Gated Trajectories in Children's Leisure Time and Space in Turkey: a Relational Reading of the Parents' Accounts of Supervision

Hamide Elif Üzümcü*

Author information

*   Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology (FISSPA), University of Padova, Italy,
Email: hamideelif.uzumcu@phd.unipd.it

Gated Trajectories in Children's Leisure Time and Space in Turkey: a Relational Reading of the Parents' Accounts of Supervision

Hamide Elif Üzümcü

Abstract: Children's leisure in minority worlds is becoming increasingly time- and space-structured. Parents take a great share in getting their children's quotidian 'free' time scheduled and defined. This research aims to explore how the parental organisation of children's post-school time may interlink to children's everyday dependencies. The research sample consisted of the parents of children who were aged 10-14 and attended the two state middle schools in Üsküdar in Istanbul/Turkey, within academic year 2016-2017. The empirical material was drawn from semi-structured interviews (n=30) and surveys (n=365). The data analysis was informed by a relationality perspective built on a post-humanism literature. Findings suggest that most of the participating parents limited their children's socialisation time and space to a specific duration and geography. In that, some parents opted for extracurricular courses for their children; others confined the children to the yards of the gated building complex or the households. Organisation of children's leisure time and space was found to be minimally open to negotiation, and parental accompaniment was prevalent throughout children's peer socialisation and techno-socialisation regardless of the socioeconomic background of the parents. We suggest that such parental confiscation and monitoring may filter children's encounters with different layers of society and reproduce their dependence on family.

Keywords: children's leisure, interdependency, parental monitoring, Istanbul.

Introduction

We are all interdependent (Lee, 2001) and "always in a process of "being" and "becoming" with one another (...)" (Uprichard, 2008, p. 307). In this holistic web of relations, childhood, as well, is "interdependent, equated to other generations who are all moving in time in relation to one another" (Murray and Cortés-Morales, 2019, p.160). Punch (2015) points out that these interdependencies are constantly negotiated and renegotiated, particularly within intrafamilial relationships. They are constrained by the family members' access to socioeconomic, educational sources, and negotiated across the generationing of the family, the temporality and spatiality that the family share. Accordingly, the experience of children's interdependencies vary from family to family, from Global North to South. For instance, in majority worlds, intergenerational family relations are more interdependent than in the minority worlds, as young people contribute in the household economy and take care of both their own and their family's needs (Punch 2002).

In considering children's geographies and children's participation in it, Nansen et al. (2015) draws attention to an inclusion of external factors at environmental and policy levels as well as the familial factors, such as parental supervision, mediatisation and children's agency. Instead of looking at this issue within the dichotomies of dependence-independence, they argue children's mobilities as "a part of a continuum of interdependence." (Nansen et al. 2015, p. 469). Yet, the power relations within the family may influence the dynamics of children's dependencies (Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009).

This paper aims to explore children's spatial and temporal experience in their leisure, from parents' eyes. We further question whether current trends in organizing children's free time may impact children's dependency to families. With this objective in mind, we begin by providing a research background on dependence/interdependence arguments and children's geographies with a specific focus on the Turkish context. We move on to portray the design of this mixed-method study. We then discuss the results of the qualitative and quantitative data, and conclude by arguing a relation between parents' side of 'regulating' children's post-school time and children's dependency.

Adult-world versus interdependencies

The image of the "standard adult" is entitled with the role of performing authority over children (Lee, 2001, p. 14) Within these binaries, "The 'finished' standard adult has powers over and responsibilities toward the 'unfinished' child" (Lee, 2001, p. 19). The adulthood is considered stable and complete, while childhood instable and incomplete. In the 'generationing' (Alanen, 2001) of the family members, the parents occupy a hierarchical position, which entitles the elder with more power (Punch, 2007), due to

the superiority of their life experience over that of the children (Lee, 2001). Lee (2001) traces the emergence of childhood dependency back to the seventeenth century when European nation-states developed and invested in the upbringing of the children as proper citizens, thus for their future value. Making childhood dependent and rely on others' sources and support became a stronger trend with Fordism. It was, in a way, a preservation of childhood for its future value. This investment in children's regulation and supervision was a state mission, as well as being considered a protection of children's personal interests. Indeed, childhood has been "the most extensively governed sector of personal existence." (Rose, 1989, p. 121 cited in Lee, 2001, p. 30). With the globalisation of the economy, childhood dependency is now beyond state boundaries and a part of the global citizenship formulation. Children's appearance as weak and vulnerable is thus a consequence of a long-term political project. In the micro culture of the family, this project is carried out by the parents who perform the 'legitimate' authority over the children.

A relational stance, on the contrary, is about flexibility and the exchange of knowledge, rather than the one-way route in knowledge production and dissemination. It is about the reciprocal and multilateral conversation, rather than the reproduction of binaries. In their relationality with human and non-human forces, children take an active part in the nexus of relations. Spyrou (2017) encourages to de-centre the child for the sake of understanding its place within the relationality. Acknowledging the system of relational connections helps recognizing any component as agents, instead of centring the sake of one or several components into focus (unlike i.e. the Anthropocene). From this holistic lens, any living and non-living are seen interconnected and thus interdependent.

