

# **NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORKS FOR “FREE” TIME: PARENTS’ VALUES, DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT REGARDING CHILDREN’S OUT OF SCHOOL TIME IN NEW YORK CITY**

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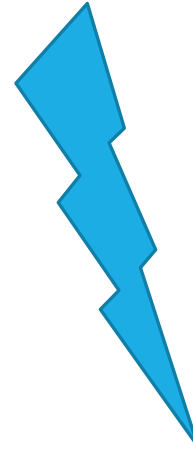
The Graduate Center, City University of New York



Gezi Park, Taksim-Istanbul (May 31, 2013) <http://31mayis2013unutma.com/polis-mudahalesi-oncesi-cocuklar-gezi-parkinda-resim-yapiyor/>

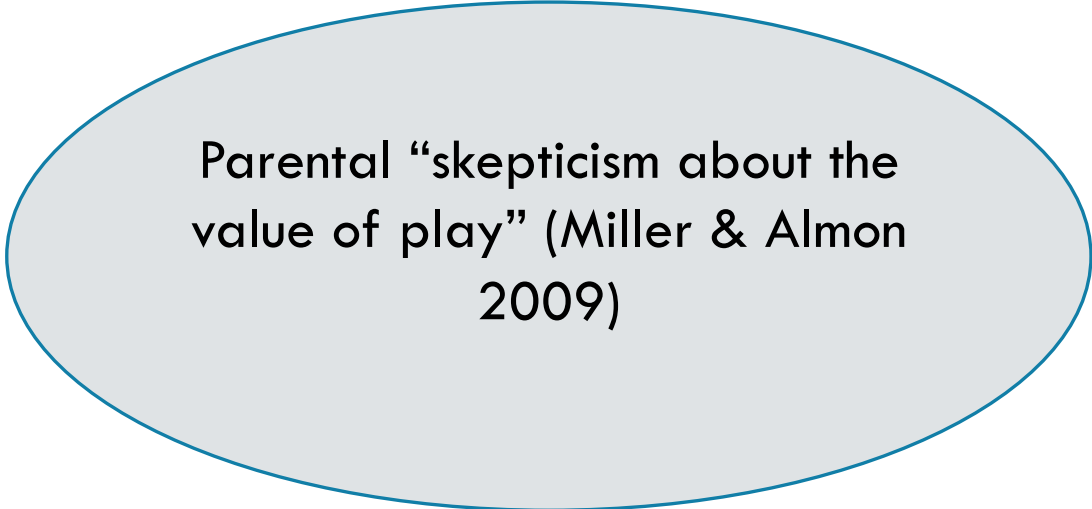
“If it’s up to him, he could play *all* the time...”

“there are many activities to do during summer”



“I want to play”

“I don’t want to do anything”

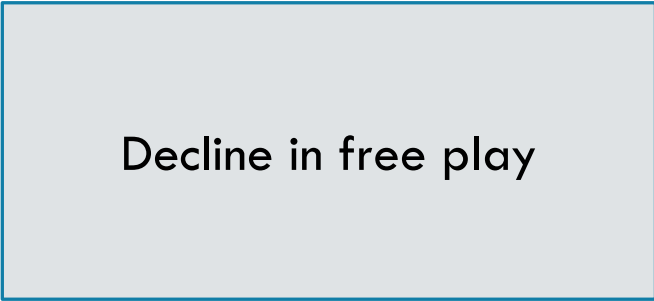


Parental perceptions

Organization of society

Social factors

Economic factors



Environmental factors

Psychological factors

# OUT OF SCHOOL TIME & PARENTING

Children's expectation that after-school activities is about 'having fun' (Duffett et al 2014)

New York City: a tightly regulated, fast-paced, competitive, unaffordable urban setting

For most college educated, urban parents, after-school or summer activities are very important (Lareau 2003); but they also valorize negotiations and "democratic interactions" (Tomanovic 2003, in Tezel 2011) as the basis on which decisions concerning children are made

# QUESTIONS

- What are the factors playing into parents' decisions about and management of children's out of school time?
- How do parents enact their roles in relation to child development in the interactions that make parents evoke children's voices saying "I want to play"?
- What do the common and different values underlined imply about the after school/out of school programs in New York City?

