Encountering, regulating and resisting different forms of children’s and young people’s mobile exclusion in urban public space
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Abstract

This thesis focuses on different forms of exclusion specifically related to the mobility of children in Japan by examining the role of their parents as gatekeepers and existing systems of protection and control as producers, regulators and organizers of their mobilities.

Article I examines the everyday feelings of exclusion experienced by immigrant parents of preschool aged children in public park playgrounds in Tokyo. These parental feelings of exclusion arose from unsuccessful encounters between children, in part due to visible bodily differences. The article argues that this sense of exclusion is socially problematic as immigrant parents turn away from local public space mobilities towards virtual mobilities in online play dates with their countries of origin, and focus more on private home centered play through a style of self-segregation as coping techniques.

Article II focuses on school based systems of protection and attitudes of parental protection in Kanagawa regarding stranger danger. These systems involve processes utilizing a visual pedagogy in which the stranger becomes known and is read as being ‘out of place’ in public space if their corporeal appearance transgresses a ‘regime of visuality’ through a form of networked regulation. The article argues that these systems and attitudes are creating a self-perpetuating embedded narrative of excessive risk and fear which impacts negatively on children’s independent mobility and is socially counterproductive in public space.

Article III focuses on a controversially redeveloped urban park in Tokyo where factors such as ‘pay to play’ access to sports amenities and heavy rule sets are in place to regulate the space. The article illuminates contradictions which arose between the official redevelopment discourse and what then ultimately unfolded socially on the ground. It argues that the current park structures limit children’s and young people’s everyday access and mobilities, and further, that they direct their focus towards resisting adult structures.

The combined findings of the thesis are that opportunities must be taken and implemented across parental, institutional and official scales to promote the everyday mobilities of children in urban public space in order to prevent them becoming mobile and political anomalies in public.

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For my mother and sister
and in memory of my father Guy
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要旨 (Summary in Japanese)

公共空間はしばしば美しい理由で生まれるものであり、異なる年齢、民族性、アイデンティティの都市居住者が集い互いに関わり、また日々の移動ですれ違う自由で開放されたプラットフォームである。人は公共空間の「公共性」の要素を問う移動性や職場へのアクセスに関連する無数の排他的障壁を見出すが、その上辺のはるかに下を穿り出す必要はない。この論文では特に子どもの移動性における阻害の異なる形式に焦点を当て、ゲートキーパーとしての親、また従来の保護・管理制度が移動性のプロデューサーかつ運営者として果たす役割を検証する。

この研究の地理的立地は日本の東京都と神奈川県である。何故この論文の焦点が日本なのか？日本が都市の公共空間計画においてネオリベラルなアプローチを採用したこと、子どもに関するリスクや恐怖を「知らない人は怖い」という説話が増えたこと、さらに比較的低い外国人移民水準といった理由により、日本では開放された公共空間が減少の一途をたどっている。これらは、日本で、さらには世界の大半の地域で、子どもが以前にも増して都会の環境で育っていることを考慮すると大いなる問題である。子どもの移動性に関する研究の多くは移動性そのものの実践を検証するが、この論文では両親や大人が主に果たす保護制度やその感情を通して、規制や日々の子どもの動作の創出に結び付く関係性のある複雑な力学を提示する。

この論文の最たる貢献は三点ある。一つは、都市における公共空間への子どもの移動性やアクセスの規制にまで及ぶ社会的生態学あるいは関係性のネットワークを提示すること。この論文では三部構成により、両親の抱く恐怖、地元当局の公共空間へのアプローチや移民の親が体感する疎外感の影響といった異なる要因を組み合わせて一つの絵として描き、移動性に関して人は相互に関係があるかを明らかにする。二つめに、異なる基準において、子どもの権利に対する障壁として立ちはだかる日々の阻害に注意を向けることを目標。三つめに、日本において幅広い年齢層や立地での子どもの都市における公共空間での移動性に関連する政治やその創出についての知識の拡大を図
こと、また、地理的分割に従属するのではなく、むしろ知識を通じて結びつけ、幅広い国際的機会にも目を向けることも目指す。この三部構成による論文では下記の通り検討し結論付ける。