In a similar vein, children's every day activities, their societal position and relations with adults may vary from culture to culture and thus childhood needs to be understood within its specific context (Twum-Danso Imoh & Ame, 2012). In Turkey, the relations between parents and children are considered to be strongly tied throughout children's life course, including when they leave home as adults. The parents attribute a great value in care and help from their children, during their old ages (TURKSTAT, 18.01.2017). Research also demonstrates that one of the least valued attributes by the parents is children's autonomy (Kağıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005).

In their study of Turkish families, Mayer et al. (2012) characterise Turkish parenting within an 'emotional interdependence' model. This model refers to familial bonds which are closely knitted with an emotional interdependence. In that, children's socialization tends to be under supervision of parents, while there is also some room for individuality and autonomy. They further point out an increase in the independence model in urban cities of Turkey,

in which parents are rather permissive, and children's independence and self-sufficiency are encouraged. In contemporary Turkey, still, children's social position tends to be defined through power relations with adults. Generational hierarchy continues to be a basic structural feature (Sunar & Fişek, 2005). Sunar and Fişek (2005) note that the importance of the family over the individual has persisted through the last three generations of urban middle-class Turkish families. In a traditional rural extended family structure, which is still visible, childrearing practices are largely authoritarian in nature (Çelen & Çok, 2007). Authority of parents and obedience by children are strongly emphasized, children must express gratitude and loyalty and subordinate their own interests (Sunar & Fişek, 2005). Similarly, in modern urban Turkish society, traditional emotional intimacy and closely-tied family relations remain (ibid.), a protective parenting style with authoritative traits tends to be common (Çelen & Çok, 2007). Drawing on these studies, it may be inferred that children in Turkey are confronted with parental authority as part of their everyday life, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

Time and space for children's leisure

Children are subject to control in most of their activities in minority worlds. They are considered as futuristic project, while still in formation and dependent on parents in their here and now (Qvortrup, 2009). In most spheres of their lives, they are in adult-steered environments. They are required to respect schedules of institutions such as schools and structured after-school activities, besides the constraints set by the adults on whom they are made to depend for greater part of their being present (Belloni, 2015). They are exposed to adult control in and outside institutionalized settings. As Shao-Chang Wee and Anthamatten (2014) suggest, although the nature and content of the play is determined by children, the physical boundaries are determined by adults. Similarly, as Onur (2005) argues, while children's play may be their choice, their play time, play spaces and play objects are under adult supervision.

On the other hand, unstructured time and space may allow children's exploring their interdependencies. As defined by Fletcher, Nickerson and Wright (2003, p. 642), unstructured activities are the spontaneously and freely constructed, limited neither to time nor space. Conversely, structured activities tend to be organized by adults, oriented to attaining social behaviours and achieving goals (ibid.). They often aim to improve skills with the guidance of an adult leader based on certain rules and require regular attendance. In this sense, an unstructured context provides children with a practise field to test boundaries and to make sense of the diverse stimulations. Abbasoğlu Ermiyagil & Sunalp Gürçınar (2015) points out that engaging with unstructured activities, particularly outside, allows children to integrate with the

social environment unconsciously and thus interact with the society. It offers adventure, pleasure, creativity and risk (Cortinez-O'Ryan et al., 2017). It enables physical action (Roemmich et al., 2006; Veitch, Salmon & Ball, 2007) and provides a platform to develop peer culture (Belloni, 2015; Matthews, Limb & Taylor, 2000).

Istanbul, yet, is becoming less and less privileged in providing unstructured ambient to children. An industrial destination to numerous domestic migrants after mechanisation of agriculture since 1950s, Istanbul has been sheltering a multitude of unauthorized squatter settlements (*gecekondu*) on public domains (Severcan, 2018). The population growth densified in post-1980s along with commodification of squatters and urban transformation (Karaman, 2013). Now the most densely populated city of Turkey, Istanbul hosts 15.519,267 registered inhabitants (TURKSTAT, 04.02.2020). The current rapid urbanization shrunk children's free spaces (Tezel, 2011) and led to a prevalence of private playgrounds and security vulnerabilities of public playgrounds in Istanbul (Sullu, 2018). It also gave rise to a growing fear of crime, which affects both adults and children negatively (Bilen et al., 2013) as well as their preferences to live in the gated communities which are secured by security walls, guards and video-recorded surveillance (Tezel, 2011). The high-rise building sites are excluded by walls from the city and from its possible perils and dense population (ibid.). The playgrounds, which are advertised to adult customers as safe getaways for children then can be considered to contribute in commodification of childhood (McKendrick, Bradford & Fielder, 2000). The unstructured play spaces of once, namely the from streets, doorsteps, deserted lands, mosqueyards and churchyards (Onur, 2005) has now been transformed into designated and demarcated spaces labelled with the indications of use.

Method

Design

This paper explores the intersection between a reproduction of children's dependency and parental guidance in organising children's leisure. The empirical material for this study was drawn from semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The research sample for both data collection techniques consisted of the parents of 10-14 aged children attending two state middle schools in 2016-2017 academic year in two neighbourhoods of Üsküdar district of Istanbul. The two major criteria of sampling were that each parent had at least one child aged 10-14 and this child attended one of the participant schools in Üsküdar.

