth of real-life contacts (Hampton and Wellman 2001) and that online interactions are challenging geographically bound communities as the main vehicles of sociability. As a means of connecting emotionally while geographically distant, social network sites and mobile technologies are also used as a way of negotiating social differences.

4 Conclusion

It would be difficult to argue with the notion that the rise of digital technologies and new media has triggered profound changes in human cultures. As these technologies have become more enmeshed in contemporary global culture, there have been

important implications for the nature of communications and relational ties changed, although it is also important to recognize significant continuities with the past. Much like any other type of human relationship, friendship has geographical dimensions. As illustrated throughout this chapter, friendships are formed, rekindled, made, remade, and even ended in and through digital spaces, particularly social network sites. These simultaneously allow and disallow spatialities of sociality and possibility. The concept of Friendship 2.0, as described in this chapter, has much scope as an analytical concept for not only human geography but for other disciplinary arenas as a way to think about transformations in the meaning and practices of friendship within the context of new communication technologies and digital environments. As social media has come to organize practices and people in the real world, these applications and platforms have critical implications. Digital social spaces and physical spaces are mutually constituted so it is worthwhile to observe, analyze, and critique both of these spaces as constitutive of each other rather than in opposition to each other, especially as this is a worldview taken up by millennials.

Over the last decade, a rich and developing body of work on digital spaces has contributed to knowledge about youth cultures but there is an insufficient consolidated research on the role of social media in the production of space and sociality. The Pew Research Center provides extensive quantitative reports on young people and social media in the United States, but these are not complemented by qualitative analyses or geospatial models. The balance of scholarly and popular comment on the effects of social media on young people has emphasized negative consequences. Although some of the potential implications are real and well documented (such as cyberbullying), there is also a moralizing dimension to some of this commentary. In a number of respects, social media has arguably proven to be a beneficial tool whether it is to redefine one's identity, access avenues of social capital which were previously denied or inaccessible, or as mentioned earlier rekindle and strengthen friendships, old and new. Friendships are diverse and diffuse, therefore to paint a one-dimensional picture of social networking in the lives of young people is inadequate. As Palfrey and Gasser (2008, p. 5) say, "Online friendships are based on many of the same things as traditional friendships – shared interests, frequent interaction – but they nonetheless have a very different tenor: They are often fleeting; they are easy to enter into and leave, without so much as a goodbye; and they are also perhaps enduring in ways we have yet to understand."

Yet there remains a divide between accounts of the positive and negative implications of practices of social networking and their impacts on young people's lives. If, on the one hand, studies herald a celebration of digital media as empowering and bridging difference then, on the other hand, there are studies countering this with the perception of digital media as risky, hostile, and damaging. It is hardly productive to take a dichotomous view of the practices of digital media and their impact as these perspectives do not explore how young people utilize these technologies in the development of their social relations nor do these ground young people's experiences in empirical analysis. A review of the studies on social media noted in this chapter suggests that this is certainly a focus which warrants further research and given the vitality of work emerging in this area, it is expected that the robust body of

work on the uses and impacts of digital technologies will continue to grow. It is worth bearing in mind that despite the diverse and extensive ways in which friendships have now come to be constituted in the digital age through stylized self-presentations and manipulatable virtual identities, this has not erased “traditional” modes of friendship but intersects with it in all sorts of ways. This becomes clear in the growing evidence from young people who enjoy the experiences of face-to-face contact, hanging out or meeting up for a social activity, and practices which are fundamental to a meaningful friendship. Newer and multiple socialities are practiced across multiple platforms that do not destroy the quality of human interactions, nor do these collapse a bounded sense of place but rather potentially allow a more fluid and reflexive sense of place.

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Abstract

Only recently has the topic of children's well-being become of greater interest for Childhood Studies and is now an area awaiting further contributions. Moreover, of late there have been calls within the discipline for a cross-cultural investigation of children's lives, for a more global approach to childhood. This chapter addresses both topics and, referring to knowledge and debates within these fields, offers frameworks for research.

Drawing on relevant theories, as well as on concrete examples from a cross-cultural ethnography on children's well-being, theoretical and methodological issues are discussed. It is illustrated how both in research on children's well-being and in cross-cultural research on children's lives in general, dualistic approaches – such as particular versus universal or childhood versus childhoods – are limiting. Furthermore, since children's experiences are directly related to their coexistence with adults, the intergenerational component needs to be part of such research. Sociocultural constructions of childhood ('what it means to be

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a child'), for instance, are created mainly in social interaction with adults and influence children's level of resilience and self-confidence. Especially in cross-cultural research, exploring childhood from a generational perspective can generate valuable insights into the diversity of children's worlds.

Keywords

Childhood, Cultural Construction of · Comparison, Cross-Cultural · Competition · Friendship, Children's · Intergenerationality · Interpretative Reproduction · Peer Cultures, Children's · Social Constructivism · Social Indicators · Subjective Well-Being, Children's

1 Introduction

Children's well-being has not always been a subject of public interest as it is nowadays in most countries. Only as late as the sixteenth century did a public concern for children begin to develop in Europe when churches and charities drew attention to lives of orphans and street children (Doek 2014). A second wave of interest in children's well-being arose during the era of industrialization when a concern for child laborers sparked several children's rights movements. The activists were able to enforce child-protection laws which ultimately led to children's right to primary education becoming compulsory in many countries by the turn of the century (Fyfe 2009). Since the second half of the twentieth century, governments' policies around the world have increasingly addressed children's well-being issues, such as health care and education (Punch 2013). These developments culminated in the UNCRC agreement in, 1989, a treaty which "made well-being a right of the child" (Doek 2014, p. 188). Activities of major international organizations such as WHO, UNICEF, and Save the Children reflect these trends (Punch 2013).

2 Researching Children's Well-Being

A commonly held perspective in Childhood Studies is that children are "a minority social group, whose wrongs need writing" (Mayall 2002, p. 9) – a view which contains the concern for children's well-being. Children's well-being is therefore an especially well-suited area for Childhood Studies. However, only recently has Childhood Studies begun explicitly to research children's well-being (Ben-Arieh et al. 2014; Fattore et al. 2007), a development taking place alongside wider political and academic discourses where well-being has become an increasingly popular subject matter (Mathews and Izquierdo 2009b). Reports from different parts of the world testify to the challenges children and young people still face (see Minujin and Nandy 2012), some indicating an increase of mental health problems, such as depression and suicidal preoccupation (Hartras 2008; Newman 2002). Such reports

reemphasize the importance of social science research for getting a better understanding of children's well-being and how it can be improved.

The notion of well-being has become especially popular in social science over the past two decades (see Buchanan 2000; Mathews and Izquierdo 2009b), however, as definitions of well-being are variable and often muddled "the field is in need of conceptual clarification" (Alanen 2014, p. 132). This chapter describes the different theoretical approaches to researching well-being, considering how these may be applied in cross-cultural research on children's well-being. Based on experiences from a cross-cultural research project on children's well-being at a Tibetan and a German primary school, these elaborations will be sustained by concrete examples from ethnographic research.

3 Cross-Cultural Research with Children

Sociocultural contexts play a key role in how people experience the world (Lutz 1988) and unsurprisingly, therefore, children's cultures vary significantly across the globe (Montgomery 2009). Accordingly, recent calls within the field of Childhood Studies have urged for a more global take on childhood (see Punch and Tisdall 2014). Cross-cultural research is also particularly well suited for researching children's well-being as notions of well-being differ cross-culturally and a better understanding of well-being may be derived from these differences. It is "by understanding (...) well-being (...) in a diverse array of societies, we can begin to understand it in its cultural specificities and also in a broader, human sense" (Mathews and Izquierdo 2009b, p. 2).

Until recently, research with children has been overwhelmingly in Minority World contexts (Chen et al. 2006). Several studies have begun to shift this one-sided focus, yet cross-cultural accounts are still rare (Punch 2016). Some discussions on research from different parts of the world (see, for example, Montgomery 2009) and cross-cultural collections of different empirical accounts (see, for example, Punch and Tisdall 2014) are available. Only a few sources (Chen et al. 2004; Cribari-Assali 2015) include research from both Majority and Minority Worlds which is therefore an area yet to be explored by Childhood Studies.

One of the main epistemological issues facing cross-cultural research with children is the question of how to approach the notion of childhood. Most theories in Childhood Studies posit childhood as *either* a plural *or* a singular category (James 2010). In the singular thesis, childhood is understood as a universal category which is constructed by *all* societies, in various forms, yet universally. In this view "childhood is a permanent structural form or category that never disappears even though its members change continuously and its conception vary historically" (Cosaro 2011, p. 4). This position contrasts to the relativistic stance of constructivist approaches in Childhood Studies, which emphasize sociocultural plurality. According to such a relativistic paradigm, childhood as a singular category does *not* reflect a social reality. Instead, the term *childhoods* (as a plural) is used, and a

growing body of research underscores this multiple nature of childhood (Christensen and James 2008).

Acknowledging the sociocultural diversity of human experience, cross-cultural research needs to be based on a relativistic stance (Fay 1996). At the same time, however, viewing childhood as a universal category (the singular approach) is also a valuable perspective, as it draws attention to children's marginalization and exploitation worldwide – one of Childhood Studies' main *raison d'être*s (Cosaro 2011). Its proponents argue that a focus on the multiplicity of childhoods may undermine efforts to establish general ethical standards necessary to improve children's living conditions worldwide.

It has therefore been argued that a plural and a singular concept of childhood must not be considered oppositional approaches (James 2010). In fact, the intertwining of the two approaches can be of methodological value for cross-cultural research on children's lives. As Punch explains, “the two strands weave together creating a particular pattern in the cloth and integrating the perspective of childhood as a singular social category with the diversity perspective of many childhoods” (2016, p. 5).

The second issue that needs to be considered in cross-cultural research on children's lives is the notion of cross-cultural *comparison*. This notion poses a challenge when it comes to social (as opposed to natural) phenomena, “due to the impossibility of comparing like with like” (Thomson 2007, p. 575). Punch (2016) also acknowledges this difficulty and suggests drawing on samples of children from similar social backgrounds for cross-cultural comparisons and focusing on transcultural themes, such as identity and agency or leisure and play. Yet the notion remains problematic.

Consideration of the two most significant approaches in comparative social science by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, respectively (Smelser 1976), may shed some light on the issue. Durkheim's stance was positivist which presupposed an existence of independently existing “social facts” that can be compared (see, for example Durkheim's [1997] comparison between suicide rates among Protestants and among Catholics). In *Rules of Sociological Methods* he defines a social fact as something “which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations” (1982, p. 59). A positivist stance in social science is, however, inherently problematic as Max Weber (1949, 1991) has argued. As opposed to natural phenomena, social phenomena are not reproducible in experiments, are continuously changing and, most importantly, multicausal. According to Weber's philosophy of social science, the infinitely complex nature of social phenomena is abstracted by the researcher's likes, interests, and views and does *not* reflect any independently existing social reality. The data selected in research are ‘value oriented’ rather than ‘naturally given’ and therefore cannot be compared as if they were facts (Weber 1949). According to a Weberian comparative sociology, therefore, the researcher merely generates ‘ideal types’, abstractions of a highly complex, abundant social reality, and thereafter reveals ‘elective affinities’ between these ideal types (1949, 1958). In *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1958), for instance, he merely posits an elective affinity

between the Protestant worldviews (Calvinism, in particular) and Capitalist principles and does not claim that one led to the other.

Applying Weber's approach to cross-cultural research on children's well-being, explanations on how certain conceptualizations of well-being are held by children and how they seem to relate to aspects within their wider sociocultural backgrounds would therefore *not* be considered social facts, but merely ideal types that the author has constructed through analysis. At the same time, however, the use of ideal types does allow for (limited) conceptual generalizations. According to this view, a cross-cultural research account may give the impression that comparisons are being made; however, what is being compared are never snippets of a social reality but merely the authors own observations. It may be suggested, therefore, that the notion of comparison is misleading insofar as it does not capture this fine but significant difference of social science research and that a term needs to be found which is less positivistic.

Based on Thomson's (2007) considerations on this issue, Punch (2016) has referred to the phrase 'conversation between cases' in place of the notion comparison. Similarly, the term *dialectical study* (Cribari-Assali 2015) may be suitable – 'dialectical' implying a theoretical discussion between different (cross-cultural) views. As opposed to the notion of cross-cultural comparison, a dialectical study of children's lives does not claim to compare social phenomena but merely to paint a cross-cultural picture of children's experiences. The picture is, of course, the author's creation and not a mirror of any social reality 'out there'; or as Clifford and Marcus put it in *Writing Culture*, it is "caught up in the invention, not in the representation of culture" (1986, p. 2).

Despite its pitfalls, cross-cultural research can be a valuable empirical method for researching children's lives. Precisely because of the subjective nature of social science research, mentioned above, cross-cultural research may generate especially rich data by making "the exotic familiar, and the familiar exotic" (Sax 1998, p. 292). The researcher may begin to see issues, aspects, and sociocultural patterns that would have otherwise remained unnoticed.

Especially if the researcher is familiar with the sociocultural context where research is conducted, it is likely that certain phenomena relevant for the research are overlooked as "normal" (Cribari-Assali 2015). The founder of ethnomethodology, Harold Garfinkel, describes this phenomenon as "'seen but unnoticed', expected, background features of every day scenes" (1967, p. 36). He argues that, "for these background expectancies to come into view one must either be a stranger to the 'life as usual' character of everyday scenes, or become estranged from them" (1967, p. 37). Cross-cultural research may have such an estranging effect on the researcher as through the cross-cultural contrast unnoticed data may suddenly become apparent.

This argument is illustrated by examples from a research project on children's well-being, which spanned both a Majority and Minority World setting, by Cribari-Assali (2015). The ethnography was conducted with children (6–8 years old) in a Tibetan day-school (India) and in a German day-school (Germany) for 6 months at each site, 3–4 days a week, in 2012. Many of the findings from this research turned out to be strongly related to the cross-culturality of the project and would have not

manifested in single sited fieldwork. For instance, as will be explained later in this chapter, it was observed that the Tibetan children displayed a much higher level of self-confidence and resilience than the children at the German school – an indicator for well-being. These observations were only possible on the basis of the cross-cultural contrast. Another set of findings further illustrate this point whose contents will only be outlined here. Briefly, it was found that a demand for *fairness* was very prominent with the children in the German school, however, fully absent in the Tibetan school, while *luck* played a central role at Tibetan school but was rare in the German school. Although they were documented, these data would have remained unnoticed without the cross-cultural contrast. Having grown up in a German context, the researcher would have overlooked these data from the German school as “normal” if it would have not been for the fact that this phenomena was apparently absent at the Tibetan site. The data, however, proved significant to research insofar as they suggested that the children were constructing different notions of their selves which, in turn, were found to be linked to particular aspects of well-being.