第一部では、東京にある公共の公園で就学前児童のいる移民の親が日々経験する疎外感について検討する。このような親が感じる疎外感は、視覚的に明らかな体型の差異が要因で不成功に終わった他人との出会いや、子供同士の遊びの中で発生している。この第一部での発見は、移民である親が公共の遊び場を利用することにより、しばしば否定的な感情を感じ、地元にある公共空間での移動性に背を向け、出生国にいるオンライン上の遊び相手にパーソナルな移動性を求め、さらには問題対処方法として自らを隔絶することで、より自宅での遊びに偏ってしまうことから社会的にも問題となっている点である。第二部での見出しは、学校単位の保護制度や、日本の神奈川県における公園や都会の公共空間での「知らない人は怖い」という親の保護態度が過剰なリスクや恐怖の自己増殖的に心に深く刻まれる説話を創り出している点である。この第二部では、このような姿勢は子どもの自立した移動性にマイナスの影響を及ぼし、社会的にも逆効果であることを論じる。検討した保護制度は、1．他人的怖さや、学校ベースのクラスで警察による知らない人の「見分け方」を教えること。2．リアルタイムで公園や公共空間で不審者と見られる人物の通報やマッピングを行うこと。こういった制度は、見知らぬ人物が人々に知られるところとなり、その身体的特徴が「視覚的境界」を逸脱した場合は、公共空間に「不適合」として判断される「視覚的教育」を活用したプロセスに影響を与える。第三部では、東京都渋谷区では、公共空間の公共性が衰退中であること、潜在的な日常の移動性にマイナスの影響を及ぼし、子どもや若者が阻害されている。この第三部では、現行の大人仕様の構造を重視する有料スポーツ施設や厳格な規定のルールといった存在が制約条件となり、移動性を奪うという理由で、波紋を呼んだ渋谷区の公園再開発が、子どもをテーマとする日々の政治活動にマイナスの影響を及ぼすことを示す。この論文では、公園再開発で表向きになされた説明と、現場で実際に起きていることとの間での矛盾点に光を当てる。
この論文での複合的な発見は、世間の一部とは対照的に、公然と子どもが移動的になることや政治的に異質な存在になることを防ぐために、都市部の公共空間における子どもの日々の移動性を促す親、役人、制度的な規模にわたって、機会が生かされ実施されることである。
Articles included in the thesis

This thesis is based on the following papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

I  Perrem, J.G. “Some type of force field”: immigrant parents’ everyday encounters with exclusion and turns away from public space mobilities, *A version of this article has been submitted to an internationally refereed journal*

II  Perrem, J.G., Jansson, D. Regulating fear: the processes of creating ‘stranger danger’ and their impact on Japanese children’s urban public space mobilities, *A version of this article has been submitted to an internationally refereed journal*

III  Perrem, J.G. Creeping forms of children’s and young people’s exclusion in public space: ‘pay to play’ redevelopment on a Tokyo park, *A version of this article has been submitted to an internationally refereed journal*

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1. Introduction

Unfolding in the background to the highly contested and visible issues surrounding ongoing erosions of the ‘publicness’ of public space, through factors such as neoliberal planning policies adopted by many cities in the global north and ongoing spatial privatization, are parallel processes of restriction related to children’s everyday mobilities in urban public space (Cele, 2015; Cresswell, 2006; Hannam, Sheller and Urry, 2006; Harvey, 2008; Low and Smith, 2006; Mitchell, 2003). These restrictions have partially led to children’s mobilities and activities such as outdoor play in physical city spaces like parks and playgrounds, to become more home centered, as accessibility is reduced through governmental approaches to public space and by parental feelings of fear or exclusion. Fear, in urban contexts has been consistently growing surrounding the safety of children in public space, and has become increasingly intertwined with everyday life through various structures, media and platforms (Katz, 2008; Pain and Smith, 2008). These interconnected shifts towards the private sphere away from public space have problematic consequences for children’s mobilities, their political relationship to the city and how they are perceived to ‘be’. Research on children’s mobilities has shown that ‘there is a long history of closing children’s worlds down closer and tighter to private spaces. This process then becomes a platform for the logical axiom that children’s direct experience of the world is limited and parochial; hence, the assumption, and often assertion, that what children have to contribute in the context of politics is minimal’ (Skelton, 2013: 128).

Being cognizant of the interconnectedness of children’s urban mobilities is a key component of this thesis as it seeks to view their mobilities as enmeshed social constructions rather than isolated physical outcomes. By viewing children’s mobility as enmeshed in an interconnected network the goal is to demonstrate that dialectic relationships exist between the everyday myriad of socially constructed factors that influence movement and the underlying political meaning of such movements.
The scope of this thesis then focuses upon the experiential and spatialized mobility centric reactions to these preceding elements in urban public space through examining the role of parents and systems of protection in their prime positions as gatekeepers and producers/organizers of children’s mobility, as well including children’s perspectives themselves. It is also worthy to note that in tandem to the aforementioned elements which the thesis focuses upon, are other external factors regarding time organization that incorporate features such as: commuting distance, length of parental working day and time allocated to institutionalized activities (Sibley, 1995b; Van der Burgt and Gustafson, 2013).