An urban town by the Marmara Sea, Üsküdar is historically central in the Asian (locally known as Anatolian) side of Istanbul. The municipality of Üsküdar reports the town's population to be largely conservative, and culturally diverse – "from dressing styles to dialects" (Üsküdar Belediyesi, Social conditions, Access date: 17.4.2017). It has long been investing in specialized services for children, ranging from playgrounds, courts for structured activities to artistic, sportive and cultural training centres and leisure courses. All of them are offered free-of-charge, ensuring open access to children from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

In order to choose the middle schools, preliminary interviews were undertaken with public officials at the Üsküdar District Directorate of National Education. Based on their guidance, two middle schools were determined in compliance with our selection requirement, which aimed at including families from heterogeneous socioeconomic status (SES) and with various approaches towards children's leisure (i.e. academic achievement-oriented, media-oriented, free play-oriented etc.). One middle school (hereinafter referred to as Middle School #1) constituted one of the most academically successful middle schools in Turkey, while the second one (hereinafter referred to as Middle School #2) was considered one of the least academically successful middle school in Üsküdar district. The schools also differed in terms of family income: The families from the middle school #1 were reported to be in middle- or high-income group whereas the families from the latter in a lower income group. This was due to the fact that till 2012, the students could only be enrolled in the middle school #1on condition that their parents were dual earners. Ethics approval for this research was issued by the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Anadolu University. The permission of access to the middle schools was granted by the Provincial Directorate of National Education under the Governorship of Istanbul.

Data collection and analysis

The survey respondents totalled to 365 parents (199 parents from Middle School #1; 166 from #2) who were determined with purposive sampling technique (Neuman, 2013). 206 of them mothers, 149 fathers, 6 relative caregivers (sisters, aunts, grandmothers) and 4 undefined. 330 of the parents were married, 19 were divorced, 4 were married but the couple lived apart, 5 were widowed and 7 defined themselves to be single. In order to take into account the family socioeconomic background as a variable for the data analysis, we classified three income groups according to the average monthly income per household stated by the interviewees. This classification was produced solely for this research purposes. On an informative note, the gross minimum monthly income was Turkish Liras (TL) 1.777,50 (net income approximately

TL 1.404,06) in 2017 (Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 28.4.2018). Following from that, TL 0-2000 per month was grouped as lower income, TL 2001-5000 as middle income and TL 5001 and above as higher income. Based on this categorization, 136 of the parents were in the lower income group, 158 were in the middle income and 47 were in higher income group.

In order to reach the parents, the advice of school administrators was sought. Accordingly, we visited three 5th, three 6th, two 7th and two 8th grade classrooms at the middle school #1 and two 5th, two 6th, two 7th and three 8th grade classrooms at the middle school #2 individually, notified the students of this research and distributed the questionnaires. The students were asked to take them to their parents/caregivers and bring them back in the following one week. In total 560 questionnaires were distributed. 367 of them were brought back filled out (200 from middle school #1 out of 320; 167 from middle school #2 out of 240). However, 2 questionnaires were not taken into consideration as the answers were marked the same; which made 365 questionnaire data significant for analysis. 206 of the respondent parents were mothers, 149 were fathers, 3 were sisters, 2 were aunts and 1 was a grandmother. The objective of the questionnaire was to measure frequencies of children's participation to leisure activities and the ratios concerning intrafamilial decision-making on children's leisure. It consisted of 3 categories broken into 100 questions. The first part sought demographic information such as number of children, parents' educational background and average monthly income per household. The second part explored the frequency of children's participation in street-based activities. The last part focused on parental attitudes towards children's time outside and parental decisions on time and space limitations. The data from questionnaires was analysed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0.

The interviewees of the semi-structure interviews, on the other hand, were comprised of 30 parents (15 from each school) who were determined with a quota sampling technique (Neuman, 2013). More elaborately, 22 of the 30 interviewees were mothers; 6 were fathers and 2 were relative caregivers (grandmothers). 11 of our interviewees were in the lower income group; 12 were in the middle-income and 8 were in the higher-income group. A part of the volunteer parents were the survey respondents who were then interested in the interview as well. The rest of them were among those who came to the school for other motivations (i.e. parents who were waiting for their children after school, who brought their children to an extra-curricular course organized by the school, who were invited by the teacher to talk about their children's academic and social situation, who came for a classroom-oriented parent-teacher meeting etc.). All interviews were conducted face-to-face with and upon parents' verbal consent for participation and a voice recording. For the interviews, we made use of the school facilities that were made

available for us by the school management, such as the classrooms, libraries or canteens. The semi-structured interviews sought to give an open space to elaborate on the survey themes that were investigated upon close-ended questions. They were made up of two parts. The first part briefly sought interviewees' demographic background such as information about average monthly household income, the number and genders of their children. The second part, in parallel with the survey topics, investigated parents' reflections on children's post-school activities outside, probing how they negotiate their decisions and children's interests. Interviews lasted from half an hour to one hour. Transcriptions were analysed upon a thematic analysis (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019), which allowed identifying a topical framework in relation to our research questions. The dataset was comprised of only the parents' qualitative contributions. Therefore, children's voice was absent in this research.