These examples show how the cross-culturality of a research project may be key to eliciting particular data. As Fay in a *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science: A Multicultural Approach* suggests, this phenomena has much to do with the nature of understanding itself:

Changes in our understanding of others lead to changes in our self-understanding, and changes in our self-understanding lead to changes in our understanding of others (...) Epistemologically all understanding is comparative: there is no self-understanding if no other-understanding. (1996, p. 229)

Cross-cultural research on the diversity of children’s lives is therefore not only a fascinating subject of study but can be simultaneously a heuristic tool. This can be said to be especially true for researching children’s well-being, as the following will elaborate.

4 Exploring Well-Being

Social science research on well-being can be roughly categorized as accounts either of subjective or objective well-being (Morrow and Boyden 2014). The former investigates people’s experiences and conceptualizations of well-being, while the latter focuses on outer factors considered relevant for well-being, such as income, social relationships, health, political freedom, etc. Objective well-being research has produced quite an extensive body of work, especially in the field of economics. Most accounts of children’s well-being also deal mainly with the influence of objective factors, such as parental care, access to education, wealth, political rights, etc. (see, for example, Mapp 2010).

Even though of value, studies which focus solely on objective well-being may be insufficient (Ben-Arieh et al. 2014). It has been found, for instance, that subjective experiences of well-being do not necessarily correlate with high levels of objective

well-being (Bartram 2011). A study by Easterbrook (2004) suggests that well-being may even decrease parallel to the rise of affluence within a society – an objective factor usually considered basic to well-being. According to his analysis, unipolar depression “has been rising in eerie synchronization with rising prosperity” (Easterbrook 2004, p. xvi) in the USA over the past 50 years. Similarly, social-psychological disorders in children are reported to have increased in most wealthy countries over the last half of the century. “Even countries with such widely admired social welfare systems as Sweden have not escaped these trends” (Newman 2002, p. 2).

Proponents of a subjective well-being approach frequently apply a social constructivist viewpoint (Uchida et al. 2004). Social constructivism is also considered an important approach in Childhood Studies, for understanding childhood as a social construction (rather than as a naturally given category) appreciates the variety of forms childhood takes cross-culturally and across time (Christensen and James 2008; Cosaro 2011; Mayall 2002). When investigating children's well-being from a social constructivist view it makes little sense to assume that objective factors will universally determine well-being. People experience and construct the world according to their unique sociocultural conditioning and history (Lutz 1988) which accounts for the phenomenon that individuals can be happy in the most challenging circumstances or depressed even though all objective factors for happiness seem to be present. Accordingly, subjective well-being researchers have defined happiness “as a positive emotional state that is most general and, thus, not restricted to any specific circumstances or events” (Uchida et al. 2004, p. 226).

Subjective well-being approaches do not deny the significance of objective factors for well-being. However, they hold that focusing on these cannot generate holistic accounts of human well-being. Social science has therefore begun exploring subjective well-being (see, for example, Diener and Suh 2000; Mathews and Izquierdo 2009a) and recently more explicitly in children's lives (see, for example, Fattore et al. 2007). Yet accounts of children's subjective well-being are still few (Casas 2011) as it is “often taken for granted that children need not be asked, because they do not know (are not yet capable or competent to know) what is good for them” (Ben-Arieh et al. 2014, p. 10). Morrow and Boyden (2014) draw awareness to ethical issues when children's well-being is being researched without an interest in the children's own definitions of well-being. They ask for a consideration of

... what happens when questions about well-being are applied to children and across social groups and countries? One of the most serious problems, often overlooked, is that notions of well-being tend to be underpinned by powerful values about desired life goals and about children and childhood. (Morrow and Boyden 2014, p. 2899)

Investigating children's views on well-being is an important part of well-being research, and cross-cultural research needs to generate a socioculturally rich account of the children's own understandings and experiences of well-being rather than relying on adult's views. Moreover, it needs to focus on children's experiences in the here and now (Qvortrup 2014) rather than on their future lives as adults.

Although not denying its value, a forward-looking view that postpones children's well-being "until adulthood" (Ben-Arieh et al. 2014, p. 16) or children's "well-becoming" (Qvortrup 2014) cannot be the main interest of such an account.

Yet what is well-being? It is said to be "a fluid, holistic and ambiguous notion which is difficult to define" (Punch 2013, p. 226; see also Morrow and Mayall 2009) and unsurprisingly, therefore, theoretical and methodological frameworks for researching well-being are still variable and often conceptually muddled (Alanen 2014; Fattore et al. 2007; Morrow and Boyden 2014). Moreover, especially in a cross-cultural study, a definition of well-being needs to be broad enough to allow for the sociocultural diversity of different sites. How can well-being be defined in a socioculturally sensitive way? The following sections explore these questions.

5 Children's Views on Well-Being

A growing body of work in the social sciences usually referred to as subjective well-being (SWB) (Diener and Suh 2000) investigates well-being cross-culturally by documenting people's cognitive appreciation of their quality of life. In these accounts, subjective well-being is usually defined as "a person's evaluative reactions to his or her life – either in terms of life satisfaction (cognitive evaluations) or affect (ongoing emotional reactions)" (Diener and Diener 1995, p. 653). More recently, the SWB approach has been applied also to research with children (Huebner et al. 2014). Nguyen (2011), for example, undertook a longitudinal study with 1000 Vietnamese children (aged 12), investigating how family income and/or social inclusion related to the children's happiness. Each child was shown a picture of a ladder with nine steps and asked the following question:

There are nine steps on this ladder. Suppose we say that the ninth step, at the very top, represents the best possible life for you and the bottom represents the worst possible life for you. Where on the ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time? (Nguyen 2011, p. 5)

Fattore et al. (2007) interviewed 123 children from rural and urban areas of New South Wales in less structured interviews about their definitions of well-being. The final stage of the research asked participants to complete a creative project of their own design, choosing from photography, drawing, journal keeping, etc., to describe what well-being meant to them. Hart et al. (2007) investigated children's well-being in Sri Lanka by conducting a well-being exercise with them. Participants were asked to think of someone their own age who is "doing well in life" and describe the things that indicate this. All three of these accounts are examples of research on children's well-being that values children's views and appreciates them as mature informants. This has been considered a key to Childhood Studies (Punch and Tisdall 2014) – the researcher can and should rely on children's knowledge and reflexivity during research and analysis (Mayall 2008).

Some argue, however, that focusing merely on participants' cognitive evaluations is limited when researching well-being (Bartram 2011). This may be considered an argument also because people's views are always situational and socioculturally tainted (Garfinkel 1967) and sociocultural knowledge is to a large degree tacit (Polanyi 1966). As Mason warns, "it is important to remember that qualitative interviewing has limitations (...) generated through the rather specific and refined context of the interview" (2002, p. 83). Limitations of interviewing are even more significant when conducted with children as, due to the inherent adult-child power-imbalance, they are more likely to respond in ways they believe may be expected from them (Mayall 2008). Also the ethical challenges when interviewing children need not be underestimated. As Morrow and Boyden explain:

One-to-one interviews may be difficult for children in contexts in which children are not used to talking one-to-one with unfamiliar adults (i.e., most of the world), and questionnaires may include questions that do not make sense to the children concerned, ask insensitive or irrelevant questions, or questions that children do not know the answer to. (2014, p. 2904)

Interviewing very young children about their definitions of well-being is, moreover, extremely limited or impossible due to their cognitive abilities (Huebner et al. 2014).

Instead of relying exclusively on interviews, children's subjective well-being can effectively be investigated by ethnographic research (Camfield et al. 2009). Ethnography is considered a key methodology for research with children as it gives children a more direct voice in the generation of the data while focusing on what is meaningful in their daily lives (James and Prout 1990). Moreover, through ethnographic participant observation sociocultural patterns and tacit knowledge are more easily accessible. Ethnography "allows us to understand nonverbal communication, to anticipate and understand responses (...) [and] shapes the way we interact with others and, in a more fundamental way, it shapes the way we interpret what we observe" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 11).

As ethnographic research investigates social interaction, well-being may be understood as an umbrella term that embraces any form of social action (Weber 1991) that people (explicitly or implicitly) relate to maintaining or creating "a good life" (Izquierdo 2009, p. 68; see also Ben-Arieh et al. 2014). While ways of maintaining or improving a good life are a part of social action everywhere, they are experienced, presupposed, and conceptualized in various socioculturally specific ways and may therefore even be contradictory (Buchanan 2000). Ethnographic research allows for the sociocultural sensitivity that is needed in order to capture this diversity.

Yet how is it possible to identify social action that is specifically related to maintaining or creating a good life? One way would be to explore 'what matters most' to the children (Cribari-Assali 2015), as what matters most must be considered an essential condition for a good life by the person concerned – why otherwise strive for it? Moreover, researching what matters most is more concrete than what makes

up a good life and can be observed in real life situations rather than having to rely on thoughts and views expressed verbally by the participants.

Again, experience from the Tibetan/German research project (Cribari-Assali 2015), mentioned earlier, may assist in illustrating this point. During fieldwork in both schools, the children's notions of well-being and their related social practices at each site were explored by investigating what mattered most to them. This proved to be very different. What mattered most to the children at the Tibetan school was 'being skilful' as the children would spend most of the time demonstrating and negotiating their different skills with each other. Certain skills were valued higher than others within the peer group (academic skillfulness was leading, for example), yet an individual's proficiency in one area seemed to balance lesser skillfulness in another. Some of the boys' lack of academic skillfulness, for instance, was compensated for by their strong physicality which they would display in physically dominating each other or the girls (physical 'teasing'). At the German school, on the other hand, what mattered most to the children was friendship with peers (see also Corsaro 2003). These children spent most of their time negotiating and establishing belonging to peers, and interviews confirmed that that the children considered friends central to their sense of well-being.

When investigating the children's social practices related to achieving these particular conditions for well-being (being skilful/friendship) at each school, it was found that this took place mainly within competitive frameworks at both sites. At the Tibetan school the children would establish skillfulness in competitions and at the German school belonging to peers was negotiated competitively. Most of the Tibetan girls were especially successful in academic competitions, the majority of the Tibetan boys tended to focus their skills in physical teasing and members of both sexes had developed skillfulness in verbal teasing (see also Corsaro 2003; Goodwin 1990). In contrast to the Tibetan children the competitions of the children at the German school for friendship were indirect, taking on the form of *othering* practices. The notion of *othering* describes the creating of difference mainly by rendering the other inferior, antagonistic, or both – a process through which the self and belonging becomes highlighted and empowered (Spivak 1985). In research with children, *othering* could be distinguished from 'usual' forms of exclusion in terms of its focus. When children exclude peers in order to protect their interactive space (Corsaro 2003, 2011), for example, the focus is on the commonalities of one's group whereas in the *othering* practices individuals are deliberately sought out in order to make them into a 'social other' and otherness is the center of attention. The children at the German school were creating belonging through *othering* peers. Within the girls' group *othering* manifested often as a form of bullying; boys and girls would create gender-based quarrels and many children would generate social others within role play. The result was a (heightened) sense of belonging: by creating a social other the social us became highlighted and belonging was confirmed for individuals and groups.

The fact that the children at both schools established competitive frameworks for well-being suggests that well-being was linked to competition for the children. On the one hand, competition may have been a 'thrilling' experience for the children, a welcome change from school's monotony (Harden 2012). On the other hand, the

children may have been interpretatively reproducing (Cosaro 2003, 2011) the values of their societies where well-being is inevitably linked to an engagement in economic competition. Within both Tibetan society in Exile (Roemer 2008) and German society (Steingart 2013) achieving well-being is mostly dependent on engaging in (educational or economic) competitions. Accordingly, the Tibetan children as well as the children at the German school are likely to have creatively integrated competitive conditions as a doorway to their unique understandings of conditions for well-being, that is, individual skillfulness and belonging, respectively. As children interpretatively reproduce aspects of their sociocultural environment in their peer cultures, children's views on well-being are also likely to reflect some of their societies' values.

6 Transcultural Well-Being: Self-Confidence and Resilience

While exploring children's perspectives of well-being is an important part of well-being research, a richer account should also acknowledge aspects of well-being that people are not always aware of (Cribari-Assali 2015). The Tibetan/German research project showed, for example, that while the children at each site had different understandings of what mattered most to their well-being (i.e., being skillful/friendship), other phenomena indicating their well-being, such as strong self-confidence, for instance, was not something they would necessarily conceptualize. This section suggests, therefore, that the study of well-being needs to include the exploration of aspects of well-being which participants do not necessarily conceptualize in terms of what matters most. In cross-cultural research, this would be considered a more *transcultural* approach since definitions of well-being do not rely primarily on the participants' understandings. Instead, well-being is defined primarily in accord with the researcher's conceptualizations.

In the light of such a transcultural take on well-being, the definition of well-being adopted for the first part of research – what makes up a good life for the participants – does therefore not serve anymore and requires a different approach. Yet, how is one able to identify local aspects of well-being without relying on the participants' understandings? Social science research on well-being has been tackling this dilemma by investigating transcultural *indicators* for well-being (Alanen 2014; Ben-Arieh et al. 2014). Social indicators for well-being are usually associated with objective factors; however, they have recently been applied to subjective well-being as well (Ben-Arieh and Frønes 2011). Many of these accounts (for example, Uchida et al. 2004; Mathews and Izquierdo 2009a) consider *happiness* an indicator, arguing it to be an emotion which is universally present. Childhood Studies, on the other hand, has frequently focused on children's *resilience* as a potential indicator of well-being (Punch 2013; Ungar 2005) even when studies do not mention the term well-being much at all (Daniel 2010; de Berry and Boyden 2000).