The thesis focuses on issues connected to public spaces. But what are public spaces? I utilize Staeheli and Mitchell’s (2002) definition here as those being: publically accessible physical spaces that are in theory ‘relatively open to a range of people and behaviours’ (Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009: 2). This link to public space differs from the Habermasian (1989) bourgeois public sphere which is a metaphorical space in which dialogue circulates (Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009: 2), where the key interests are civil society, public opinion and the attainment of consensus (Aubin, 2014: 90). The public sphere lacks the physical characteristics of public space platforms such as parks or playgrounds. I draw this distinction of physicality between public space and the public sphere as the thesis focuses in part on embodied mobilities and the exclusion of those mobilities in relation to children and young people and physical urban space, rather than a purely non-physical metaphorical space (Habermas, 1989). There are important metaphorical elements contained in each of the three thesis articles however. An example of why the physical characteristic matters directly in relation to mobility can be seen in both abstract and practical terms. An abstract example is that rights, such as the right to the city, ‘have to be exercised somewhere’ (Mitchell, 2003: 47) for them to have meaning. This grounds the exercising of rights at a physical location in embodied ways. A more practical example is that ‘limited access to good outdoor play areas and prohibitions against unsupervised play in the streets affects crucial aspects of children’s mental and physical health’ (Van der Burgt and Gustafson, 2013: 26). The preceding examples are presented not to diminish the importance of the public sphere as a whole, as ‘claiming public spaces is only one strategy for staking a claim in the spaces of the public’ (Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009: 646), but that the central concern of the research is oriented towards public space.
What do these preceding factors mean in relation to children’s and young people’s mobility in the case of Japan? This thesis sets out to examine these issues in the context of children’s and young people’s mobilities and their production in Tokyo City and a city located in Kanagawa prefecture. In order to understand the contextual relationships of children’s mobilities and how they are produced, limited and pressured, it is necessary to look at the structuring factors of their everyday mobilities and the interconnected social ecology which they form. This broadens the perspective to avoid a narrow focus on what Cresswell (2010b) identifies as the ‘raw materials’ of mobility, that being: the physical movement of point A to point B. Through this inter-relational approach the thesis considers the experiences and emotions of parents as a crucial focal point and methodological centerpiece. As Van der Burgt and Gustafson (2013: 26) state: ‘due to their age and dependent status, children are particularly restricted in their mobility, what they can do and where they can do it. Without assistance of a parent, children usually have a very small activity zone’.

Children’s everyday mobilities and activity zones in Japanese cities, as in many other locations, are considerably affected by perceptions and feelings of safety in society. These everyday mobilities that I am referring to include both independent and accompanied mobilities. Independent mobilities are where children are afforded opportunities to go to spaces such as parks without the accompaniment or direct supervision of adults, while accompanied mobilities, are where an adult joins the child/children in a form of joint mobility. The levels of independent mobility afforded to children are often connected to factors such as age and gender. For example, regarding age, younger children (such as preschoolers) tend to have symbiotic mobilities with their parents and guardians while young people (teenaged children) tend to be being given a greater level of freedom in their urban mobilities. Factors such as gender within children’s mobilities can also have an impact. For example boys are typically given a wider geographic scope in their urban public space mobilities in comparison to girls who tend to be more restricted and supervised in their movements in the city.

Defining the category of children and young people and what constitutes the definition of a child can be problematic (James and James, 2012). For the purposes of this thesis I use the age of majority in Japan, that being 18 (recently lowered from 20 years of age in 2015) as the boundary line. I decided to refer to children and young people rather than just use the term ‘child’, to indicate a difference in stages of life. This is because while a preschooler and a seventeen year old
are both technically children in Japan they are engaged in different forms of mobilities, activities, education and possess different development indicators. As James and James (2012: 9) state: ‘most societies would recognise some distinction between infants and toddlers on the one hand and youth/adolescents on the other’. Thus I use the term young people periodically to indicate older children when appropriate. Having outlined this contextual difference an important unifying aspect of ‘children’ across the age ranges of childhood/s and geographic contexts is their differentiated citizenship status, social status and rights compared to adults. These aspects are frequently bound up with notions of competence, maturity and independence and an associated moral and practical ability to exercise rights. Thusly children are often placed in a ‘futurity’ dilemma (Dee, 2008) where they are positioned as ‘citizens in the making’ (Marshall, 1950: 25), as subjects who have yet to reach ‘social maturity’ (Holloway and Valentine, 2000: 2), or as only becomings rather than beings and becomings. A certain tension exists here in the difference between citizenship and rights. For example, Japan is signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNHCR) which are human rights linked to ethics and morals rather than legally enforceable citizenship rights, and thus ‘because children’s rights are not rooted in the social and legal status of citizenship they serve to reinforce children’s dependence on adults’ (James and James, 2012: 29). Despite the cultural relativism of childhoods in different countries ‘in terms of the institutional arrangements of any society ‘childhood’ remains - it is a space occupied by the next generation’ (James and James, 2012: 15).