Results

In this part, we give an outlook of the situation on how the participating parents manage children's free time and the decision-making on it. In showcasing the results, we will rather adopt a qualitative stance, while providing relevant statistical data as supportive of the interview excerpts. The statistical accounts are only employed for the purpose of either backing or challenging the narrative accounts.

Gated childhood

Rapid increases in urbanization in Istanbul and population growth have given a rise to multi-storey building complexes. Still, as seen in Table 1, the use of streets as a play arena was found to be a common practise among the children of the participating parents. The children in lower income were reported to play in the streets more frequently than their peers in middle and higher SES groups on 'at weekends' and 'almost every day' bases. On the quantitative side, street play seemed to compose an important leisure activity for children, whereas the quality of what such outdoor play came to mean proved to be interpreted differently for the parents.

Table 1 - Children's frequencies of playing in streets by household income

Play in streets	Average monthly household income			
	TL 0-2000	TL 2001-5000	TL 5001 and above	Total
Never	35 26,3%	56 35,9%	23 49,0%	114 34,0%
A few times in a month	22 16,5%	33 21,2%	9 19,1%	64 19,0%

At weekends	46 34,6%	41 26,3%	10 21,3%	97 28,9%
Almost every day	30 22,5%	26 16,7%	5 10,6%	61 18,2%
Total	133 100,0%	156 100,0%	47 100,0%	336 100,0%

The interview accounts revealed that the children's uses of outside has been more structured, confined to a piece of predefined territory and scheduled. Some parents associated outside play with structured sportive or artistic courses, some interpreted this as time spent in the garden of the gated community they live in and, others talked about allowing their children to play outside in local parks. Others parents reported allowing their children to play with their peers in the yard of their residence complex. Some of these residence yards were stated to provide facilities like basketball courts, swimming pool and playground guarded by a security. Here are a couple of examples demonstrating that the significance of these facilities to some of the parents:

> We have everything in our garden, that's why we don't usually need to go out from the gated community. But I wish we also had a cinema (mother of a 13-year-old boy, Middle SES).

> My son is not limited to a certain hour to come back home in the summer. Because we live in a gated community, he can come home at 10 pm or midnight. He is free. Because he does not have the chance go out from the building site, we have a security and he has friends (father of a 11 year-old-boy, Middle SES).

As seen, the building complex was not only a residential unit, but also an outdoor facility for children's leisure time in the case of these two middle SES parents. Children were "free" within the gated premises of their home. The walls surrounding the garden of their building apartment and the security guards seemed to relieve the safety concerns of some parents, while limiting the children to a contained yet public space. The garden is shared by the children who can afford to live in such a building complex. This may come to mean that the children are indeed being socialized with their peers of the similar "class". Such "controlled socialization" arguably prevents them from integrating into more open public spaces. This suggests that some parents seek to control their children's socialization environment by allowing them only see the children from their own social class, and not letting them encounter other layers of the society.

Other children, on the other hand, were bounded to home in their peer socialisation. One higher SES father noted that he did not like to let her daughter to play outside, thus took her daughter by car to her friends' home

to let them see each other. Parental accompaniment lasted throughout children's mobility and their peer socialisation contexts.

> We don't find the street culture appropriate for our children nowadays. We are not oppressive parents, as we both are teachers. I take them with my car. For example, they go to birthday parties, chat with their friends. Sometimes we host their friends at home, sometimes they go to their friends' home (father of a 11-year-old girl, Higher SES).

Particularly higher and middle SES families provided more layers of walls around their children's contact with the nature and the wider public areas. They could afford to provide their children with an exclusive space of same-class families. In turn, their children were not challenged with the changing conditions of the communal arenas.

Digital media for a more feasible surveillance

Home might be considered unsatisfying as a space for socialization for children (Matthews, Limb & Taylor, 2000), as it is an adult-owned place where children often lack privacy (Sibley, 1995). Indeed, most of our survey informants stated that they (73,5%) did not leave the time their children spent on the internet to them, and they (72,2%) sought to limit the time the children spent watching the TV, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2 - Distribution of the informant parents' view on time restrictions on children's uses of the internet and television

Time restrictions	*I leave the time my child spends on the internet to him/her.*	*I seek to limit the time my child spends watching television.*
I disagree + I strongly disagree	259 73,5%	81 22,9%
I neither agree nor disagree	27 7,6%	17 4,8%
I agree + I strongly agree	66 18,7%	255 72,2%
Total	352 100,0%	353 100,0%

However, quite the contrary to the quantitative results, there were some of the parents who stated to encourage children to use digital media as a spare time activity, since this would keep the children more visible. They noted their concerns for their children who could not socialize outside and explained how they transformed their home into an inviting space for their

children's friends to come over. For example, one higher-SES mother expressed that she bought limitless internet connection for domestic use, so her child can enjoy it when his friends come over. In this way, children could be constantly followed-up and their socialisation needs were somewhat taken care of.

> I've already got an unlimited internet connected at home. I say, "I will not at home. Take your friends, come home." You know, we cannot accept everyone at home, but he can do whatever he wants with the people with whom we are more than friends. Because there are two or three computers at home, one is his sister's, the other is his father's. If necessary, he can use them as well and have create an ambient he wants. This is how I try to guide him. He can meet this kind of needs at home, rather than outside (Mother of a 13-year-old boy, Higher SES).