However, focusing on transcultural social indicators for well-being has the potential of becoming socioculturally ethnocentric – the pitfall of any transcultural approach in social science (Markus and Kitayama 1991). There is always the danger of “judging others according to our benchmark” (Fay 1996, p. 3). As mentioned

earlier, the danger of imposing definitions of well-being can also be considered an ethical challenge when conducting research with children (Morrow and Boyden 2014). In the Tibetan/German research project this problem was met by choosing transcultural indicators for well-being inductively during data analysis. Rather than selecting an indicator (such as happiness or resilience) prior to field entry, the topics were elicited from preliminary data analysis and thereafter pursued. This approach was conducted in line with postmodern grounded theory methods (Charmaz 2006), where data are typically collected at first in accord with what seems relevant and conceptualizations are formulated thereafter.

Thus, the Tibetan/German research project ultimately began exploring the two indicators self-confidence and resilience because in cross-cultural preliminary analysis there was a noticeable difference in self-confidence and resilience at both schools. The Tibetan children displayed a comparably higher level of both. Self-confidence or self-esteem is often linked to well-being in social science literature (Daniel and Wassell 2002) especially in social psychology (Diener and Diener 1995). Children's resilience is another indicator frequently related to children's well-being (Punch 2013). Its proponents argue that research on resilience may be helpful in fostering children's well-being (Ungar 2005).

The Tibetan children appeared much more self-confident than most of the children at the German school. Even the "least popular" children at the Tibetan school showed themselves to be confident in terms of their wants and needs whereas many children at the German school would frequently relinquish their personal wants, in order to appease more popular peers. Post-fieldwork analysis suggested how this phenomenon may have been related to what mattered most to the children at each site. First, becoming skillful (Tibetan site) presupposed a preoccupation mainly with oneself while achieving belonging (German site) required others' affection. The Tibetan children would therefore manifest a much more individualized sense of self and the children at the German school a more relational sense of self which could relate to a higher and lesser level of self-confidence, respectively. Moreover, it was much easier for the Tibetan children to demonstrate their individual skillfulness than it was to achieve an experience of belonging for the children at the German school. The Tibetan children had various ways of presenting themselves as skillful and therefore everyone seemed to 'have access' to being skillful to a certain extent. At the German school, on the other hand, achieving a stable sense of belonging was difficult for most children – especially since the othering activity (that served to establish belonging in the first place) would exclude some children from belonging by default. The children's othering practices were therefore overall not conducive to their sense of well-being.

7 Children's Well-Being and the Generational Order

Childhood is generally constructed and children are constrained by the generational order (Mayall 2008) and, therefore, research on children's well-being needs to include this aspect of children's lives (Alanen 2014; Qvortrup 2014). The

Tibetan/German research project therefore investigated how the children's environments shaped by adults may have related to the different levels of self-confidence of the children at both schools. It was found that the children were constrained and monitored by adults in different ways and to different degrees at each site.

The German school and its staff emphasized a valuing of children's agency, intergenerational equality, and did not approve of authoritarian methods. Teaching methods at the Tibetan school, on the other hand, were more authoritarian – children were expected to show respect towards elders and corporal punishment was still common. At the same time, however, the Tibetan children showed a high level of resilience towards physical punishment and displayed a similar resilience when faced with other potentially emotionally challenging situations, such as being ill or hurt, being teased by peers, or receiving low marks in class – more so than the children at the German school. For one thing, the Tibetan children's greater daily exposure to adversities is likely to have made them more resilient. Living in India, the Tibetan children were more intensely exposed to physically and emotionally challenging situations than the German children, not least, being members of a displaced people who had to flee the Chinese occupation (Von Welck and Bernstorff 2004). Overall, Tibetan children are confronted with more adversities in their daily life (for themselves and the people around them) than children in Germany.

Research on children's resilience has demonstrated that children develop remarkable ways of dealing positively with adverse situations (de Berry and Boyden 2000; Punch 2013), and it makes sense to assume that experiencing adversities may raise children's level of resilience. Case studies have shown how children facing challenging circumstances, such as war, refuge, poverty, and terminal illness may even begin to support distressed adults (see de Berry and Boyden 2000; Hinton 2000). The common assumption that caregiving is exercised only by adults may therefore be questioned (Emond 2010). As self-confidence and resilience are often interrelated, it is not surprising that the Tibetan children were more resilient and experienced a higher self-confidence.

Moreover, how the children were approached by adults at each site – in other words, the prevalent constructions of childhood – suggested some further explanations for the different levels of resilience and self-confidence at each school. As mentioned, childhood is a relational phenomenon, constructed in relation to adulthood (James and Prout 1990) and the manner in which people are viewed by their sociocultural environment significantly influences their own constructions of self (Burkitt 2008). Socioculturally shaped conceptions of self and world “influence, and in many cases determine, the very nature of experience” (Markus and Kitayama 1991, p. 224).

Within Childhood Studies, mainly the generational focus has drawn attention to the importance of deconstructing underlying ontological assumptions (about self, world, childhood, etc.) present in the children's lives. For instance, Morrow and Mayall (2009) have pondered how children's socioculturally shaped sense of self in the UK may have contributed to children's low scores at school:

In the specific case of the UK, adults tend to construct children and childhood as a social problem. This construction links in to social class divides. It is entirely possible that media, teachers and even parental concern about childhood affects the children's self-image and may partially account for low scores. If childhood is (objectively) bad and children think so too, could this be because children have internalised their risky and at risk status? What is the impact on children themselves of societal denigration of children and childhood? (Morrow and Mayall 2009, p. 225)

In a cross-cultural comparison of children from US Middle class, Matsigenka and Samoan households, Ochs and Izquierdo (2009) demonstrate how the children's ideas about what constitutes well-being differ significantly in relation to their socioculturally constructed sense of self. For the Peruvian as well as the Samoan children, self-reliance proved to be a key component to their sense of well-being, which was not the case for the North American children, who were accustomed to being given significantly fewer responsibilities by their parents in their daily life.

The Tibetan/German research project showed how the children were approached very differently by the adults at each school: children's need for protection was much more emphasized at the German school while the Tibetan children were more expected to take care of themselves. At the German school, at least as much time was spent reflecting on, regulating, and discussing the children's social abilities as with developing their academic skills. The children's social behavior was monitored by the staff who would protect the children also from one another by disciplining students for unsocial behavior, such as teasing, exclusion, othering, or physical assaults. In fact, students would mostly be disciplined for socially inadequate behavior. The developing of children's social abilities was considered one of the main tasks by teachers and caretakers.

Similar to the German school, the Tibetan school and its staff also emphasized the importance of developing prosocial behavior in the children; however, only rarely did Tibetan adults actually intervene in the children's social interaction or instruct individual children directly about social matters. It was extremely rare that individual children were disciplined for "unsocial behavior" at the Tibetan school – particularly not during the break times, where the children were almost entirely left to themselves. Children at the Tibetan school would be scolded and punished mainly for not paying attention in class, for not doing homework, or for 'disobeying' adults. Teachers would get involved only reluctantly in social issues between children, and student's requests to intervene in their conflicts would often be ignored.

The manner in which adults approached children at the Tibetan school suggests that Tibetan children were credited with a greater ability to look after themselves. The Tibetan children were expected to care for their own safety and well-being more than the children at the German school. When Tibetan children were ill, for example, and able to walk, they were sent to the local medical station on the school compound on their own or in the company of a classmate. Children were also much less supervised by adults after class, even when they were playing in potentially dangerous areas without supervision. The pedagogical approach of the German school and its staff, on the other hand, mirrored a view of children much more in need of development not only academically but also socially. Implicitly, therefore, children

were constructed at the German school as much more vulnerable and therefore in need of protection (see also Daniel 2010).

Social constructions of children are not merely abstract views but are part of adults and children's lived experience. "Both children and adults carry society's patterns of childhood in their heads, though sometimes different interpretations of these" (Zeihner 2001, p. 38). It is therefore probable that the different constructions of childhood at each site may have contributed to the different levels of resilience and self-confidence with the Tibetan children and the children at the German school. Approached as more vulnerable and in need of adult protection, the children at the German school are likely to have constructed a less confident self than the Tibetan children, who were approached much more as being resilient and entrusted with social responsibility. The German school and their staff were making a genuine effort to foster children's agency; however, their construction of childhood was most likely influencing the children's view of self in a disempowering manner.

Children in Minority Worlds have reported that they often do not feel perceived to be moral agents by their school environments (Mayall 2002). Elsewhere, Mayall explains how children themselves seem to reproduce this view: "Some children explain that they were indeed morally unreliable (...) this is a common theme in children's accounts" (2001, p. 125). Research has shown how children from Majority Worlds are often given much greater social and moral responsibility, not only for themselves but also for other family members, including adults (Hinton 2000). Moreover, many children develop astonishing abilities to deal with adverse situations as a response to these sociocultural expectations of their environment (de Berry and Boyden 2000). Corsaro (2003), for example, observed how children at an Afro-American school were left to solve their own conflicts and would skillfully master this challenge. Corsaro compares these situations to conflicts he had observed at a school in Berkeley where adults would more frequently intervene. The conflicts of the Afro-American children differed insofar as

...the children's disputes were longer, more complex, and often developed from spats between two or three kids to group debates (...) However, any serious conflict dissipated and the kids went on to more general discussion, where they tied their contributions to personal experiences and honed their skills in debate and argument. (Corsaro 2003, p. 189)

The children who were given the chance to solve their conflicts were actually able to do so, proving to be morally reliable agents.

These accounts and the findings from the Tibetan/German research project challenge the view that children's protection is exclusively beneficial to their well-being (see also Daniel 2010; Newman 2002; Punch 2013). While it is undeniable that children are in need of protection, it needs to be considered to what extent children's vulnerability is socioculturally constructed (Holland 2004) and how this may have adverse effects on children's well-being. Shielding children as much as possible from adversities may likewise prove to inhibit the development of a greater self-confidence and resilience towards the challenges of life (see also Punch 2013; Newman 2002).

8 Concluding Considerations

This chapter has provided an overview of relevant debates and theoretical frameworks for researching children's well-being, sustained by examples from a cross-cultural research project at a Tibetan and a German school. As well-being research is in its infancy within Childhood Studies, holistic theoretical frameworks for researching children's subjective well-being are still rare and in need of development.

It has been illustrated how cross-cultural research on children's well-being would be well-advised to include two approaches simultaneously: (a) researching the children's particular understandings of well-being and (b) investigating transcultural indicators for well-being within the children's interactions. These two approaches are rarely combined since a relativist and a transcultural approach (known as the particularistic versus universalistic dilemma, Papastephanou 2011) are often considered dichotomous. However, applying a methodological (as opposed to an ontological) relativism can appreciate both the similarity and uniqueness of social phenomena (Fay 1996; Geertz 1984): although children's experiences and understandings of well-being ultimately differ cross-culturally commonalities are likely. Future cross-cultural research on children's well-being may need to include these two sides of human experience in order to advance the knowledge in this field.

Moreover, research on children's well-being, more generally, can ill afford to ignore the significance of intergenerationality. Children negotiate their sense of self – in particular their understandings of what it means to be a child – in social interaction with adults which, as illustrated, is likely to influence factors for well-being, such as resilience and self-confidence.

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Ambivalence, Autonomy, and Children and Young People’s Belonging or not in Home Spaces

22

Sarah Wilson

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Abstract

Drawing on two case studies relating to both relatively “ordinary” and more difficult family circumstances, this chapter explores the spatial, sensory, and material contexts of Minority World children’s and young people’s belonging in “home” spaces. The chapter illustrates how belonging may be associated with more diverse and less conventional home spaces and, further, how sensory experience is important to feeling “at home,” or at least comfortable, in different environments. The importance of objects, including “keepsakes” and those providing access to digital resources and music, is also highlighted. In particular, in more difficult circumstances, these items may help to construct a feeling of security and to “display” connections to family members who live elsewhere. These items often also provide avenues to imagining the future. Throughout, the ambivalence and possibilities of autonomy typically incorporated within ordinary feelings of belonging are highlighted alongside the difficulties sometimes associated with more painful feelings of non-belonging.

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Children · Young people · (Non-)Belonging · Home · Ambivalence · Autonomy

1 Introduction

The notion of belonging has often been explored on national and community levels (Yuval-Davis 2011). However, ideas of belonging overlap with “ontological security” (Giddens 1991) and are “rooted in particular settings. Not just people and cultures, but also physical places and material objects” (May 2013, p. xi). This notion of belonging draws on recent work on the great significance of objects and spaces and of access to, and sensory experience of, those objects and spaces in constructing self and relationships (Finch 2007; Miller 2008; Pugh 2009; Wilson et al. 2012; Wilson 2015a). As such, this chapter does not explore children and young people’s belonging in relation to psychological theories of “attachment,” which focus almost exclusively on primary, parental relationships (Howe 2005; Quinn and Mageo 2013), but rather in terms of the “place(s), space (s), feelings and practices” (Mallett 2004, p. 62) in and through which belonging is constructed.

First, then, the spaces associated with belonging are explored. The “home” has been highlighted as a locus of everyday conceptions and practices of family life (Carsten 2005, p. 37) and as at the center of contemporary “symbolic universes” of “feeling and fantasy” and memory (Gillis 1996, pp. 61–62, 75; Bachelard 1994). The increasing ideological significance of home in providing “a sense of place and belonging in an increasingly alienating world” (Mallett 2004, p. 66) has also been examined. However, Mallett also criticizes the resulting common “conflation between house and home” (2004, p. 62). She points to the experience of danger in some homes and to the need for research into how a sense of home or feeling at home may be constructed and experienced in different spaces (2004, p. 74), including those outside of one’s living place. Similarly, Childhood Studies research into everyday practices of home has highlighted key themes of children’s relative power, autonomy, and agency inside and outside of the home and the interrelationships between the two (Skelton 2000; Matthews et al. 2000).

The significance of “[s]ensory experience [...] [to providing] a strong sense of place and belonging” has also been explored (Adams et al. 2007, p. 206). As such, and drawing on my own research (Wilson et al. 2012), this chapter also emphasizes the importance of the sensory, lived experience of “home” spaces, including the level of control over sensory experience there, to a sense of safety and belonging. Relatedly, it also reflects “the material turn” in sociology, highlighting the importance of objects within domestic spaces, including electronic items, to a child, or young person’s feeling of belonging both within particular spaces and relationships and broader communities (Pugh 2009; Moore 2011; Ruckenstein 2013). Furthermore, the relationship between belonging and the imagination (Bachelard 1994) and the possibility of building toward a future (Yuval-Davis 2011), partly through the use of these objects, is also addressed.