The articles in this thesis encompass both independent and accompanied mobilities. These are not exclusive distinctions however as both forms are discussed as is pertinent. Indeed the boundaries of what constitutes children’s ‘independent’ mobility are not always clearly staked out. A practical example of this can be found in Japan regarding the compulsory school ‘walking bus’ for elementary aged children (Drianda and Kinoshita, 2011). Here, the ‘walking bus’ is used across Japan by children to travel to and from school where they move in single file along a set of predetermined waypoints with the eldest child leading at the front. While the children are technically independently mobile this form of rigid and structured mobility does not constitute the meaning of independent mobility as referred to in this thesis.

There are a number of scaled barriers blocking children’s and young people’s mobilities and their ‘right to the city’, and to take account of these barriers, actors, such as parents or institutions (e.g. the school) connected to the everyday lives of children must be in-
cluded as key gatekeepers and central producers of mobility. Previous research has shown that ‘studying children’s mobility with an emphasis on children ‘‘on their own’’ has...advocated an understanding of children as isolated beings whose lives are not analytically connected to wider social, economic and cultural processes’ (Cortés-Morales and Christensen, 2014: 12). Of key importance then to the relational production of children’s mobilities are the perceptions of parents and their approach toward spatial access and perceived geography of danger linked to public spaces like parks (Sibley, 1995b; Valentine, 1997b, 1997c). Sibley (1995b: 128) notes that adults relate to children partly through their attitudes to space in both the family home and beyond. And that children’s experience of boundaries (both spatial and behavioral) through parental divisions which carve up their time, set markers and potential conflicts in the present life of the child, but also as effects that are carried forward into adult life, and thus are profound considerations as problems ‘spill over into public spaces’ (Sibley, 1995b: 129).

Examples of the types of spatial divisions and boundaries set by parents can include parental blanket bans and warnings when negotiating public space (Valentine, 1997c: 78) as they contend with narratives of risk and dangers to their children linked to their ‘vulnerability’ in public space (Valentine, 1997c: 69). Katz (2006: 107) has identified such narratives as ‘terror talk’ which impact parental perceptions surfacing within mass media where ‘a constant assault of articles that detail the violence of urban children’s everyday lives’ exists and that ‘in these, the tropes of innocence and danger oscillate at breathtaking speed’. Katz goes on to note the rise of private ‘safe haven’ play spaces ‘for children whose parents are alarmed by news reports of children being abducted or harmed while playing outside’ (Katz, 2006: 106) and these haven spaces have evolved in Japanese urban contexts. Further, Cele (2015: 241) notes that ‘parents set the framework for children’s access to the city, and it is parents’ underlying ideas about places and childhoods that decide where and how children live’.

The perceived threat to children’s safety in urban public space commonly takes the form of ‘stranger danger’ (Ahmed, 2000; Drianda, 2010; Valentine, 1996, 1997; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). For children, the rise of societal ‘stranger danger’ fears and ‘paranoid parenting’ (Furedi, 2001) has seen independent mobility suffer and come at ‘great cost to their autonomy’ (Pain, 2006: 221). Further it has increased children’s position as ‘prosthetic citizens’ (Cresswell, 2006: 167) as they become even more reliant on adult accompaniment to enable their own movements to/in urban public space. This has seen
children become more tied to the private sphere and demonstrates how ‘children’s actions reflect the prevailing conditions, which for the most part they cannot choose for themselves’ (Kallio, 2008: 286). Given the primacy of importance of prevailing conditions for children’s mobilities it becomes crucial to understand more about these prevailing conditions, how they are socially produced, and their impacts on everyday mobilities. In addition to the mobility framework setting by ‘parents in determining the extent of their children’s personal geographies’ in public space (Valentine, 1997b: 37), institutions, such as schools, are also involved.