In order to make children see the risks of outsides, one lower SES mother reported that she made her children watch a very famous everyday TV series in Turkey, called Arka Sokaklar (literally translated as 'Back Streets'), in which the policemen are the protagonists. In each episode the policemen fight against the local crimes. The mother stated to find these series a good medium to make their children learn about different sort of villains of the streets. Thus, she aimed to make her children informed of what was happening outside, without being have to be involved in outside life.

> They watch "Arka Sokaklar". As hey demonstrate very bad examples there, "Look," I say, "My daughter, anything can happen to people. Watch this, so take these as an example. No matter how much I tell you, you may not consider it right now. You may not take care unless it happens to you. But you see, there are such people around us. There are people who seem good, but seek to do evil things behind you, who may want to do you harm, who may want to get you used to taking some bad drugs. Anything can happen. Your friend may offer you one, saying nothing can happen if you try it once. You now see how much addition it may cause and what can happen to people on this show." That's why I don't object to [children's watching] 'Arka Sokaklar' (Mother of 13 and 11-year-old girls, Lower SES).

In a similar vein, a lower-SES mother remarked that she had to ask her son to watch television, so that she could keep him at home at a visible spot. Organising her son's leisure time with TV-watching helped her keep her son engaged and monitorable, and relieved her worries of outside.

> We used to tell the children "Do not watch television". (…) Now even experts say "sit down and watch television together." (…) So, I say, "Son, sit down and watch TV." Believe me, now I ask him to "watch television" (Mother of a 12-year-old boy, Lower SES). YY10, Lower

Keeping children home facilitated parental supervision. Some parents seemed to practise a restrictive mediatisation in order to get access to children's information while managing to keep their socialisation in sight. One middle SES mother reported asking her daughter to remain in the living room where she could control her daughter's computer screens. Another higher SES mother stated going into her son's phone and text messages in their momentary absence.

> I allow it [the computer] to be used in the living room, that is, in the environment we all are present. (…) So that we can see what she is doing. Just in case… someone other than you might send something. A message may appear like "click on me." We try our best to keep her under control. Things may happen outside of our control. Sooner or later we find it out (Mother of a 12-year-old girl, Middle SES).

> So he spends watching football videos or experiment videos, I've already checked it. (…) I constantly check them. I check their phones and their messages when they're not around. I check where they enter [on the internet]. (Mother of a 11-year-old boy, Higher SES).

Media technologies, were seen as educative and entertainment materials for their children's leisure, by some parents. They also helped some parents be assured of children's whereabouts in their extra-school time. This, in turn, contributed in children's mobilisation within narrower spaces and scheduled time slots. In guiding children to be engaged with digital media, we found that some higher-income parents provided the children with new media facilities, whereas some lower-income parents did so with traditional media.

Parental supervision or surveillance?

In a minority world, planning children's day after school can be challenging for parents, as they may need to depend on themselves for supervision of the children. Table 3 provides some figures to confirm that majority (93,8%) of the participant parents kept themselves updated about their children's leisure and practised monitoring.

Table 3 - Distribution of the informant parents' view on being aware of and monitoring their children's leisure time engagements

Parental monitoring	I disagree + I strongly disagree	I neither agree nor disagree	I agree + I strongly agree	Total
I am aware of and monitor what my child is doing in his/her leisure time.	14 3,9%	8 2,2%	334 93,8%	356 100,0%

Furthermore, our interview findings suggested that some parents exercised strict supervision strategies that might as well be considered as a close

surveillance. Some participating parents allowed their children to go outside on condition that the children were supervised by them closely. This supervision included explicit or implicit monitoring such as accompanying children during the play, letting the children see solely their peers among their kith and kin. For instance, one higher SES mother followed her son covertly to the football pitch in order to find out his playmates. A middle SES mother refused to send her son anywhere without her supervision. Furthermore, a lower SES grandmother, as the primary caregiver, only let her grandson to spend time at her sister's place where she found secure and elsewhere was unquestionably inappropriate according to her.

- We monitor our son quite frequently.
- How so?
- Let's say that he is going to play football with his friends. Either his father or I go behind him to see who he is playing with (mother of a 13-year-old boy, Higher SES).

> I am a very painstaking mother in these issues. And I am sorry, but if necessary, he has to stay home and cannot go outside. I am that much [painstaking]. We do not have such a good environment at the moment. The children are in danger. So it's not nice outside. You know, yes, under my supervision, he can go out. But only under my supervision. He cannot go somewhere I am not aware of (Mother of a 11-year-old boy, Middle SES).

> We always have one eye on him. We don't let him go anywhere alone. I may only allow him to go to my sister's home. Because I know that there are no strangers there (grandmother of a 14-year-old-boy, Lower SES).

> If there were children who liked to go out, I would have had to get tired twice as much. Because I would have to monitor and follow them. But they mostly stay at home, spend time at home. He is home with his brother. (Mother of two 12-year-old boy, middle SES).