This chapter is thus divided into sections on the construction of belonging through spaces, sensory experience, and objects. Throughout, the slipperiness and complexity of the notion is emphasized. In particular, the importance of the possibility of a degree of autonomy to feelings of belonging is highlighted. It is also recognized that much belonging is ambivalent and that a comfortable “non-belonging” may be a positive choice. Sometimes, however, a sense of non-belonging is painful. This chapter draws on work, and on two case studies introduced in the next section, that highlights this complexity within both “ordinary (or as Mason and Tipper (2010) put it ‘ordinarily complex’) families” and the more vulnerable circumstances, such as those of “looked after” children (those in the care or under the supervision of the state), without implying that difficult circumstances are restricted to the latter group. As such, the chapter focuses on the Minority World, primarily the UK, and includes material relating to some of the less affluent Minority World childhoods there that Tisdall and Punch (2012) argue should receive more attention from researchers, while also highlighting the relationship between the experience of belonging and power.

1.1 Case Studies

1.1.1 Case Study 1

The author carried out secondary analysis of data from the longitudinal, qualitative Timescapes “Siblings and Families” study, which includes three waves of interviews with 50 young people (aged 5–13 at the time of their original interviews) from mixed, but predominantly “ordinary,” backgrounds across Britain. The project focused on the respondents’ intra-generational relationships and employed numerous methods, including photo-elicitation in relation to favorite domestic places.

The aim of this secondary analysis (see Wilson 2014) was to learn from other researchers’ conceptualizations of home and the methods they had used to explore young people’s understandings of “home” places. In addition, the author wanted to interrogate assumptions built up over the course of her previous research work with participants from predominantly “vulnerable” backgrounds, while developing a new project (Case Study 2). This process highlighted how unexamined and unnuanced assumptions of difference in relation to “ordinary” or “vulnerable” samples, and the often different disciplinary location of research with each, may affect the data produced in terms of methods chosen, questions (not) asked, and interpretations made. Such findings confirmed Gillies’ (2000) observation that isolated accounts of difficult experiences within “ordinary” samples are often not written up, and as such, the complexity and pain within “ordinary” families may be underestimated.

1.1.2 Case Study 2: Young People Creating Belonging: Spaces, Sounds, and Sights

This ESRC-funded project (RES-061-25-0501) was a participatory, qualitative study of the sensory and spatial construction of (not) belonging (whether positive, negative, or ambivalent) with “looked after” children and young people. From 2011 to

2012, the researchers worked with 22 young people (13 men, 9 women) mostly aged between 14 and 17 (full range 10–23), recruited through Scottish voluntary sector and statutory social work agencies. All the respondents were “white,” reflecting the predominant ethnic composition of “looked after” children in Scotland, a country significantly less ethnically diverse than England and Wales. The participants lived in remote island communities as well as Scotland’s more densely populated “Central Belt.” At the time of the first interviews, three participants were living independently having left care, 10 were living with foster carers, three with kinship carers, three in residential care, two in secure units, and one had been adopted. However, several participants’ living circumstances changed over the course of the project and all had experienced varied, and often successive, official living arrangements. The circumstances of those who had left care to live alone in often tiny, ill-furnished council flats (public housing) were often particularly difficult (see Wilson 2015a; Wilson and Milne 2016).

The project employed sensory methods (Pink 2009) over the course of two, loosely structured and often long (1–4 h) interviews. After an initial meeting in which they were talked through the methods and their ethical implications, the participants were asked to take photos of their favorite and least favorite spaces (where they felt most and least “at home”) and three significant objects, to record sounds (including music) that were important to them, and to complete drawings of their ideal and current living places. Reflecting the findings of Case Study 1, the instructions did not limit the participants to where they lived nor to conventional domestic or “private” spaces. Pseudonyms chosen by the participants themselves will be used throughout.

1.2 The Importance of Different Spaces to Belonging

The notion of “home” is often associated with belonging. The “home” is often connected in the “Anglo-European imaginary” with intimacy, privacy, comfort, and belonging (Mallett 2004), and it has been argued that “our house is our corner of the world” (Bachelard 1994, p. 4). This association of home with belonging is particularly strong in the case of children. According to contemporary Minority World discourses, the proper place for children and young people is supervised in the family “home” (Forsberg and Strandell 2007), while the unsupervised presence of children in public spaces is problematized (James et al. 1998). Some research has noted that many younger children in “ordinary” families share conventional associations of “home” with “safety” (Harden 2000).

However, home can also “create a sense of marginalisation and estrangement” (Mallett 2004, p. 84) or a feeling of being “homeless at home” as in the context of domestic violence (Wardaugh 1999). Furthermore, much Childhood Studies work has identified the importance children attach to places not only inside but also outside of the “home” (Hart 1979; Rasmussen 2004). Similarly, the importance of public space to young people from overcrowded homes (Matthews et al. 2000), and the ways in which young women may effectively “privatize” pockets of public space

(Skelton 2000), have been highlighted. This section discusses both belonging and non-belonging in different conventional and less conventional home spaces. It emphasizes the importance of a certain degree of control or autonomy to children and young people's feeling "at home" in particular environments whether or not those environments reflect conventional norms of a singular, bricks and mortar place. It also highlights the large degree of ambivalence and everyday conflict contained within "ordinary" belonging.

In both case studies, many participants' photos and related discussions reflected conventional and idealized notions of "home" as a tranquil, static, bricks and mortar place of primary or exclusive residence (Mallett 2004). Respondents from across the samples discussed aspects of conventional living spaces in positive terms. The importance of bedrooms or other relatively private spaces in and around homes, and the autonomy or "own space" they afforded, was particularly emphasized, as in McRobbie and Garber's (1976) research. In Case Study 1, those happiest with their homes were often the minority who could retire to bedrooms (or sheds) they did not have to share to watch TV or play computer games. For example, Ash loved the fact that there was a shed containing a drum kit, sound system, sofa, and blinds at the bottom of the garden of his parents' small terraced house, where he could go if he wanted his "own space" and to "do things that I'm not allowed to do in the house" (see Wilson 2014, p. 4.19). Other respondents discussed their delight at being in the house alone when everyone else was out (allowing them, e.g., to practice being a pop singer with a hairbrush microphone in front of a large mirror), and one 6-year-old identified a "special" wardrobe she liked to hide in away from her siblings, although she did find it a bit "squashy" (see Wilson 2014, p. 4.24).

Similarly, in Case Study 2, many participants took photos of bedrooms as their favorite spaces. Recalling Bachelard's descriptions of the importance to homes of nooks and crannies in which to hide away "like an animal in its hole" (1994, p. 29), several younger respondents also discussed images of small "niches" where they could feel comfortably alone and safe. For example, Tiger (10, foster care) and Marissa (10, children's unit) both identified special garden places as "theirs"; Marissa recounted:

[m]y space is the shed outside.. it's really quiet and nobody thinks of looking for me there.. sometimes I want to get away from it a bit.

Such niches were important to her ambivalent sense of belonging in a children's unit, while, for Tiger, they reinforced a strong sense of ease with his current foster carers after previous difficult placements (see Wilson and Milne 2016, p. 145).

Furthermore, in both case studies, the respondents' sense of "belonging in or to" was not limited to one bricks and mortar space but often included friends' homes. In Case Study 1, several, mostly young women, spoke of "living" at a friend's house and being referred to there as "like" a member of the family. At 14, Danielle spent a lot of time at the house of a friend whose family attended the same church. By 16 she was spending more time with them and even had a semipermanent bed in her friend's room. She emphasized, "I get out of the house as much as possible now" (Wilson 2014, pp. 4.31–4.32).

In Case Study 2, Reggie (23), who lived alone in a bedsit, emphasized how he felt like “furniture” in a corner of his mother’s living room containing a couch and a computer. At times, he used headphones to protect himself from the surrounding “insane busyness” of his brothers arguing with their girlfriends. His sense of belonging in this place seemed to relate to comfort but also to his recognition by others as part of the “furniture,” trusted with a key and able to enjoy or to separate himself from the hubbub of others without causing offense (see Wilson and Milne 2016, p. 147). Several other participants highlighted networks of “home” places, incorporating some which resembled conventional norms (such as parts of relatives’ homes), but also others, including mobile and outdoor places, that are not usually considered to be either “private” or “home-like.” For example, in addition to her aunt’s and a friend’s houses, Channel (17) identified a beach, her college, a caravan park, and the bus that she used to travel between all of these different “home” spaces (see Wilson and Milne 2016, p. 147).

Such accounts suggest comfortable experiences of belonging in conventional and less conventional home spaces. However, much work on children’s experiences of home spaces has also identified elements of conflict and ambivalence within such “ordinary” experiences of belonging. Notably generational and gendered power dynamics affecting the use of different parts of the home have been highlighted (McRobbie and Garber 1976; Sibley 1995; Mcnamee 1999).

Case Study 1 participants’ ambivalence as regards home spaces often reflected their lived experience of the size, repair, and location of their homes, parent–child power relationships, and the transient nature of young people’s expected presence there. In some cases, concurrent understandings of the home as a residence but also as a workplace or an economic asset, which might need to be sold, became clear (Wilson 2014). For example, as Skelton (2000) discusses, many respondents felt excluded from common areas especially in the evenings, if parents worked from home:

It ain’t really a family area this [living] room because my mum is usually working (Alannah 17 in Wilson 2014, p. 4.18).

Most respondents had to share a bedroom at some point or store their things in siblings’ rooms as a result of spatial constraints, and many complained about these arrangements and the lack of privacy and quiet they entailed. Such tensions sometimes led to arguments with parents stepping in to try to resolve them:

most of my toys and stuff are in his bedroom because [mine] is really small, and he goes ‘Hurry up! You’ve got ten seconds . . . And . . . if I take too long, then ..he might push me a bit, and he might shove me. . . . Well my mum . . . starts shouting. . . . And my dad starts shouting!’ (Ash, 9, before his parents constructed the shed, in Wilson 2014, p. 4.20).

As discussed in several articles written about this particular sample (Gillies and Lucey 2006; Lucey 2013), varying degrees of conflict and violence between siblings seemed to be somewhat, if not quite, normalized or “backstage” behavior

(Punch 2008) within these home contexts. For example, Lizzie (11) mentioned how her sister would pull her hair and bite and kick her (see Wilson 2014, p. 4.22).

Such accounts of conflict and ambivalence in relation to living spaces were not uncommon therefore. In most cases, they did not detract from an overall sense of belonging within a certain space or family. In some cases, however, across both samples and in the author's research more generally, this ambivalence was more extreme, reflecting a sense of not being recognized consistently as important within the home and, sometimes, of non-belonging. In a previous study of the effects of parental substance misuse (Wilson et al. 2012), one respondent's appreciation of her "nice" "home" with her dad, as opposed to living with her heroin-using mother, was clear:

I feel safe and it just feels nice to go home to a nice home and not, you know, some house where there's going to be a bunch of heroin addicts laying around or your Mum out of her nut [head]? (Sally, 18 in Wilson et al. 2012, p. 98).

Often the solution in such circumstances was to seek refuge in bedrooms or in friends' homes, practices that, as Danielle's experience indicates, build on "ordinary" behaviors among young people. In Case Study 1, for example, Allie related how she found it difficult to be with the rest of her family, spent most of her time in her room, preferring not to bring friends to her "embarrassing" home and to stay away:

"[m]ost of the time yeah because I don't like being here . . ." (see Wilson 2014, p. 4.9).

For some of these respondents, the importance of bedrooms as places of refuge was reinforced (Wilson et al. 2012), as also observed in studies of young people living with domestic violence (Överlien and Hydén 2009) and parental mental illness (Fjune et al. 2009). However, sometimes this sense of non-belonging related to poverty and the physical state of the buildings themselves. For example, in Case Study 1, several respondents spoke of living in rundown flats and areas they actively disliked, and where they did not feel at home:

I don't really like this house . . . I think it's too small and don't like the decoration . . . it's horrible (Lizzie at 15 in Wilson 2014, p. 4.2).

In Case Study 2, several care leavers reflected on their great difficulty in feeling a sense of belonging in the flats allocated to them and how they spent most of their time there elsewhere. This sense of non-belonging partly related to a lack of autonomy in choosing where to live; Reggie had been placed quite far from his mother's home, while Dylan thought that his flat was "vile." These feelings of nonconnection or belonging to the spaces allocated seem to have prevented any process of "orientation" there (Ahmed 2006). In Reggie's tiny bedsit, there were none of Bachelard's nooks and crannies, although he had drawn some squiggles on the walls in a vain attempt to introduce some sense of intimacy into this space. Such findings illustrate the importance of the embodied experience of space and that:

“spaces matter, in many more ways than the rather blank, neutral, calm and lifeless sense of their common usage” (Horton and Krafft 2006, p. 270).

The importance of sensory experience to belonging is explored in the next section.

1.3 The Importance of Sensory Experience to Belonging

There has been an increasing emphasis in various disciplines on the importance of sensory experience. As Mason and Davies argue:

too often social science research and knowledge is oddly abstracted and distanced from the sensory, embodied and lived conditions of existence that it seeks to explain (2010, p. 600).

Nevertheless, recently the importance of sensory experience has been highlighted as “provid[ing] a strong sense of place and belonging” (Adams et al. 2007, p. 206; DeNora 2000; May 2013). Similarly, Bachelard’s imagery of the home (in terms of warmth, security, and protection) is highly sensory. He speaks of the increased intimacy of the house when besieged by winter (1994, p. 38) and mentions the lampshade as a positive image of solitude (1994, p. 36). These are all aspects of the (ideal) home that, in his view, allow for the retention of memories and for optimistic (day) dreaming.