While an increasing awareness has been taking place surrounding children’s politics (Bartos, 2012; Philo and Smith, 2013; Skelton, 2013), and that ‘children’s everyday interactions contain many actions and reflections with political connotations’ (Cele and Van der Burgt, 2015: 2), a space still remains to broaden the connections between the (im)mobilities of children and the political meanings linking to spatial exclusion. This is especially important as children are in part beings and ‘political becomings’ (Skelton, 2013) and when we consider this formative aspect in relation to the social production of mobility, imposed immobility and the curtailment of mobility.

Children can be considered to be political becomings in two ways. Firstly in their embodied everyday practices as they ‘have to have the opportunities and spaces in which to try out their political practices and agency’ (Skelton, 2013: 130). Secondly, in a broader symbolic political sense. This symbolic sense is rooted in children being ‘a public’ who are engaged in a formative process through both their visibility and their mobilities in urban public space while trying to become part of ‘the public’ (Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009). Mobility can be considered as a key aspect of this practical and symbolic formation process as ‘mobility is as much about meaning as it is about mappable and calculable movement. It is an ethical and political issue as much as a utilitarian and practical one’ (Cresswell, 2010a: 552). It is important to note here that I am not stating that children are only becomings, but that in the context of ‘the public’ they are in part ‘becoming’. Their experiences as beings should be valued however.

The topography of the process involved in shifting from the periphery as ‘a public’ to the core of ‘the public’ can undulate for different children in different geographic settings and social classes. For example the process for children to become part of the wider ‘public’ through being visible in embodied mobilities in public space becomes more complex when the children are part of immigrant families in Japanese cities. This complexity has been noted in other geographic
contexts outside of Japan, such as in the United States and Australia for example (Ahmed, 2000; Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009; Noble and Poynting, 2008). Yet Japan itself is an interesting case due to its high level of ethnic homogeneity. This presents a set of particular challenges and barriers connected to the emotional aspects of mobility, and to senses of belonging/exclusion found in everyday encounters with difference in public space (Den Besten, 2010). While research has shown that a sense of belonging in local neighbourhoods is vital for people’s well-being (Den Besten, 2010: 181), as is the ability to feel ‘at home’ (Noble and Poynting, 2008), both these elements can be more difficult to attain for immigrant families who are sometimes visibly different from the majority urban population.

When feelings of belonging and of being ‘at home’ are absent, the everyday mobilities of immigrant children, particularly of a younger age, can become impacted upon by parental feelings of exclusion. This can lead to forms of self-segregation from local public space. From the perspective of meaning contained in the production and enactment of mobilities and the political aspects of such meaning, this again comes back to the right to the city and how these mobilities and encounters in public space impact upon its fulfillment or denial.

When we envisage politics in relation to children and their role as beings and political becomings it is crucial to note that the nature of the politics in question here is not the same as formal politics or what can be conceived of politics with a big ‘P’ that is tied to official politics. Children’s politics are rooted more in the interactions and spaces of the everyday, such as negotiating friendship dynamics through care or through forms of play, rather than in the formal or traditional adult conceptions of what politics is and where politics takes place. This makes the everyday public spaces of the city, such as parks, important platforms for children and young people to engage in their own form of politics, and why issues of exclusion and (im)mobility significantly matter when their opportunities to access such spaces decrease or are supplanted by private sphere interactions. This children’s politics which is bound to the fabric of the everyday highlights the importance of the call made by Philo and Smith (2013: 143) for the need to ‘craft situations where their priorities can indeed be beauty, or play, or friendships’, because it is within these aspects where their political ‘becomingness’ unfolds. Further, there is a need to ‘create conditions and resources able to realize not just their survival but also their flourishing’ (Philo and Smith, 2013: 143).

A metric to both assess and attain a ‘flourishing’ related to children and the city can be couched within the ‘right to the city’ (Harvey,
2008; Lefebvre, 1996) in that it brings barriers to the equitable access and use of urban public space by children into sharper focus as not a mere afterthought, but as a fundamental aspect of their urban existence.