Some caregivers seemed to be present in children's leisure time and space. By keeping them accompanied (be it explicitly or implicitly), they exercised parental surveillance and accessed to children' data. Such a practice was found to be ubiquitous across the participating parents from all income groups. We argue that this impose of control may reproduce a dependency of children to an adult monitoring. We question whether such close surveillance may cause children to alienate the risks of outside the parental zone.

Parents' share in children's leisure organisation

In exploring parents' organisation of children's spatial and temporal experience of leisure, we also asked them about the intrafamilial negotiation

processes on the choice of children's leisure activities, activity duration and place. The statistical accounts revealed that some parents stated that such decisions were taken mutually with the children or solely by the children themselves. Table 4 demonstrates that in all income groups, most of the parents (respectively 67,1% of lower-income parents; 62,4% of middle-income parents and 55,3% of higher-income parents) stated to take a mutual decision with their children about what their children would do in their leisure. As can be seen, this ratio decreased from lower to higher income families. Subsequently, it was stated to be the child as the decisionmaker in all income groups (respectively 28,2% of lower-income parents; 28,6% of middle-income parents and 38,2% of higher-income parents. Moreover, this ratio raised from lower to higher income families. We may infer that higher income families gave slightly more space to the children to take decision and slightly less for a mutual decision, compared to the parents from other socioeconomic levels.

Table 4: Parties of decision-making on children's leisure activities by household income

Who usually decides what your child will do as leisure activities?	Average monthly household income			
	TL 0-2000	TL 2001-5000	TL 5001 and above	Total
Respondent parent	4 3%	11 7%	3 6,3%	18 5,3%
The child	37 28,2%	45 28,6%	18 38,2%	100 29,8%
Mutual decision	88 67,1%	98 62,4%	26 55,3%	212 63,2%
The other parent	1 0,7%	2 1,2%	0 0%	3 0,8%
Other	1 0,7%	1 0,6	0 0%	2 0,5%
Total	131 100,0%	157 100,0%	47 100,0%	335 100,0%

However, their further narrations proved to be unsupportive of these figures. Here in these cases of three families, the parents reported that they allowed their children to participate in decision-making, while they exercised authority to keep them engaged within their projected structure:

> We decide mutually [on their leisure activities]. In the semester break, I told them "Every day you will read a book for 20 minutes,". They said "okay." Let's say today something happened, we did an activity, we were out, they came home and were stuck with the TV and did not read any books. The next day, they would complete the 20+20, 40

minutes of reading time by themselves, without me warning them to do so (Mother of 13 and 11-year-old girls, Lower SES).

I don't know, I mean they do these activities gladly. The elder one plays volleyball which we also used to do together. Since their childhood, they did folk dances, Taekwondo, volleyball, handball, swimming… I never let them be unengaged (Mother of a 12-year-old girl, Middle SES).

We do not have the concept "prohibition" at my home. I just ask my child that that he knows his responsibility. He has to do his lesson at lesson time, play at the play time. I never get him to do something by restricting him. I set up this system. But, for example, he does not close his door while playing. The door remains open. So, he is under our control. This is how I try to monitor him (Mother of a 13-year-old-boy, Higher SES).

As seen, the interview excerpts are from three different SES groups. Parents from each of the lower-, middle- and higher-income levels referred to a one-way communication as a form of negotiation. Their narratives may demonstrate that the parents perceived children's conformity to parental ends as a voluntary consent, although it was gained through authority. Children's obedience was also interpreted as an asset; a sign of a collaborative decision.

Conclusion

In this paper, we aimed to explore how children's dependency may link to the parental regulation of children's leisure, from a relational perspective. Drawing on the results of surveys (n=365) and semi-structured interviews (n=30) with the parents with children aged 10-14 in Üsküdar district of Istanbul in Turkey, we demonstrated the ways the parents construct a spatial and temporal culture in organising their children's leisure. In this concluding part, we draw together the findings in reference to children's dependencies that we put in argument with parents' approach.

In minority worlds, children's geographies have largely been situated in designated settings: homes, schools and leisure complexes/centres (Rasmussen, 2004). We found that most participating parents referred to fenced spaces, structured activities and bounded time slots in narrating their children's spare time. The chronological sequence of the events and activities of the everyday life was found to become more and more precisely defined, particularly in the middle- and higher-income groups in the research sample. By "allowing" their children to play only in the yards of their residence surrounded by walls and most of the time by the security as well, the parents

seemed to control the layers of the society that their children encounter. Considering the social homogeneity of these spaces, it can be argued that the parents refine their children's social cycle to the children of the "same class".

Digital media was found to be employed as a tool to promote home as a space for peer socialization by some parents. Some higher income parents referred to new media technologies that they provided their children with in order to keep them home and invited their peers home to socialise over media entertainment. Some lower income families, on the other hand, were found to encourage their children to family viewing in their post-school time. This shift to domestic socialization may mirror an urban move to home as children's wider socialisation platform in a micro-social terrain.

In negotiating children's quotidian leisure, the figures based on the accounts of the parents, demonstrated that the children took an active part as much as the parents' themselves. Yet, the narratives of the parents depicted that some parents took it as a 'mutual decision' even when they clearly defined the time and space of the children's activities and tracked the children to make sure they complied with these calls.