The positive powers of music as a source for “creating and sustaining ontological security” and affirming self and group identity have been emphasized by DeNora (2000, pp. 16–7, 52–60). Drawing on Hochschild’s notion of “emotional work,” music is presented in her work “an active ingredient in the care of the self” and as “a device with which to configure a space” (2000, p. 60) by sealing it off from outside noises. Similarly, iPod users’ auditory “privatization” of public space is noted by Bull (2007, p. 4) who argues that such auditory technologies are used to “warm up” public spaces by transforming them into “cocoon” (2007, p. 113) or “home” (2007, p. 99) and to manage social interactions, often as a “defensive strategy” (2007, p. 22). The connection between feelings of safety and intimacy and having auditory control over particular spaces is clear in these authors’ work.

With some exceptions (Rasmussen 2004), fewer studies have focused on children or young people. However, the author’s previous research (Wilson et al. 2012) into the effects of parental substance misuse further identified how domestic sensory experience may sometimes conflict with “Anglo-European” norms of “home.” For example, the importance of visual experience was illustrated by family dynamics around parental concealment, and children’s seeking out, of evidence of drug use (Rhodes et al. 2010). Such parental strategies of concealment of drug use helped constitute an uncomfortable atmosphere, undermining trust. Furthermore, like young people affected by family violence (Överlien and Hydén 2009) and parental mental ill-health (Fjune et al. 2009), many respondents emphasized the barriers to a sense of belonging posed by loud music, arguments, and other unwanted noises seeping through walls, particularly at night. For example:

My mum . . . would invite friends around . . . and, like, play loud music and..I'd ask her to turn it down 'cause it would be really late.. and she wouldn't (Dena, 17).

Her friend (Nathalie) also reflected on the atmosphere of disorder in Dena's home:

The first time I went to her house and the music was on. . . really loud. . . a really kind of crazy atmosphere. Whereas in my house [...] you're not allowed to run up and down or, cause I've got neighbours [...] But . . . as soon as I walk into her house, like even now, I change, I like speak really loudly. [...] her house is really quite disruptive (see Wilson et al. 2012, pp. 100–101).

Such accounts therefore suggest the important role of sensory experience in constructing whether or not a particular environment – and the relationships within it – feel “normal” or secure. Respondents were acutely conscious of the contrast between their own (unpredictable, noisy) homes and contemporary discourses that emphasize the need for a tranquil, domestic home life in order to establish a stable sense of self (Illouz 2007). They found this contrast difficult to negotiate leading to a highly ambivalent sense of belonging.

Many respondents did try to exercise some autonomy in these environments, using visual, auditory, and physical strategies to do so. They employed music (DeNora 2000) and the television to vent feelings, blank out unwanted sounds, and to create a sense of warmth and security, a “cocoon” (Bull 2007) in bedrooms, or, as discussed above, sought out such “home-like” environments elsewhere (Wilson et al. 2012). Overall, however, this autonomy was very limited, leading to a sense of estrangement in the home.

The Case Study 1 analysis confirmed the general importance accorded to noise in constructing understandings of belonging in family places. A certain amount of noise was considered an intrinsic part of family life:

I don't think I'd like to come home to *no* noise . . . obviously I do when I come home late, but it's nice to just sit down in the front room and watch 'Big Brother' with everyone (Alannah, 17, in Wilson 2014, p. 4.14).

It was important that these noise levels were controlled. The most common response to a general question, “What about any rules around the house?,” asked in the first wave of the case Study 1 interviews, highlighted how rules limiting noise levels were perceived as critical to living together and to avoiding conflict with neighbors. Conversely, overly loud noise was perceived as antisocial, a tool that could be used to avoid social interaction; for example, one young woman had concluded that an older brother, who stayed in his room playing music very loudly, wanted to isolate himself from the rest of the household.

As discussed in Case Study 2, the sensory methods employed and data produced provided an insight into participants' attempts to create and maintain a sense of belonging within both more intimate, conventionally “private” spaces and more “public” environments. For example, Channel (17) discussed the color scheme and

objects in a photograph of what she first presented as her aunt's living room at length. These conversations revealed that the house and its contents provided numerous visual, sensory reminders of her grandfather, who had lived there until his death in the previous year. She emphasized that this house had not changed over the years, providing a measure of stability that contrasted with her experience of moving between foster placements. She was so attached to the particular aesthetic of her aunt/grandfather's living room that she had reproduced significant elements of it, including the flowery wallpaper, in her decoration of a friend's flat, where she spent most of her time (see Wilson and Milne 2016, p. 146).

In contrast, Bachelard's image of home as a place in which to snuggle up against the cold of winter was lost on Reggie who could not afford to heat his bedsit. Instead he thought of places in which he could keep warm outside of his flat. Like Bachelard however, Reggie pointed to the importance of lampshades, and to how the absence of a lampshade had affected him on his arrival from a children's home. It had meant that he could not view his flat as a haven against the world. Instead it seemed to him a non-intimate place reflecting a lack of "recognition" (May 2013 drawing on the work of Honneth). Another care leaver, Dylan (18), talked about his flat in similar terms; his cat wore a bell to provide him with an independent source of noise and he played music very loudly to fill the silence (see Wilson and Milne 2016, p. 150). Sensory experience was therefore crucial to a sense of belonging in a particular place. In the next section, another crucial and often connected aspect of belonging will be discussed, specifically the importance of objects.

1.4 The Importance of Objects to Belonging

The importance of "transitional objects" is reflected in social work practices such as "memory boxes" and "life story work" which help to create records of little-remembered periods (Brodzinsky et al. 1998; Baynes 2008). The significance of such work is often explained in relation to bereaved children's difficulties in remembering or finding out about relatives and important events, as well as their need to explore and work through difficult past circumstances.

The "material turn" in the social sciences has also fuelled an interest in objects and materiality (Woodward 2015). Drawing on Miller (2008, 2010), May argues, for example, that "[o]bjects can store and possess emotions, and can, for example, represent deceased people and allow the bereaved to continue a relationship with them even after death" (2013, p. 144) through their visibility, texture, and smells. The significance of objects and memory boxes may also extend beyond their actual contents and again relates to the importance of "holding" memories. Bachelard argues that "[t]he casket contains things that are unforgettable, unforgettable for us, but also unforgettable for those to whom we are going to give our treasures. Here the past, the present and a future are condensed" (1994, p. 84).

At the same time, the importance of everyday and routine "display" as "an activity which characterizes contemporary families" has been explored by Finch (2007, pp. 65–66). She draws on Morgan's work on "family practices" (1996) which

shifted understandings of “family” away from particular structures to focus on the way family and other relationships are “done” in everyday routines or activities. The argument here is that “families need to be ‘displayed’ as well as ‘done’” and further that ‘the process of seeking legitimacy entails displaying one’s chosen family relationships to relevant others and having them accepted’ (Finch 2007, pp. 66, 71). Being able to make such a claim and to have it recognized by others has been argued to be crucial to the prevalent “psychoanalytic imagination” of the construction of self and identity (Illouz 2007, p. 71). As a result, circumstances, including those of same-sex families, separated households postdivorce, and transnational family relationships, in which “family” and “household” do not (easily) coincide may be those in which display (often in the form of activities, relationship narratives, and “keepsakes”) becomes particularly important (Finch 2007, p. 77).

In Case Study 1, the great importance accorded by respondents to objects seemed to relate in part to the conflicts and the lack of privacy inherent in families sharing limited space. Since many respondents shared bedrooms, concerns for privacy and personalization were often focused on smaller spaces such as beds or private objects; for example, Allie (9) mentioned a “box that says [name] on it and my dad carved it and [older sister’s] not allowed to go into that” (see Wilson 2014, p. 4.23).

Furthermore, examining these respondents’ photos of their favorite spaces suggested a different aesthetic of “homely” space than is often associated with adults, one that perhaps reflected the young people’s relative lack of decision-making power there. Instead of taking shots of entire rooms, for example, their photos often focused on personalized corners or on particular objects. For example, photos of bedrooms did not portray a conventionally “homely” sense of a whole room but tended to highlight electrical items (computers, mobile phones) or sporting equipment. On reflection, this more restricted, and what seemed at first sight to be a cold and impersonal focus perhaps related to the young people’s lack of influence over the decoration of their bedrooms. Holly, notably, emphasized that she detested the color of her bedroom walls in each of her interviews. In her third interview she related that her room was to be repainted at last, but explained that this decision related to her parents’ decision to sell the house and was not a response to her long-standing complaints. This concentration on specific items may also reflect an appreciation that these items were really “theirs” and could be taken with them to future homes (see Wilson 2014, p. 4.29).

For “looked after” young people, such as those in Case Study 2, who tended to have very little contact with their families of origin, the importance of being able to “display” some kind of family seemed to be heightened, as Finch suggests. Several participants discussed photographs of loved ones that they kept in their bedrooms. For example, Jodie (15, residential care) discussed a photograph she had taken of a framed portrait of her former foster parents and their dog that she displayed prominently in her room. She took care to emphasize that they had given the photograph to her. Such a display, both in her room and, arguably, her discussion of it in this interview, may be seen as a claim to be recognized as forming part of a more conventional family setup than the one she was living in at the time of this interview (see Wilson 2015b, p. 133). Teddy bears were frequently discussed, and often by

older respondents, as among the few material objects to have shared their journeys through multiple placements in the care system. For many, including Liz (12, foster care), her teddy was “someone” to whom she could chat and a source of physical comfort and familiar smells. Indeed, several respondents recounted that these bears also carried the familiar smells of important people, often relatives or former social workers. Often it seemed unlikely that this could be the case, but the “reality” seemed less important than their imagination of this continued presence, which provided a sense of the sensory belonging discussed above (see Wilson and Milne 2016, p. 146).

Not all such keepsakes referred back to the past or to previous living arrangements or associated relationships, however. Tiger (10, foster care) possessed few things that related to the time before his current foster placement but had adopted his foster brother’s hobby of collecting bird and animal ornaments and discussed several photos of these ornaments in his interview. In this way perhaps, as Finch speculates in relation to “chosen” families, he seemed to claim his current placement as his “real” and future family where he “belonged.” In contrast for Penfold (14, foster care) a photograph of a guitar hanging on his bedroom wall seemed to provide a means of displaying a comfortable sense of non-belonging. His explanation of its significance seemed to assert a consistent sense of self from a very young age in spite of multiple moves and of having a talent and an identity separate from any of the foster families with whom he had lived:

SW: Did somebody teach you to play?

PENFOLD: On my own.

SW: Wow! So did you teach yourself to play guitar?

PENFOLD: A-ha, since I was the age of four I taught myself.

SW: And how did you get hold of this guitar?

PENFOLD: I don’t know.

SW: It’s just always been there?

PENFOLD: Aye.

(see Wilson 2015b, pp. 134–135).

Some of these participants’ accounts reflected a very fragile or an uncomfortable sense of non-belonging, however. By the time of her second interview, Channel had lost access to the living room she loved after an argument with her aunt. Before leaving she had ripped a piece of her beloved wallpaper from the wall, which was now stored in a box at her boyfriend’s place, since she had nowhere to display it. Furthermore, several of the items photographed and discussed by participants might be seen to reflect the “seething absence” of the possibility of living with parents or siblings. Reggie lacked the caskets Bachelard mentions in which to keep his belongings and had little to inherit from his family. His photos of objects tended to emphasize a very solitary identity, rather than any sense of a connection to, or display of, family or community. Notably, he took a photo of the bag in which he carried most of his belongings around with him and spoke of how “having too much just slows you down” (see Wilson and Milne 2016, p. 150). Furthermore, his sense of yearning for a stronger sense of identity seemed to be reflected in his interest in

tribal tattoos and desire to form part of a culture in which, as he perceived it, such rites of passage guaranteed a sense of adulthood and masculinity.

1.5 The Importance of Digital Items to Belonging

In recent years, electronic items have become increasingly important in children and young people's lives. Nevertheless, in the UK at least, children's relationship to computers and digital technologies (including YouTube™, Facebook™, and games consoles) has repeatedly been perceived as "harmful or morally undesirable" (Buckingham 2011, p. 23). It has been observed (Meyer 2007) that it has become morally difficult to contest associations drawn, as, for example, by Palmer (2006), between children's Internet use and the risk of pedophilia. Further, psychosocial research has often focused exclusively on the negative "effects" on children of advertising and online violence (Buckingham 2011). Childhood Studies research, including the EU KidsOnline Project, has also identified content (violence, pornography), contact (bullying, grooming), and privacy risks (Livingstone and Haddon 2008). However, these authors have emphasized that: "protection must be balanced against enabling children's rights, pleasures and opportunities, including the opportunities for risk-taking" (Livingstone et al. 2012, p. 3) and that children's own understandings of harm must be prioritized.

Furthermore, and while critical of the way that the commercialization of childhood is "shaping what it means to care and what it means to belong" (Pugh 2009, p. 5), other authors have emphasized the significance of such items to parents and their children. Pugh's (2009) ethnographic work casts the importance of such items in US households in terms of participation in an "economy of dignity." She uses "dignity" (2009, p. 51) to connote being able to join in with, and be heard particularly by peers, as well as reflecting a sense of being cared for (2009, p. 64). Children who could not participate in this way were observed to engage in "facework" to negotiate this sense of exclusion.

Drawing on such work, it has been argued that children and young people's uses of these technologies are not exclusively individualistic but "embedded within everyday life and interpersonal relationships" (Buckingham 2011, p. 37). Others have argued that their use can create opportunities for sociality and positive self-representation (Aarsand and Aronsson 2009; Miller 2010; Livingstone and Brake 2010). Such technologies may be used in the context of trusting social care relationships as means to foster nonverbal communication and to "create coherent life stories" (Hammond and Cooper 2013, p. 5). Further, it has been argued that the Internet provides a space, notably through social networking sites, in which young people can experiment safely with nonheterosexual identities (Downing 2013), while similar points have been made in relation to disabled youth (Asbjørnslett et al. 2012). The ways in which young people with "socio-emotional difficulties" who encounter difficult experiences in schools and may seek out supportive relationships, through online resources including video games, have also been identified (Holtby et al. 2013). In view of these authors, such relationships, including "weak"

and nonlocal ties (Wells 2011), are important and underpin these young people's development of social and cultural capital. Indeed, it has been argued that online communities are now an essential element of children and young people's sociality, precisely because of the way they can be used to circumvent social and spatial boundaries imposed by parents and educators (Ruckenstein 2013). Moore (2011, p. 8) further argues that such technologies "allow users –individuals and groups- to create and develop live-able spaces and opportunities for emergent forms of sociality" offering some sense of belonging. At the same time however, authors have pointed out that there may also be disadvantages associated with digital technologies in terms of intimacy, in that a sense of loneliness may be reinforced by the absence of the other (Jamieson 2013). The less valued social or cultural capital to which these resources give access has also been noted (Holtby et al. 2013).