There are many negative effects of children’s mobilities being more bound to the private sphere and these effects include: 1. The encouragement of assumptions and constructions of children as being incompetent and vulnerable in urban environments (Valentine, 1997c). 2. the less ‘visible’ children are in public space then the greater the risk of a shift towards becoming anomalies in public space rather than accepted and ‘legitimate’ users of spaces in the cities in their own right (Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009: 12). 3. the loss of opportunities to reap potential social benefits, such as children’s increased sense of ownership of places in their neighborhoods where the unfamiliar becomes less intimidating through their own knowledge and experiences in public space (Karsten, 2003; Van der Burgt, 2008). 4. the loss of opportunities to reap potential health and physical benefits of engaging in play outdoors, and finally, 5. reducing children’s opportunities for meaningful connections to the environment, as this can provide emotional benefits and develop environmentally friendly outlooks (Carver et al., 2008; Chen-Hsuan Cheng and Monroe, 2012; Foster, 2014; Schoeppe, Duncan, Badland, Oliver and Browne, 2013; Schoeppe, Duncan, Badland, Rebar and Vandelanotte, 2015).

The aspects discussed in the preceding sections of this introduction raise important issues regarding children’s and young people’s mobilities in urban public space related to exclusion. Connected and overlapping with this exclusion are restrictions on factors such as independent mobility, range of movement, activities and presence in public space. Through adopting a feminist approach and employing a qualitative methodology this thesis explores three processes: 1. Social exclusion 2. fear and securitization 3. neoliberal planning and approaches to urban public space. These can be combined into an overarching question which is formulated as follows:

How do the processes of social exclusion, fear and securitisation and neoliberal planning influence the exclusion and restriction of children’s and young people’s mobilities in urban public space in Japan?

In turn, this overarching question can be expanded into research questions which allow for more particular examinations of the three different processes connected to the exclusion and restrictions of children’s
and young people’s mobilities. By incorporating a variety of ages the following questions aim to explore the processes across an array of experiences. My use of the term ‘production’ in the questions overleaf infers that this is a social production (Lefebvre, 1991). Similarly to how urban public space is significantly a social product, so too are the everyday (im)mobilities which traverse or are denied from it. Also implied in my use of ‘production’ is the result of such productions, that being the nature of the mobilities that emerge and the associated physical, social, political and emotional elements connected to particular contexts. I refer to the three questions as ‘guiding’ research questions as they are intended as an entry point into each process which each thesis article examines. The questions do not exactly mirror the smaller particular questions explored in each article verbatim, but rather act as thematic guides and inform the direction of the articles.

1.1 Guiding research questions

**Article I:** What kind of impact does social exclusion have on the production of preschool aged immigrant children’s mobilities in Japan?

**Article II:** What kind of impacts do fear and securitization have on the production of Japanese elementary children’s mobilities?

**Article III:** What kind of impacts do neoliberal planning and approaches to urban public space have on the mobilities of Japanese children and young people?

The rationale behind the ordering of the articles is reflective of a journey which occurs across them when they are considered as an interconnected whole with its beginnings rooted in the emotional and the diffuse, and which has a destination connected to the materiality/design of physical public space and the blanket of officialdom which overlays it. The additional connective thread that runs through the three articles is the underlying political meaning associated with the everyday mobilities that emerge as result of the three processes, and also examinations of how children’s mobilities are socially produced in different contexts (i.e. preschool, elementary, teenagers).

The thesis seeks to make a contribution in three primary ways. Firstly, it presents a relational network that goes into regulating children’s and young people’s mobilities and their access to public spaces.
of the city and thus goes beyond the meaning of the physical movements themselves. Through the three articles the thesis weaves together a picture of different factors such as parental fear, local authority approaches to public space and the impact of parental senses of exclusion amongst immigrants, to show how they are interrelated and impact upon mobility outcomes in different and political ways. Secondly it seeks to draw attention to everyday exclusions which are acting as barriers to children’s right to the city at different scales. Thirdly, to broaden knowledge on the politics and production of children’s urban public space mobilities across a spectrum of ages and locations in the Japanese context as well as taking a broader international opportunity towards bridging geographic divides through knowledge rather than being subservient to them. As Dimmer (2013: 3), a prominent researcher on Japanese public and private urban space states: ‘until not too long ago, international public space debates strongly centered on European or North American cities, or those influenced by European cultures through colonialism — in effect underplaying public space in non-western settings. Only recently has urban collective space been discussed in a cross-cultural perspective, seeking to decenter the dominating Western bias’.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is comprised of five chapters followed by three articles. Following this introductory chapter the comprehensive summary moves on to the theoretical concepts and literature that underpins the thesis in Chapter 2. That chapter also sets out the ontological position from which the thesis proceeds. Chapter 3 presents the methodological approach adopted in the research and includes discussions and reflections on epistemology, my positionality as researcher and practical issues related to my research experiences. Chapter 4 presents a brief summary of the three thesis articles, while Chapter 5 presents my concluding considerations and thoughts. Article I, II and III then follow in full to provide the necessary context for this comprehensive summary.
2. Theoretical and conceptual points of departure

Within this chapter of the thesis I present the theoretical starting points from which it proceeds and the main conceptual aspects which it connects to in the context of researching the production of mobilities of children and young people in urban public space. The common thread that links the conceptual aspects are issues of exclusion across a range of ages and urban places. The chapter begins where all endeavours in social science begin, either consciously or unconsciously, with a brief discussion on my ontological perspective as the bedrock upon which the rest of the thesis proceeds.