Parents' presence throughout children's leisure was found to be ubiquitous across all the income groups. Most parents tended towards a stricter supervision over children and demanded children's visibility than ever before. The research found a strong embrace of parental supervision ranging from strict implicit or explicit monitoring, following them to their destination, accompanying them throughout play, making playmate selections for them. In doing so, some employed authority and reproduced the asymmetrical power relations between child-parent.

Furthermore, our findings provided evidence to what some previous research found. In that, parents kept children accompanied in their most 'free' time, for educative purposes (Satta, 2011) and reported to keep them attended due to numerous concerns, including distrust to the streets, unsafe public spaces, common media imaging (Matthews, Limb & Taylor, 2000) and the construction of shared culture of childhood in local media (Riva & Cefalo, 2015).

In conclusion, as Murray and Cortés-Morales (2019) argue, children's mobilities are a part of a network of relationalities. Yet, on the parents' side, we argued that some parents tended towards rendering children dependents by narrowing children's social, material and geographical circle. Some children's socialization was found to be strictly based on exclusion, elimination and disregard of the elements of the 'external'. Their leisure time and space were reported to be getting more scheduled, structured, intraclass and less spontaneous. We found that some parents were growing intolerant of public arenas and of less privileged classes due to possible risky situations. They

sought to keep their children safe by isolating children from the mainstream society, keeping them attended and accompanied in children's free time.

Children are in unequal power relationships with adults, which makes their position vulnerable and constrained by adult society (Punch, 2002). Adult dependency is considered voluntary, flexible or 'circumstantial' whereas children's dependency is a taken for granted, consistent and obligatory state. While children might seem to be economically and physically dependents, Lee (2001, p. 24) argues that such dependency is socially constructed and distributed. We therefore suggest this can socially constructed differently.

We argue that adults' strict supervision and confinement of their children may increase children's dependency to the parents. Accordingly, their prevention from exposure to risk might make them more vulnerable and distrust people (Hillman, 2006). However, from a relational perspective, it is important that children are the space to deal with the unfamiliar. As Rasmussen notes, we should reconsider children's places not only the official establishments defined by adults, but also the informal arenas, "often unnoticed by adults" (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 155). To achieve so, parents can be in communication with children in satisfaction of their surveillance needs. So that children can explore the system of available opportunities and constraints in their interactions with adults and peers, find out how to cope with dangers, to live with risks and to address concerns of everyday life through their interactions with other people and social encounters.

Acknowledgement

References

Abbasoğlu Ermiyagil, M. S., & Sunalp Gürçınar, C. (2015). Kentsel mekânın gelişiminde çocuk oyun alanlarının rolü: K.K.T.C.'de Yeni Kent Gönyeli örneği [Role of children playgrounds in an urban space development: The case of TRNC Yeni Kent, Gönyeli]. İdealKent, 17, 12-45.

Alanen, L. (2001). Explorations in generational analysis. In L. Alanen, & B. Mayall (Eds.), Conceptualising child-adult relations (pp. 11-22). London: Routledge Falmer.

Belloni, M. C. (2015). Confiscated time: Are children allowed to manage their own time? *Structural, historical and comparative perspectives. Sociological Studies of Children and Youth*, 12, 139-165.

Bilen, Ö., Aşkın Ö. E., Büyüklü, A. H., Ökten, A., & Gür, M. (2013). How the fear of crime differs among the districts of Istanbul. *E-journal of New World Sciences Academy*, 8, 153-164. doi: 10.12739/NWSA.2013.8.4.3C0115

Cortinez-O'Ryan, A., Albagli, A., Sadarangani, K. P., & Aguilar-Farias, N. (2017). Reclaiming streets for outdoor play: A process and impact evaluation of "Juega en tu Barrio" (Play in your Neighbourhood), an intervention to increase physical activity and opportunities for play. *Plos One*, 12, 1-17. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0180172

Çelen, N., & Çok, F. (2007). Turkey. In J.J. Arnett (Ed.), International encyclopaedia of adolescence: Volume I A-J index (pp. 1010-1024). New York: Routledge.

Fletcher, A. C., Nickerson, P., & Wright, K. L. (2003). Structured leisure activities in middle childhood: Links to well-being. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 31, 641-659. doi:10.1002/jcop.10075

Hillman, M. (2006). Children's rights and adults' wrongs. *Children's Geographies*, 4 (1), 61–67.

Kağıtçıbaşı, Ç. & Ataca, B. (2005). Value of children and family change: A three-decade portrait from Turkey. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 54 (3), 317-337. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2005.00213.x

Karaman, O. (2013). Urban renewal in Istanbul: Reconfigured spaces, robotic lives. International *Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37 (2), 715–733. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01163.x

Lee, N. (2001). Childhood and society: Growing up in an age of uncertainty. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Matthews, H., Limb M., & Taylor, M. (2000). The 'street as thirdspace'. In S. L. Holloway, & G. Valentine (Eds.), Children's geographies: Playing, living, learning (pp. 54-68). Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Mayer, B., Trommsdorff, G., Kağıtçıbaşı, Ç., & Mishra R. C. (2012). Family models of independence/interdependence and their generational similarity in Germany, Turkey and India. *Family Science*, 3, 64-74. doi: 10.1080/19424620.2011.671503