# FINDINGS

Ideas pertaining to ideal notions in child development in dynamic interaction with children

Spatial and temporal aspects: physical facilitators of and barriers to actualization of parental values

Responsibility and participation by supportive institutions and actors

# BACKGROUND

- Organized activities, discussions, implications for child development

skill acquisition, adult-supervision

fulfilling the gap left from public institutions (Halpern 2004)

critique by play scholars & advocates (Staempfli 2009)

- Out of school time in the neoliberal context & parenting

standardized testing, increased accountability pressures (Kane 2016)

cutting of recess (Jarrett 2013)

approaching formal schooling and changing parental perceptions (Kane 2016)

# BACKGROUND

- History of urban policy

Efforts to “contain” children (Hart 2002)

privatization and budget cuts to staff (Hart 2002)

- Class and socio-economic dimensions of access

concerted cultivation (Lareau 2003)

lack of public funding for organized out of school activities (Bennett et al 2012)



# BACKGROUND

- Parental anxieties, ambiguous futures and children as “becoming”

Shifting responsibilities, growing economic pressures on families (Katz 2008)  
becoming rather than being (Qvortrup 2009)

- Ethics of an encounter: being open to not-yet-known

being open to uncertainty and possibilities

listening (Davies 2014)

relationships and reasons before instruction and outcomes (Ramaekers and Suissa 2011)

# APPROACH & METHODS

- Semi-structured interviews with 10 parents (9 families)  
Interviews influenced by narrative inquiry techniques, aiming to elicit parent stories involving ideas, expectations, processes and conflicts as they surface in everyday life (Daiute 2014)
- Demographic surveys
- Observation notes
- Documents from organizations parents use and interact with

	Gender	Age	Annual Household Income	Ethnicity	Median Household Income of Zipcode	Employment Status	Occupation	Highest Level of Education	Marital Status	Residency in NYC
<b>Int 1</b>	Female	31-40	Under \$ 20,000	Asian	\$46,113	unemployed	not working outside home	undergraduate degree	married	Last 5 years - international
<b>Int 2</b>	Female	41-50	\$200,000	Caucasian	\$64,900	self-employed	architect	graduate degree	married	More than 10 years - native-born
<b>Int 3</b>	Female	51-60	\$200,000	Caucasian	\$85,930	part-time	auditor	graduate degree	married	More than 10 years - native-born
<b>Int 4</b>	Female	31-40	\$20,000-40,000	Asian	\$57,010	student	social worker	undergraduate degree	married	Last 3 years - international
<b>Int 5</b>	Male	31-40	\$61,000-80,000	Caucasian	\$66,129	full-time	civil servant	graduate degree	married	More than 10 years - native-born
<b>Int 6</b>	Female	41-50	\$61,000-80,000	African-American	\$52,052	full-time	teacher	graduate degree	married	More than 10 years - native-born
<b>Int 7</b>	Female	41-50	\$61,000-80,000	Caucasian	\$58,614	full-time	higher-ed educator	graduate degree	married	More than 10 years - native-born
<b>Int 8</b>	Male	31-40	\$61,000-80,000	Caucasian	\$69,415	full-time	non-profit manager	undergraduate degree	domestic partnership	More than 10 years - native-born
<b>Int 9 &amp; Int 10</b>	Female	31-40	\$61,000-80,000	Asian	\$51,183	full-time	city planner	undergraduate degree	married	More than 10 years - international
	Male	31-40	\$61,000-80,000	Asian	\$51,183	full-time	city planner	undergraduate degree	married	More than 10 years - international

# ACTIVITY-MEANING SYSTEM DESIGN

“An environment of everyday life -a cross context slice of life- wherein relationships across different points of view by different actors in the system interact in some way” (Daiute 2014: 38)

Parenting as “social network environments” (Daiute 2014: 73)

Different genres of texts (Bakhtin 1986) underlines context, relationality, audience and uptake vs. resistance by different actors