Although computers and mobile phones did appear in many photographs and respondents pointed to the importance of being able to contact friends outside of their homes, Case Study 1 analysis did not focus so much on these items as the relevant studies were completed prior to their current ubiquity. Nevertheless, Case Study 2 suggested the enormous contemporary significance of such items in terms of communication and as techniques of self-care (Wilson 2015a). Notably, the multifunctionality and portability of mobile phones proved very useful to those participants who were faced by frequent court-ordered moves between different residences or who spent as much time as possible away from their place of residence. Toni (16, part-time foster care), who moved between a foster carer's and a parent's house each part week used her phone to keep in touch with her friends when elsewhere, but also as a portable photograph album and address book. The intimate relational context of these items was important to her therefore (see Wilson 2015a, p. 7). Several participants in difficult relational circumstances also related socializing with online acquaintances, often through computer games. Dylan argued that social networking sites had allowed him to make new friends and recounted that he had become very close to a Facebook™ friend who he now saw frequently. For Penfold, playing computer games eased his sense of isolation in a new placement, allowing him to calm down and to socialize safely and inexpensively. In addition, recalling Finch's notion of display and Pugh's "economy of dignity," Dylan repeatedly emphasized that the source of his mobile phone was an affluent former foster mother, someone who, in his account, had held prestigious public positions. He seemed to want to display these items to show himself to be worthy of such parent-like support and "the time, care and attention of others" (Pugh 2009, p. 64) (see Wilson 2015a, p. 6).

At the same time, it was clear that the use of these items sometimes reflected an extremely ambivalent or nonexistent sense of belonging. Reggie, for example, listened to particular songs or sounds, such as rainfall, on YouTube™ to calm down but also recalled that he had employed such strategies since his childhood to help him block out family conflicts: "I think you have to or you'd just freak....go completely insane" (see Wilson 2015a, p. 9). It may therefore be significant that the participants that placed most emphasis on the importance of such items in terms of providing music included the "care leavers," Reggie and Dylan, who used music to

fill the silence of the flats they hated. An important aspect of their use of music and online resources was the imaginative resources that they afforded, something explored in the next section.

1.6 The Importance of Imagination to Belonging

As discussed, the imaginary “cocoon” or sense of security potentially constructed through music, television characters, or reading, and the objects providing access to them, represented an important element of many young people’s belonging. The possibility of imagination was not only significant to surviving the present, however. Indeed, as Yuval-Davis (2011) emphasizes, having some form of project for the future may be a critical aspect of feeling a sense of belonging. As such, an important element of belonging to a place may relate to the possibility of being able to plan or imagine a future in that environment. The pertinence of imagination is also emphasized by Bachelard who ties its very origins to the house which he sees as “one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind” (1994, p. 6). The significance of imagination to his thought cannot be underestimated as he further argues that:

it is always more enriching to *imagine* than to *experience* (1994, p. 88 emphasis added).

The focus in Case Study 1 on photographs of objects prized for their potential to contribute to a future dwelling outside of the parental home provides one suggestion of the salience to young people of the possibility of imagining a future in a different space. In Case Study 2 there were further examples of building toward or imagining a different future, including the use of digital resources to try out different identities. For example, like Downing’s (2013) respondents, a few older participants identified film characters or singers, whose sexual orientation was unclear, and that they had come across through YouTube™, as their favorite music tracks. Several conversations also pointed to how respondents used imaginative resources to analyze and move on from previous difficulties and to build toward a different future. Reggie discussed a computer printout of a character from a video game in his first interview and emphasized how he enjoyed the safe, imaginative space the games afforded in which to engage with difficult historical and developing questions around his personal history and identity (see Wilson 2015a, p. 9). Meanwhile Drab (12, children’s unit) discussed an excerpt from a music video, in which a young boy looks in through a window at his dad’s “new” family and later enters the home and vandalizes the room of one of his dad’s “new” children. This track and associated video allowed him a safe and even “cool” and publicly recognized space to explore difficult experiences. In a process which might be compared to the ability to “mentalize” (Fonagy and Target 1997), he returned to this video frequently to reflect on his relationship with his father and anger at past events, while emphasizing that he had moved on from that anger (see Wilson 2015a, p. 10). Certain places also seemed to provide environments in which future possibilities could be imagined. Notably, the significance of Channel’s reproduction of the aesthetic of her grandfather’s place in her

friend's flat did not relate only to her past; it seemed to help provide a secure place to build toward a future as part of a "chosen" family with her friend and her friend's son. Indeed, in her first interview, she referred to decorating her friend's place as a "project" (see Wilson and Milne 2016, pp. 146–147).

In contrast, some of the more difficult experiences of fragile or non-belonging experienced by some participants, especially in Case Study 2, presented barriers to the imagination of a better future (Wilson and Milne 2016). Channel's experience of losing access to this flat as well as to her aunt/grandfather's place illustrates the fragility of her access to places in which she could imagine a future. Furthermore, part of Reggie's problem in making his flat feel homely included the fact that he could not imagine it as such, and this had had a very real effect on how he felt about his future possibilities and on his mental health.

2 Conclusion

Belonging has been characterized as "feeling at ease with one's self and one's social, cultural, relational and material contexts" (May 2013, p. 14). This chapter has explored belonging by focusing on the sensory, spatial, and material contexts of children and young people's lives, primarily in the Minority World. As such, it reflects a concern with how belonging is experienced and "done."

Young people's experiences of belonging have been considered across more and less conventionally home-like spaces since the literature and the author's research suggests that feelings and therefore explanations of belonging cannot be limited to the latter or driven by idealized Anglo-European norms of "home" as a cozy haven. A wide variety of spaces inside and outside of the places the respondents officially lived were identified in both case studies as providing a sense of home. Furthermore, this chapter argued that even comfortable feelings of belonging are often complex and ambivalent and may coexist with conflict. Both case studies reflect how intra- and intergenerational power dynamics are an intrinsic element of belonging and that developing alternative spaces outside of the family home is important to a broad range of young people partly as a result. In addition, young people may try hard to locate or create their own spaces, in which to exercise a sense of autonomy within the home and, sometimes, in more difficult circumstances, to construct a "safer" place, through the deployment of sensory resources including music.

Another important element of belonging, or sometimes of comfortable non-belonging, related to the incorporation and display of biographically significant "keepsakes" in particular spaces. Such display seemed to be particularly important in circumstances less readily presentable as "family-like," and some respondents made quite striking claims relating to ways in which the presence of such items maintained sensory connections to important people. In addition to maintaining connections to the past, particular, often electronic, items and spaces were also identified as resources with which to explore difficult experiences, negotiate identities, and imagine a positive future.

The difficulties encountered by a minority of respondents in constructing or maintaining a sense of belonging were also evident. Some respondents, especially in Case Study 2, did not feel that they lived in or had access to spaces in which they felt comfortable or valued or from which they could imagine a future. In some cases, this strong sense of non-belonging also reflected a sense of not being recognized by important others. Their circumstances related strongly to a lack of both relational and material resources and, as such, point to the links between belonging and political decision-making, especially in relation to less affluent young people in Minority World countries, such as the UK. These findings also suggest the interest of further research into belonging in the Majority World. Without ignoring the overlaps between Minority and Majority World experience, it would, for example, be interesting to explore how belonging may be affected by extreme poverty, by more communal notions of family, or by experiences of transnational migration.

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Hybridity, Hyphens, and Intersectionality: Relational Understandings of Children and Young People’s Social Identities

23

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Abstract

Children and young people’s everyday lives and relationships are both situated within their immediate environments (such as within the family or in institutional settings) as well as shaped by wider structural developments and experiences of inequalities. This means that children and young people’s social identities involve multiple and shifting positions in terms of gender, social class, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexuality, disability/ability, and more. While many writers acknowledge the complexity and relationality of children’s social identities, there are various theoretical frameworks through which these have been conceptualized, with different implications for *which* children and young people’s lives are explored and which *aspects* of their social identities are

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foregrounded through research. This chapter discusses three such theoretical frameworks: (1) hybridity, (2) hyphenated identities, and (3) intersectionality. In doing so, this chapter draws attention to the importance of the historical and ontological bases of theoretical frameworks and how they impact on the understandings of children and young people's identity work.

Keywords

Children and young people's social identities · Inequalities · Relationships · Hybridity · Hyphenated identities · Intersectionality · Difference · Belonging · Exclusion

1 Introduction: Multiple Frameworks for Understanding Social and Relational Identities

Children and young people's everyday lives and social relations are situated not only within their immediate contexts, but they also are shaped by wider social conditions and structural developments. This means that, in order to understand children's relationships, research not only needs to explore how they are constructed and performed between individuals and groups within particular settings (such as within the family or in educational institutions) but also needs to consider how these relationships are bound up with wider processes of identification and experiences of inequalities. Such processes of identification have been described as deeply relational and as always involving "classifying oneself and others" (Jenkins 2008, p. 24), since defining who we are requires defining who we are not – who, where, and what we belong to and who, where, and what we differ from. Thus, children and young people's social identities involve complex, shifting, and potentially contradictory forms of being and belonging in terms of their multiple positions in relation to gender, social class, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexuality, disability/ability, and more.

Writers in the field of children and young people's geographies, and the interdisciplinary field of childhood and youth studies more widely, have a long-standing interest in such questions around social identities. Due to its particular focus, research in this field tends to foreground the category of childhood as a primary aspect of social identity. Like other social identities, childhood may at first appear to be a biological category, marked by age (Holloway and Valentine 2000). However, the growing interdisciplinary field of childhood studies, following Prout and James' (1990) proclamation of a new theoretical paradigm, has problematized this assumption. Childhood has come to be understood as a social construct, and research has drawn attention to how children and young people contribute to the construction and determination of their own childhoods. Crucially, the category of childhood has also been deconstructed by drawing attention to the ways in which it is fractured by other dimensions of difference, for example in relation to gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, disability/ability, and social class (e.g., Frønes 1993; Holloway and Valentine 2000).

Thus, while researchers in the field of childhood studies and children's geographies prioritize the category of childhood/age, they have explored various other aspects of children's social identities – most notably gender and sexuality (Renold 2005; Thorne 1993), race/ethnicity (Connolly 1998; Van Ausdale and Feagin 2001), and disability (Davis et al. 2008; Tisdall 2012). There has been a shift toward a rejection of notions of identities as essentialized and fixed but instead toward a recognition of multiplicity and complexity (Konstantoni 2011; Kustatscher 2015). There has also been a growing trend in the literature to view children and young people's social identities as constructed or performed in interactions, and children's geographers have contributed to these debates by stressing how socio-spatial contexts produce and reproduce particular social identities (Gordon 1996; Konstantoni 2012). This attention to social interactions and contexts has led to a conceptualization of social identities as deeply relational and situated (Hopkins and Pain 2007). While many writers acknowledge the complexity and relationality of children's social identities, there are various theoretical frameworks through which these have been conceptualized, with different implications for *which* children and young people's lives are explored, and which *aspects* of their social identities are foregrounded or silenced through research.

This chapter presents three important theoretical frameworks for understanding children and young people's social identities: (1) hybridity, (2) hyphenated identities, and (3) intersectionality. It begins by introducing each of these concepts and discussing their respective origins, definitions, and applications in research. This is illustrated with examples of specific research studies (e.g., Fine and Sirin 2007; Konstantoni 2011; Kustatscher 2015; Moinian 2009; Prout 2000; Spyrou 2006). Since each of the three concepts carries a complex history and has been used in various contexts, this chapter does not claim to provide a comprehensive review but rather a snapshot of these different ways of understanding children and young people's social identities. It is important to note that children and young people's identities have also been explored through other key frameworks, such as actor-network theory (Prout 2000) or Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus, but for the purposes of this chapter we focus on these three frameworks as they have been pathbreaking in understanding children and young people's complex and relational identities. This chapter draws on English-language literature and consequently only refers to debates in English speaking literatures. Most of the reviewed studies explore minority world contexts.

After presenting the concepts of hybridity, hyphenated identities, and intersectionality in turn, the chapter turns to discuss their benefits, overlaps, and implications while drawing particular attention to the place of relationships and power in understanding children and young people's social identities. This chapter seeks to address a number of questions:

- Which children, or groups of children, are at the center of research when using particular frameworks for conceptualizing social identities?
- Which aspects of children and young people's social identities are foregrounded, and which aspects are left out, in each of the frameworks?
- What role do power and relationships play in the respective frameworks?

Through exploring these questions, this chapter draws attention to the importance of the historical and ontological bases of our theoretical frameworks and how they impact on how we understand children and young people's identity work.

2 Neither Here Nor There: Moving Beyond Binaries Through "Hybrid Identities"

The concept of "hybridity" is often attributed to the postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha (2004), who coined the idea of the "third space" as a metaphorical place in which individuals and cultures meet and hybrid identities are constituted. According to Bhabha, the "third space" allows people's identities to be performed and recognized in a way that may not be possible in the larger society (Moinian 2009). Hybrid theorizations of identity challenge ideas about homogeneity and binary assumptions about social groups, and stress that identities are multiple, fluid, and constituted within particular social and political contexts (Thomson 2007).