McKendrick, J. H., Bradford, M. G. & Fielder, A. V. (2000). Kid customer? Commercialization of playspace and the commodification of childhood. *Childhood*, 7 (3), 295–314. doi:10.1177/0907568200007003004

Mikkelsen, M. R. & Christensen, P. (2009). Is children's independent mobility really independent? A study of children's mobility combining ethnography and gps/ mobile phone technologies, *Mobilities*, 4 (1), 37-58. doi: 10.1080/17450100802657954

Murray, L. & Cortés-Morales, S. (2019). Children's mobilities: Interdependent, imagined, relational. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nansen, B. Gibbs, L., MacDougall, C., Vetere, F., Ross, N. J. & McKendrick, J. (2015). Children's interdependent mobility: Compositions, collaborations and compromises. *Children's Geographies*, 13 (4), 467-481. doi: 10.1080/14733285.2014.887813

Neuman, W. L. (2013). Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Boston: Pearson Education Limited.

Onur, B. (2005). Türkiye'de çocukluğun tarihi [History of childhood in Turkey]. Ankara: İmge Kitabevi.

Punch, S. (2002). Youth transitions and interdependent adult–child relations in rural Bolivia. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18 (2), 123-133. doi:10.1016/S0743-0167(01)00034-1

Punch, S. (2007). Generational power relations in rural Bolivia. In R. Panelli, S. Punch & E. Robson (Eds.), Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth: Young rural lives (pp. 151-164). London: Routledge.

Punch, S. (2015). Youth transitions and migration: Negotiated and constrained interdependencies within and across generations. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18 (2), 262–76. doi:10.1080/13676261.2014.944118

Qvortrup, J. (2009). Are children human beings or human beings? A critical assessment of outcome thinking. *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali*, XVII, 631-653.

Rasmussen, K. (2004). Places for children – Children's places. *Childhood*, 11 (2), 155-173. doi:10.1177/0907568204043053

Riva, C., & Cefalo, R. (2015). Children and adolescents in the media: The Veneto region case study. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 7(3), 267-293. doi:10.14658/pupj-ijse-2015-3-12

Roemmich, J. N, Epstein, L. H., Raja, S., Yin L., Robinson, J., & Winiewicz, D. (2006). Association of access to parks and recreation facilities with the physical activity of young children. *Preventive Medicine*, 43, 437-441. doi: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2006.07.007

Satta, C. (2011) Simply child's play? Reconfiguring child-adult relations in a leisure place for children. *POIÉSIS – Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação – Mestrado – Universidade do sul de Santa Catarina*, 4 (8), 252 – 270.

Severcan, Y. C. (2018). Changing places, changing childhoods: Regeneration and children's use of place in Istanbul. *Urban Studies*, 55(10), 2179–2196. doi: 10.1177/0042098017711395

Shao-Chang Wee, B., & Anthamatten, P. (2014). Using photography to visualize children's culture of play: A socio-spatial perspective. *Geographical Review*, 104, 87-100. doi: 10.1111/j.1931-0846.2014.12006.x

Sibley, D. (1995). Geographies of exclusion. London: Routledge.

Spyrou, S. (2017). Time to decenter childhood? *Childhood*, 24 (4), 433-437. doi: 10.1177/0907568217725936

Sullu, B. (2018). Geographies of children's play in the context of neoliberal restructuring in Istanbul. *Children's Geographies*, 16 (2), 169–183. doi: 10.1080/14733285.2017.1341972

Sunar, D., Fişek, G. O. (2005). Contemporary Turkish families. In U. Gielen, & J. Roopnarine (Eds.), Families in global perspective (pp. 169-183). Boston: Pearson.

Tezel, E. (2011). Exploring parental concerns about children's interactions in gated communities: A case study in Istanbul. *Children's Geographies*, 9 (3–4), 425–437. doi: 10.1080/14733285.2011.590706

Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT). (04.02.2020). The results of address-based population registration system, 2019. Retrieved October 10, 2020, from https://data.tuik.gov.tr/en/display-bulletin/?bulletin=the-results-of-address-based-population-registration-system-2019-33705

Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT). (18.01.2017). Family Structure Survey, 2016 Press release. Retrieved June 6, 2020, from http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21869

Twum-Danso Imoh, A., & Ame R. (2012). Introduction. In A. Twum-Danso Imoh, & R. Ame (Eds.), Childhoods at the intersection of the local and the global (pp. 1-17). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Uprichard, E. (2008). Children as being and becomings: Children, childhood and temporality. *Children and Society*, 22(4), 303–313. doi: 10.1111/j.1099-0860.2007.00110.x

Üsküdar Belediyesi [Municipality of Üsküdar]. Sosyal durum [Social conditions]. Retrieved April 17, 2017, from https://www.Üsküdar.bel.tr/tr/main/pages/sosyal- durum/30

Vaismoradi, M. & Snelgrove, S. (2019). Theme in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 20(3), Art. 23. doi: 10.17169/fqs-20.3.3376

Veitch, J., Salmon, J., & Ball, K. (2007). Children's perceptions of the use of public open spaces for active free-play. *Children's Geographies*, 5, 409-422. doi: 10.1080/14733280701631874