List of organizations parents use and their websites	
Mommy Poppins	<a href="https://mommypoppins.com/">https://mommypoppins.com/</a>
Wayfinder experience	<a href="https://wayfinderexperience.com/">https://wayfinderexperience.com/</a>
The Yard Playground	<a href="https://www.play-ground.nyc/">https://www.play-ground.nyc/</a>
Imagination Playground	<a href="http://www.imaginationplayground.com/">http://www.imaginationplayground.com/</a>
People's Theater Project	<a href="https://www.peopletheatreproject.org/">https://www.peopletheatreproject.org/</a>
Children's Museum of Art	<a href="https://cmany.org/">https://cmany.org/</a>
NY Metro Parents	<a href="https://www.nymetroparents.com/article/Where-toGo-Horseback-Riding-in-the-New-York-Area">https://www.nymetroparents.com/article/Where-toGo-Horseback-Riding-in-the-New-York-Area</a>
Construction Kids	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/constructionkids/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/constructionkids/</a>
Riverbank State Park	<a href="https://parks.ny.gov/parks/93/details.aspx">https://parks.ny.gov/parks/93/details.aspx</a>



“Like the Upper West Side and Park Slope, the Upper East Side is one of those neighborhoods where you can barely go a block without passing some kind of kid-centric business or attraction” (*MommyPoppins*)

“...like Mommy Poppins, right? I choose whatever is closer, but even that seems to bother her because she... So we live in Queens. It's hard for us to travel to Brooklyn, it is so far. She doesn't like to travel that far. So she started resisting”  
- *Int4 (mother)*

# ANALYSIS

Parent interviews and organizations' documents analyzed using values analysis to *'...identifying collective and divergent meanings around an issue of research interest (Davite 2014: 74)*

Major values identified in a coding process in triangulation with theoretical background and observational and survey data

An independent coder reviewed values, discussed the codebook with the researcher and suggested a new value

# NEGOTIATING BETWEEN...

## **Learning opportunities & children's play needs**

*"...I had my suggestions, like chess seems like a really good option or the science but she really wanted to do graffiti and I was like, I can't believe you want to do the graffiti" (Int 2)*

*"We, my husband and me definitely love to give him his free time because he's a very creative child and he makes beautiful Lego's and he makes beautiful things out of nothing and he's got a great imagination. So, he kind of does want his own space and time" (Int 1)*

*Our program is designed to encourage outstanding young people to develop a greater purpose in life (Wayfinder)*



# NEGOTIATING BETWEEN...

## **Responsible actors and institutions**

*“All these things they do are very expensive, but we don’t pay for school” (Int 2)*

*“We used to have a really nice afterschool program that ran at our public school and it was organized by the parent’s association and it was really affordable and convenient because there is no transition after school. And there were just a variety of different things from cooking to coding to Korean to photography and Yoga, you name it, lots of different activities and kids would pick what it is, but it stopped running. So now all of these things are kind of substituting for that” (Int 7)*

# NEGOTIATING BETWEEN...

## Places and through time

*"...like one time when she was quite young, we entered some city lottery thing and got like free swimming lessons. That seemed like a good deal at the time, but it was like in like Chelsea or something on like a Saturday, when all the trains are always down, you know, so I just remember the nightmare of like, you get to the train station oh great F is not working today, what are we gonna do? All the way to Chelsea, it was a mess" (Int 8)*

*"what would a child do if he's only at home all the time, inside it is a small space and it's not fun" (Int 1)*

*"All young people, regardless of demographic status, deserve access to spaces where they can fully engage in play" (The Yard Adventure Playground)*

# CONCLUSIONS

Parents emphasize organized activities as learning opportunities to pursue and underline learning opportunities as the most favorable path by which children develop the trait of consistency/commitment

Parents act as educators and enablers, shouldering the responsibility for children's enrichment, sometimes at the expense of children's desire

Parents' values are structured by access to opportunities and services in the city. Spatial, temporal, logistical and financial concerns play into the making of every decision

Need for affordable and accessible out of school arrangements in the city providing low-stakes and non-specialized play gatherings that could bridge parents' values and children's desires

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