An example of taking a hybrid identity approach is Moinian's (2009) qualitative study with 12–16-year-old Swedish-born children of Iranian immigrants. Moinian draws on Bhabha's (2004) definition of hybridity:

Hybrid identities can be performed and confirmed in an in-between space of culture, in which traditional fixed identities are questioned and criticized. Such a space is constituted temporarily through the re-appropriation and transformation of cultural symbols, including language, which are made to mean in a new way. (Bhabha 1994/2004, cited in Moinian 2009, p. 34)

Moinian observed that the young people constructed their identities within a hybrid space; while on the one hand, they resisted being differentiated on the basis of their Iranian roots, on the other hand they also stressed their affectionate solidarity with their Iranian families both within Sweden and in Iran. While they all emphasized the importance of their families for both emotional and material care, some of the young people chose not to speak about their families in many social contexts in order to avoid being categorized in a certain way (e.g., being "othered" by their friends because of their close family ties which were seen as unusual in comparison with more individualist Swedish discourses). Thus, the accounts of the young people reflect their constant negotiations between different forms of belonging, which are being scrutinized by others around them. For example, one of the young people states:

When I was younger I believed that I was Swedish. I was born here, and I've done everything that a Swedish child does. So what would I be if not Swedish? But then everybody else started explaining to me that I was not Swedish, I mean, I don't look Swedish. (Sirius (research participant), cited in Moinian 2009, p. 39)

At the same time, however, the young people also experienced being categorized as different from their Iranian families:

When I was in Iran, they called me a Swede. Nobody counted me as a real Iranian there. They asked me how we do different things in Sweden! They thought I was strange, but here I become an Iranian, of course, among all Swedes. (Sima (research participant), cited in Moinian 2009, p. 43)

Thus, for the young people in this study, their identities were complex and neither simply Swedish nor Iranian – their belonging was located “neither here nor there.” Bhabha’s concept of hybridity as a “third space” (neither Swedish nor Iranian) opens up possibilities for contradictory, ambiguous, and shifting identities which allow the young people’s different identities to exist side by side, while at the same time resisting stereotypical and reductionist images of either group.

Similarly, in her narrative study with Indian American youth in two high schools in New York, Asher (2008) explored how the young people negotiated particular hybrid identities at the intersections of race, class, culture, and gender between their lives at school and at home. Similar to Moinian’s research, the young people identified a range of areas (e.g., relationships with parents, dress style, choice of subjects, and career paths) in which they experienced differing expectations at home and in school, and in response to which they constructed hybrid identities that allowed them to juggle those contradictions and struggles. For example, young people described tensions experienced between stereotypes by peers in school (e.g., “You’re Asian, so you’ll want to be a doctor” (Asher 2008, p. 16)), their parents’ wishes, and their own identity preferences.

Another example of drawing on the work of Bhabha, with older young people, is Sarkar and Allen’s (2007, p. 121) study with rappers from Haitian, Dominican, and African origins in Quebec, which looked at the ways in which they perform their hip-hop identities in a “third space” “created through the use of multiple languages and in reference to multiple territories and ethnicities.” The authors suggest that the rappers engage in a process that they term “name proclaiming” which entails the public performance of responses (often very politicized and critical) to social discourses such as poverty or violence. According to the rappers, the hybrid identities performed in their songs reflect the languages and mixed identities “of the people” and “on the street” and through their songs they aim to expand awareness of these issues (Sarkar and Allen 2007, p. 124).

In the field of childhood studies, the concept of hybridity has also come to be understood in a different way, namely, in order to overcome the tension between the often problematized dualism of viewing childhood as *either* a social *or* a biological category (Lee and Motzkau 2011), to break the “grip of bio-social dualism” (Ryan 2012, p. 2), and to explore the “entanglements of biology and society” in the study of childhood (Kraftl 2013, p. 14). Prout (2000) argues that while social constructionism in the field of childhood studies has been essential to counter tendencies of biological reductionism (i.e., viewing childhood solely as a biological stage), it has also tended to neglect materialist social relations and inequalities at the

expense of focusing on discursive or representational questions. In contrast, Prout (2000, p. 2) suggests that “children’s bodies are hybrid entities,” not only constituted by their biological and socially constructed nature but also by their inextricable connections with other material objects (such as medical equipment or technology). According to Prout (2000), therefore, the polarized distinction between nature and culture is misleading, since childhood is a product of both. Consequently, the artificial distinction between childhood as *either* a biological *or* a social stage in the lifecourse needs to be overcome in order to understand how childhood and children’s bodies are constructed not only in human interactions but also in relation to material and nonmaterial resources. Such hybrid conceptualizations of childhood emphasize complexity, nonlinearity, intersections, and networks (Ryan 2012).

To summarize, hybrid identities can be understood in two ways: First, research following Bhabha and other postcolonial theorists has conceptualized hybrid identities as a response to opposing, binary assumptions about belonging to particular social and cultural groups and has drawn attention to dynamic processes of power and exclusion in our understandings of being and belonging. This theorization of hybridity challenges simplistic assumptions about categories such as “nationality” or “ethnicity” and promotes a complex, fluid, and often contradictory understanding of identities. Second, following Prout’s (2000) theorization of childhoods as hybrids composed of both nature and culture, of both human and nonhuman interactions, this approach to hybridity embraces an interdisciplinary and relational ontology of childhood (Taylor 2011) that draws attention to both social, biological, and material aspects of children and young people’s lives. By problematizing the category of age, such hybrid approaches have also drawn particular attention to intergenerational relationships and power dynamics.

Summing up, the concept of hybridity serves to challenge ideas about homogeneity and simplistic binaries. Its particular approaches foreground specific aspects of identities and their interplay with dynamics of power and belonging.

3 “Hyphenated Identities”: Subjective Identifications and Political Complexities

“Hyphenated identities” are a contested concept and the body of literature that makes use of it employs a number of competing and disputed definitions and operationalizations. Raghunandan (2012) suggests that many theoretical applications of the concept of hyphenated identities draw on anthropological writing which links the notions of culture, space, and identities together (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Indeed, hyphens are often used, explicitly or implicitly, to refer to both spatial and temporal dimensions: hyphenated identities invoke ideas about “one’s place of origin” as well as “one’s present home” (Radhakrishnan 1996, xiii, cited in Raghunandan 2012, p. 6). Used in this way, hyphenated identities highlight people’s multiple simultaneous relationships with different places and disrupt notions of essentialized identities. This constitutes a response to critiques in the field of

anthropology, multiculturalism, and beyond since the 1980s, of viewing “culture” as homogenized and essentialized (Calgar 1997).

Other writers have used the concept of hyphenated identities to draw attention to questions of politics and power. Fine and Sirin (2007) trace the concept back to the work of W. E. B. Du Bois and his theory of “double consciousness.” Du Bois, a leading African American scholar and activist for civil rights in the early twentieth century, described the struggles of African Americans to create a sense of security, equality, freedom, and belonging in a hostile white America that did not recognize their humanity nor their claim to American identity and citizenship:

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, – this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face. (Du Bois 1903/1982, p. 4)

Hyphenated identities have been used predominantly in order to refer to certain aspects of social identities: mainly to ideas about people’s multiple identifications and histories in terms of their cultures or nationalities (e.g., African American, British Pakistani, Indo-Caribbean), their racial or ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Black British), and/or occasionally also to aspects of religion (e.g., British Muslim, Muslim American). However, it has been suggested that in popular culture, media, and academia, the labeling of certain groups through hyphenated identities is not consistent: for example, Khilay (2014) argues that Muslim communities in the UK tend to be named as “British Muslims,” whereas similar hyphenated identities are not given to other religious groups (for example, references to “British Hindus” or “British Christians” are rare). Thus, the practice of labeling certain groups, and not others, with hyphenated identities, constitutes a political act, and the aspects of social identities which are “hyphenated” together inevitably foreground and construct specific aspects of identities in particular ways and across time. For example, the term African American was constructed by activists as part of the continuing project of Du Bois and other civil rights campaigners to insert Black people into the identity and citizenship of America. However, the identity of the African American is contested and there is an ongoing debate between anti-racist activists as to the implications of foregrounding cultural/geographical origins (African American) or the political and solidaristic identity of Black (Larkey et al. 1993; Neal 2001; Smith 1992).

While research with children and young people often uses hyphenated identity labels to describe participants, studies that explicitly make use of the concept and theorize it are relatively rare. Research with children and young people tends to draw on hyphenated identities particularly in relation to identities of nationality, race, ethnicity, and religion. Some researchers classify their participants through hyphenated labels (e.g., Spyrou 2006), while others have explored children and

young people's own self-identifications with particular hyphenated identities (e.g., Pinson 2008). In terms of methodological approaches, hyphenated identities have been explored through both qualitative (mainly ethnographic or narrative) and quantitative approaches (Katsiaficas et al. 2011).

Research on children and young people's hyphenated identities often includes an intergenerational perspective, focusing on the identities of second- or third-generation migrant groups (Raghunandan 2012). An example is Giampapa's (2001, p. 290) ethnographic study with Italian Canadian youth, which explores the young people's use of hyphenated identities to capture their experiences of "living across multiple worlds." For example, Francesca, one of the participants, explains:

I usually see myself as Canadian Italian. First I'm Canadian and then I'm Italian. . . I think there's an interplay of both basically like not one, like it depends on the situation too. . . I have been integrated in two cultures: Italian and Canadian. I feel a part of both of these worlds. These different cultures have shaped me to be the person that I am today. (Francesca (research participant), cited in Giampapa 2001, p. 290)

Francesca's quotation illustrates the complexity of the hyphen and how it is negotiated differently in different situations. Some young people in the study described feelings of being proud of their Italian heritage, while others emphasized their Canadian identities in order to escape Italian stereotypicalizations. Thus, Giampapa concludes that the young people constructed and challenged their multiple identities in complex and shifting ways, depending on their situated relationships with people and places.

Children and young people's identifications with hyphenated identity labels, particularly in relation to children of migrants, have also been explored through quantitative studies, drawing on questionnaires. For example, Zhou and Xiong (2005, pp. 1148–1149) found that second-generation Asian American children preferred this hyphenated identity since they perceived the United States as "home," yet at the same time resented the racial stratification in America. When examining the ethnic identities of recently arrived immigrant children from China, Haiti, and Mexico in the United States, Song (2009) found that after 5 years, most children preferred to retain their country-of-origin label (Chinese, Haitian, and Mexican). Of those children who chose a different identity label, most Haitian children preferred the hyphenated identity of "Haitian American," whereas most Mexican children preferred the "pan-ethnic" label of "Latina/Latino" or "Hispanic" over the hyphenated "Mexican American." For Chinese children who changed their identity label, there was no clear preference between either a hyphenated ("Chinese American") or a pan-ethnic ("Asian/Asian American") (Song 2009, p. 1021). These differences, shown by Song to be further qualified through gender and socioeconomic status, point toward the fact that hyphenated identifications are complex, subjective, and political processes, infused with particular meanings and values.

Indeed, exploring the importance of personal subjectivities and political struggles, in line with De Bois' original discussion of double consciousness, is a key contribution of research on children and young people's hyphenated identities. This

perspective is particularly evident in the work of Fine, Sirin, and others (Fine and Sirin 2007; Katsiaficas et al. 2011; Sirin and Fine 2007), who theorized hyphenated identities through their mixed methods research on young people's Muslim American identities and experiences of surveillance, mistrust, and racism in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. While many of the young people had lived as "invisible 'whites'" previous to the attacks (Fine and Sirin 2007, p. 17), they experienced systematic exclusion and stigmatization in the aftermath of the attacks, perpetuated in the political rhetoric of the "War on Terror." The authors problematize the label of "Muslim American," as it has been used in media and popular culture to homogenize, exoticize, or silence a particular group of young people in the USA. However, their research reveals that many of the young people themselves have adopted this hyphenated identity. As Hadice, a 17-year-old Syrian-American participant, told the researchers: "I guess you could say I live on the hyphen" (Fine and Sirin 2007, p. 19).

This expression of "living on the hyphen" captures the fluidity of hyphenated identities. Consequently, the hyphen has been theorized as "a dynamic social-psychological space where political arrangements and individual subjectivities meet" (Fine and Sirin 2007, p. 21). For the young Muslim Americans in the study, the hyphen was negotiated differently in different contexts (e.g., in school, on the street, at the airport, at the mosque), and thus constituted a deeply relational concept. While some of the young people were worried about being labeled "terrorists," others saw it as their responsibility to actively counter such stereotypes and "educate" the people around them. Thus, the hyphen could be both a space for negative experiences as well as for assertive confrontations.

Another example which draws attention to the political complexities symbolized through hyphenated identities is Spyrou's (2006) ethnographic study with children in a Greek Cypriot primary school, in which he draws attention to how Greek Cypriot children construct Turkish Cypriot children's identities. Situating the children's interactions against the history of the island, and particularly the Turkish invasion and occupation since the 1970s, Spyrou describes how Greek Cypriot children engage in processes of "othering" in describing Turkish Cypriot children. The Greek Cypriot children's constructions were situated within the mainstream Greek Cypriot discourse, which, according to Spyrou (2006, pp. 104–105), distinguishes between the Turkish Cypriots, who are held to be "essentially good," and the Turks who occupied Cyprus, who are seen as "problematic." Thus, the children's identity constructions involved complex and ambivalent forms of "othering" and splitting their classmates' identities into "good" and "bad" aspects.

Similar attention to the sociopolitical context is given in Pinson's (2008) qualitative study with students in an Arab Muslim high school in Israel, which explored their Arab/Palestinian Muslim identities within a Jewish state. The lives of Arab/Palestinian Muslims in Israel are shaped by multiple forms of belonging and exclusions, and they may be marginalized both from the Jewish majority in Israel and from the majority of Palestinians who are not Israelis. Consequently, questions of identity were not only questions of self-identification for the young people who were interviewed but were also about being positioned by others and given access

to certain forms of belonging. Hyphenated identities provided a way of reconciling these different identities, yet the hyphens were operationalized in different ways depending on the particular context:

I don't define myself as Arab-Palestinian or as Arab-Israel-Jewish, or as Arab-Israeli. I can't define myself, *I don't know what I am*. If I am Arab-Israeli, or Arab-Palestinian [...] about a year ago, I went to Jordan. They asked me if I'm Israeli or Arab, what could I say about this? I'm both Israeli and Arab, but I couldn't say that I'm Arab-Israeli because they would had thought that I'm Jewish. So I told them that I'm Arab-Palestinian [laughing]. When we were at the border control between Israel and Jordan I told the Jews that were there that I'm Israeli, I couldn't tell them that I'm Arab-Palestinian. (Othman (research participant), cited in Pinson 2008, p. 208, original emphasis)

The quote illustrates the tensions between various discourses of identities and citizenship that the young people experienced and how they were negotiated in situated contexts and in relationships with others.