2.1 Social construction and public space

My ontological position encompasses the personal, the political and the theoretical, and these aspects interconnect to frame this thesis. My initial theoretical point of departure rests upon a core underlying philosophy that space is a social construction rather than a simple empty container and that there are multiple truths rather than a singular reality (Aitken and Valentine, 2006). This social constructivist position informs the concepts which I choose to incorporate into the research, the qualitative methods I adopt which have their basis in feminist epistemology and ultimately the claims that I can make about the results arising from this research, in that it is not a positivistic endeavour. Within the social constructivist position an attempt to demonstrate that a wholly dispassionate and disconnected approach roots the study is not only conceived of as a folly but also as an impossibility. This impossibility rests in the position that there are multiple truths rather than a singular universal truth, and thus claims of a removed objectivity on the part of the researcher, or that they do not influence the field which they enter, is something that becomes invalidated (Haraway, 1991; Dixon and Jones, 2006). This connects to positionality which will be discussed presently in the upcoming methodology chapter.
My political ontology is perhaps idealistic in its ultimate aim, in that I engage in research which has an underlying desire to counter exclusions in urban contexts in hopes of shifting boundaries towards a more ‘utopian’ urban public space. While utopian ideals are problematic for children and others in neoliberal and modernist approaches towards cities, with the placing of people in subservient positions to exchange value, automobiles, aesthetic design features, private interests and the commodification of space, my dialectical utopian vision rather draws on the ideas of Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1996). Through this I mean that urban public space should be essentially open and that its social production is infused with politics (Lefebvre, 1991, 1996). The openness here is not solely referring to scale or urban space with a lack of development occurring upon it, but rather to accessibility and opportunities for equitable representations, where mobility acts as a bodily representation in space and what we can consider a ‘right’. As Lefebvre states: ‘the right to the city is like a cry and a demand . . . a transformed and renewed right to urban life’ (Lefebvre, 1996: 158; Purcell, 2003).

Calling for a right to the city for openness is a broad statement however, and so I will clarify the meaning of this right. At its core is the desire for use value to be set against the domination of exchange value and the formulation of the city as a product which has undermined many aspects of urban life (Harvey, 2005; Kuymulu, 2014). In terms of its application to the crux of this thesis surrounding the mobilities of children and young people in urban public space and barriers to access, I am drawing on the Lefebvrian concepts of participation and appropriation of space as constituent parts of the right (Lefebvre, 1996). Participation in that those on the margins, such as children, of structures and urban government that actively produce spaces of the city and its social relations are brought into meaningful participatory roles.

Appropriation is centered on use value and social function through both gaining access to and being able to use spaces to counter exclusion and spatial marginalisation (Kuymulu, 2014; Lefebvre, 1996). When considered together participation and appropriation compliment different forms of physical mobile representation in the city. This thesis is primarily concerned with appropriation as a constituent part of the right to the city of children given that mobility is tied closely to social functioning of public space, but I am also cognizant of the importance of participation and the effects of marginalisation from official governmental structures of spatial production (see Article III).
The idea of space as a social construction and its dialectical qualities (and this includes urban public space) has been a stance adopted by many human geographers who have come to question concepts of space as being an empty container. It largely finds its origins with Lefebvre’s (1991) work entitled *The Production of Space* in which a dialectical triad is proposed. Within the dialectical triad framework the three elements include: representational space, representations of space and spatial practice. Spatial practice can be conceived of as the physical and material, found in the architecture of cities and the spaces within cities. Representations of space can be thought of as models of space or imaginary space. Lefebvre notes that space is ‘manipulated by all kinds of authorities of which it is the locus and milieu’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 51) The third element in Lefebvre’s triad is representational space which is bound to the experiences of space in everyday life which has elements of both the preceding aspects of the triad, but also exceeds their determinations and is where meaning becomes imbued.