The examples discussed in this section illustrate the different ways in which hyphenated identities have been operationalized in research with children and young people. While hyphens can be used to draw attention to the multiplicity of identities, many authors also view the hyphen as a political space to draw attention to questions of histories and asymmetries in power. Hyphenated identities can be ambivalent, as they may bring together aspects of identities which can either privilege or disadvantage individuals and groups in particular contexts. Across the different studies included in this section, young people often used their hyphenated identities as a resource to negotiate the dilemmas of belonging and being different.

However, hyphenated identities have been criticized for perpetuating exclusionary assumptions about who belongs to a particular group (Gabriel 2013). For example, to refer to young people as "Muslim Americans" can be seen as implying a status of "outsider" from the national belonging of being (a "real") American. This highlights the importance of questioning which hyphenated identities are chosen by children and young people themselves, which are imposed on them by others, and the complex relational processes involved in this. Thus, it is important for researchers to not only reflect on who is given which hyphenated identities but also to question which aspects of identities remain outside hyphenated identities. For example, the studies reviewed in this section have drawn attention to aspects of nationality, ethnicity, and religion but have not included aspects of social class, gender, and sexuality, and this further problematizes our understandings of children and young people's social identities.

4 "Intersectional Identities": Everyday Experiences of Structural Relations

The term "intersectionality" is generally attributed to Kimberley Crenshaw (1991), who suggested that feminist and anti-racist scholarship did not adequately address the experiences of women of color since they neglected the particular forms of

discrimination experienced at the intersections of race and gender. Although credited with introducing the term, Crenshaw's work is indebted to other Black feminist writers in both the United States and the United Kingdom who were challenging hegemonic feminist constructions of the category of "woman" (e.g., Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983; Spelman 1988) as well as the poststructuralist turn in feminist thought (Haraway 1987). Intersectionality can be defined as

... the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power. (Davis 2008, p. 68)

In recent years, intersectionality has traveled outside its origins in feminist politics and is being applied in various academic disciplines, as well as in nongovernmental organizations and in social movements. Despite the current popularity of the term, it is a deeply contested concept. There have been debates about the ontological properties of intersectionality, for example, whether it should be used to refer to individual lives or structural inequalities, or both. While many theorists have stressed the importance of acknowledging the intersecting dimensions of social categories (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality), discussions center around whether these categories should be conceptualized as additive or constitutive of each other (Davis 2008; Yuval-Davis 2011).

Although research in the field of children and young people's identities has increasingly problematized essentialist notions of identities, studies which have actually employed the concept of intersectionality are as yet quite rare and there exists little theoretical debate about bringing the two fields together (Konstantoni 2011; Kustatscher 2015). Burman suggests that, while the interdisciplinary study of childhood has deconstructed the category of childhood/age by drawing attention to the ways in which they are constructed differently in different sociohistorical contexts, this has been done mainly through a focus on children's competence and agency on an individual, experiential level (focusing on "microsocial relations"). In order to better capture the institutionalized inequalities that children experience, Burman (2013, p. 236) calls for intersectional approaches in the field of childhood studies which extend its scope to "wider socio-structural issues, such as poverty, unemployment, political disaffection, and cuts in welfare provision." Within the field of research on childhood and youth, children's geographies have been particularly sensitive to intersecting dimensions of children's lives and identities, although mainly in research with older young people and young adults (Gutierrez and Hopkins 2015; Hopkins and Noble 2009; McLean Hilker 2014; Rodó-de-Zárate 2015). There has been some research into the classed, gendered, and racialized experiences of the educational system of parents and families (e.g., Gillborn et al. 2012), but little research exists which explores children's identities and experiences of inequalities within educational settings through an intersectional lens (Haavind et al. 2015; Konstantoni 2011; Kustatscher 2015; Zembylas 2010).

Konstantoni's (2011, 2012) ethnographic research in early childhood settings in Scotland explored issues around intersectionality in very young children's (3–5)

experiences of social identities, particularly within their social relationships (including inclusionary and exclusionary practices). Although Konstantoni (2011, 2012) mentioned the importance of intersectionality and used intersectionality as a lens to understand children's social identities and peer relations, she identified a need to unpack the implications of using this theoretical framework in more detail.

Zembylas' (2010) ethnographic study with 7–12-year-old children in three public Greek Cypriot primary schools in Cyprus employed an intersectional lens in order to explore the children's constructions and experiences of racism and nationalism. In the schools of the research, many of the majority group of Greek Cypriot children held racist stereotypes against the minority group of Turkish-speaking children, focusing on their "double positions as 'Turks' (the archenemy of the Greeks) and dark-colored and unclean (associated with a lower culture, race, and socioeconomic class)" (Zembylas 2010, p. 319). The study shows how this racism, performed in day-to-day practices at school, intersects with debates about nationalism and in particular the "Cyprus Problem" (resulting from the Turkish invasion and occupation of the North part of the island). This was illustrated in children's links between racist attitudes in school and the sociopolitical situation on the island, as expressed, for example, by one boy:

They [Turkish-speaking children] came to take over our school and steal everything from us, like they do in the occupied areas. (Costas (research participant, Grade 5 Primary School), cited in Zembylas 2010, p. 320)

This resonates with Spyrou's (2006) above-described study and shows how racist and nationalist practices are enmeshed in children's everyday lives in school. Thus, these wider power relations and social discourses are central to children's relationships and identities within childhood settings.

This importance of the wider social, policy, and legislative context is also emphasized in Kustatscher's (2015) ethnographic research with 5–7-year-old children in a Scottish primary school. The study operationalized intersectionality in order to explore the intersections of social class, gender, and ethnicity (and other categories) in the children's social identities and to show how these intersections are constructed both in children's everyday experiences, as well as in the wider organizational and representational relations into which they are hooked. The research showed how discourses and practices in the school were shaped by the particular ways in which gender, race/ethnicity, and social class were constructed in the relevant policies and mediated through staff's personal values. While gender, for example, was described as relatively absent in Scottish educational policies, race/ethnicity was often constructed through a multicultural discourse of "celebrating diversity."

Although many Scottish policies also use a rhetoric of "tackling inequality," social class differences in school were in practice often constructed through a discourse of "we are all the same," trying to smooth out any classed differences between the children. Gender, on the other hand, appeared to be a taken-for-granted dimension of children's identities, and – maybe because of this – was rarely problematized but often constructed in rather stereotypical ways. This resulted in

the foregrounding of some aspects of “diversity” (i.e., certain aspects of ethnicity: language, food, cultural practices, religion), the muting of other aspects of differences (e.g., physical markers of difference, or social class), and ambivalent constructions of other kinds of differences (e.g., gender). However, the fact that institutional discourses around diversity did not address certain aspects of difference and inequalities did not make them disappear, but, rather, left them unchallenged, resulting in children contributing to powerful social stereotypes and forms of discrimination (Kustatscher 2015).

An example of the ways in which such discourses are translated into children’s relationships and identities within the school setting can be seen in Haavind et al.’s (2015) research with a group of 11–12-year-old “Chinese girls” within a Californian elementary school. The study explored how multiple categories of difference and inequality inflect and cut across each other in the girls’ experiences of everyday life at school. The group described a dual self-identification as “Chinese” and “girls,” and these identities were performed through language, playing basketball, consumption practices, and appearances. However, while the girls could exercise some power in the ways in which they constructed their identities (e.g., switching between Cantonese and English when they wanted to), other aspects of their identities were beyond their control. For example, they described how even if wearing the “right” kind of shoes they were not given access to the group of “cool girls,” because the category of being “Chinese girls” was “incommensurate with [being] ‘cool’” (Haavind et al. 2015, p. 308), thus illustrating the complex relational dynamics of positioning oneself and being positioned by others.

McLean Hilker’s (2014) research with young adults (15–35 years old) in Rwanda explores the intersections of ethnic, gender, and intergenerational relations which shape the participants’ lives today against the background of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. This study suggests that while these relations have shifted to some extent since the genocide, young people’s lives continue to be shaped by this traumatic event. In particular, McLean Hilker describes the continued marginalization of young Hutu men and the ongoing reproduction of “ethno-gendered” stereotypes of Tutsi women that were central to the genocide propaganda. She also suggests that relationships and sexual politics continue to be “ethnicized,” both from the young people themselves as well as through their families and parents:

[Mixed relationships] happen among youth, but then the parents . . . split up the couple. They say their daughter can’t marry someone from a family whose ethnic group killed hers. . . (Doreen, age 22).

My parents tell me that I should never bring a Hutu boy into their home or I will be cast out of the family. . . (Stella, age 19). (McLean Hilker 2014, p. 362)

The research makes a case for the importance of paying attention to such intersectional relationships, as they shape how images of masculinity and femininity are constructed, the particular (re)production of ethnic relations, and dynamics of conflict and violence. McLean Hilker thus argues that considering these intersections is key to processes of nation-building and reconciliation in Rwanda today.

These studies show that intersectionality can be used as a concept to bridge children and young people's everyday experiences of identities and relationships with the wider social and structural relations within which they are situated. Intersectional approaches have emphasized aspects of age, gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and sexuality and are characterized by a focus on power and experiences of inequalities or discrimination.

5 Discussion and Comparison: Which Children, What Identities?

All the studies discussed in this chapter challenge ideas of fixed and essentialized identities (although, as Konstantoni (2011) reminds us, it is important to acknowledge that identities are, at particular moments in time, experienced as "fixed") and draw attention to the multiple and situated aspects of children and young people's social identities in some way. However, different concepts tend to foreground different aspects of social identities and forms of belonging.

The concept of hybridity has been conceptualized in two different ways. First, researchers following Bhabha (2004) have operationalized hybridity in order to describe the "third space" in which young people reconcile and live out their social identities which result from their belonging to multiple groups with sometimes conflicting demands on their lives. This conceptualization of hybrid identities tends to focus on young people's multiple *ethnic* identities, rather than, for example, questions of class or gender. Second, Prout (2000) and others have suggested that hybridity in relation to childhood should be used to understand the entanglement of social, biological, and material aspects which make up children's lives. This conceptualization of hybridity draws attention mainly to both the social and biological aspects of the category of *age*, as well as to questions of *materialities* surrounding childhood and youth. Questions of gender, race, or ethnicity, however, are not easily captured through this dualism of nature and culture. Both ways of conceptualizing hybridity have in common the questioning of polar assumptions and homogenous ideas about social groups and imply that identities are more than the sum of their multiple aspects (whether these aspects are multiple ethnicities or the social and biological), constituted of the particular relationships in children and young people's lives.

While hyphenated identities are often used to label groups both within and beyond academic writing, researchers have theorized the "hyphen" to different extents. Some writers have linked hyphenated identities to anthropological thinking about culture, space, and identity (Gupta and Ferguson 1992), while others have traced it back to the work of Du Bois (1903/1982). Research with children and young people tends to draw on hyphenated identities particularly in relation to identities of *nationality*, *race*, *ethnicity*, and *religion* and often includes an *intergenerational* perspective, which considers the temporal aspects of changing relationships and identities (e.g., of second-generation migrant children). Other aspects of identities such as social class, gender, or sexuality, on the other hand, have not been included in the research on hyphenated identities reviewed in this

chapter. This highlights the political act of identifying and combining different aspects of identities through such hyphens: while hyphenated identities chosen by children and young people themselves reveal complex subjective identifications with multiple forms of belonging, hyphenated identity labels imposed on to children and young people by other actors (including researchers) can perpetuate assumptions about groups and can often imply (and reproduce) the status of “outsider” within a particular group (Gabriel 2013).

Intersectional approaches, finally, are perhaps the most comprehensive in terms of emphasizing the different dimensions of children and young people’s identities of *age, gender, race, ethnicity, social class, disability/ability, and sexuality*. While the reviewed intersectional studies have all explored children and young people’s identities and experiences within everyday settings through qualitative approaches, they have also drawn attention to aspects of power, inequality, and discrimination. This consideration of how wider structural conditions shape children and young people’s experiential lives and microsocial relations is key to intersectional understandings of social identities.

The comparison of these different theoretical frameworks for conceptualizing identities – hybridity, hyphens, and intersectionality – exemplifies that the choices of researchers constitute deeply political acts, impacting on which children and young people take part in research, how their views and experiences are represented, and what aspects of their identities and relationships are being foregrounded. For example, some approaches tend to foreground aspects of race and ethnicity, while others emphasize gender and social class. There also appears to be a tendency to neglect the group of very young children in research on social identities, which may be in part due to researchers’ underlying conceptualizations of young children as being too innocent, or incompetent, to be concerned by or knowledgeable about these topics (see for example Konstantoni 2013). There are overlaps between the three theoretical frameworks discussed in this chapter, and not all researchers position themselves exclusively within one or the other (e.g., Fine and Sirin 2007; Gillborn et al. 2012). Different authors may also operationalize the same concept in different ways, and there are thus no final interpretations of how these concepts are being instrumentalized in research.

6 Conclusion: Toward a Relational Understanding of Research on Social Identities

Conceptualizing identities through different theoretical frameworks ultimately shows that the concept of “identity” is an abstract construct that can be imagined in many different ways. By drawing attention to the multiple and situated dimensions of identities it also becomes clear that children and young people’s social identities can never be *fully* captured through research. This raises questions about the scope and purpose of working within an identity theory framework altogether. However, the findings of the studies reviewed in this chapter and the light that they shed on the ways in which children and young people construct their identities in

multiple ways and often experience discrimination and inequalities as part of this, suggest that such research *is* indeed important for understanding their lives within complex sociopolitical contexts.

The literature reviewed in this chapter has showed that identities and relationships are inextricably linked, since it is through relationships (or talking about relationships) that identities are performed and made visible. However, relationships are spaces through which power is exercised, and this concerns also the *relations of research*, i.e., how researchers identify, label, and relate with participants. It is therefore important for researchers to reflect on *which* children and young people are at the heart of their studies, how they are spoken with and about, and who remains excluded from taking part in research.

Paying attention to the historical and ontological bases of the theoretical concepts that are used to frame research makes it possible to reflect on what and who enters the gaze of researchers and draws attention to questions of representation and power. Just like the children and young people's identities and experiences described in this chapter, researchers are also located within global relations of societal changes, migration, conflicts and crises, and this needs to be reflected on in the choice and operationalization of our theoretical frameworks. Therefore, this chapter calls on researchers to make explicit the choices of our theoretical frameworks and the ways in which they are operationalized and to reflect on how this impacts on the focus and findings of research.

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