Lefebvre’s (1991) triadic model containing the concepts of: representational space (lived space), representations of space (conceived space) and spatial practice (perceived space), have been taken up and built upon with a radical postmodern perspective in a departure from structuralism by Soja (1996) through the introduction of ‘thirdspace’. For Soja thirddspace seeks to expand the geographical imagination and he states (Soja, 1996: 1) that the underlying rationale for ‘mobilising this objective is a belief that the spatial dimension of our lives has never been of greater practical and political relevance’. Thirddspace is defined by Soja (1996: 31) as the following:

A knowable and unknowable, real and imagined lifeworld of experiences, emotional events, and political choices that is existentially shaped by the generative and problematic interplay between centers and peripheries, the abstract and concrete, the impassioned spaces of the conceptual and the lived, marked out materially and metaphorically in spatial praxis, the transformation of spatial knowledge into spatial action in the field of unevenly developed spatial power.

Through thirddspace Soja (1996) facilitates a different way for considering spatiality through its extreme openness and it contains a desire to break away from dualisms rooted in modernity and what he considers an over focus on historicism. Soja (1996: 68) states that thirddspace’s closest relative is Lefebvre’s concept of representational space or lived space. As Soja phrases it: ‘the space of radical openness, the space of social struggle’ where change can be both imagined and enacted by individuals. Yet, thirddspace differs from representational space as
rather than being a relational constituent part of a model, instead it both contains and transcends the triadic model. Soja (1996: 62) states that: thirdspace ‘retains the multiple meanings Lefebvre persistently ascribed to social space. It is both a space that is distinguishable from other spaces (physical and mental, or firstspace and second space) and a transcending composite of all spaces’.

When looking at urban public space with Lefebvre’s dialectical triad the importance of the production of space and the possibility for social reproduction becomes clear when the embodied aspect of everyday life is considered regarding exclusion. Unfortunately these dialectics often relate to what Merrifield (2000) identifies as the ‘dialectics of dystopia’, as exclusionary practices and policies such as ‘zero tolerance’ problematize those seen as against the proper order of things in the values invested into many ‘representations of space’ and ideals becoming expressed in the concrete, stone and glass of the urban fabric which reflect exclusionary ideals or social structures in taken for granted ways (Sibley, 1995a) These can produce and reproduce spatial practices of inequality and exclusion encompassing children and young people.

A simple way to conceive of this is that rather than a park falling from the sky randomly into the urban fabric of Tokyo, it is instead the result of a complex set of relational interactions which inform the desired norms which overlay it, such as what behaviours are permissible or forbidden, its material manifestation (and the ideology in design and landscape choices) and who it is intended for. Once constructed, or produced, the social and the material are not separate, but rather, influence each other in a dialectic relationship experienced by everyday lived experiences. This dialectic links to the mobilities which occur in urban public space but also how the mobilities are produced.

Urban public space itself is also in a state of mobility as processes leading to transformations are constantly occurring as Cresswell (2008: 137) notes: ‘whatever kinds of places are constructed they are never truly finished and always open to question and transformation’. In this way the socially constructed nature of urban space and cities means that they can be conceived of as a ‘text that is re-written over time’ (Knox and Pinch, 2006: 51) or to be in ‘flux’ (Harvey, 1996).

Regrettably, from a social justice perspective for many cities this re-writing process has seen the accessibility and openness to public spaces and the mobilities of everyday life become met with a series of economic, political and social barriers (Harvey, 1989; Mitchell, 1995), such as neoliberal policies (Peck, 2014), growing privatisation and quasi publicness of public space (Low and Smith, 2006; Mitchell,
and as ‘measures are taken to exclude certain groups from ‘public’ spaces including gangs of youths, drunks, the homeless and ‘‘deviants’’ such as those who appear mentally ill’ (Knox and Pinch, 2006: 49).

2.2 Children and cities

The difficulty of the process for children and young people being seen as equal co-participants in public spatial life, where adults and children can live together is a recurring theme in literature on children and cities (Chawla and Malone, 2003; Christensen and O’Brien, 2003; Valentine, 1996). As Chawla and Malone (2003: 118) note there is a serious moral dimension to the relationship between cities and how they treat their children: ‘cities are the cultural and political centres of their societies and how they treat their children and other vulnerable inhabitants is a basic measure of whether they are negligent and cruel or generous and humane. Therefore a city’s political and moral dimensions can be judged by the condition of its children, in terms of their health, opportunities for development and sense of well-being’. Children’s mobilities in urban public space are strongly connected to Chawla and Malone’s criteria when we consider that health and opportunities for development and well-being emerge from interactions with the environment in physiological and psychological terms (Cele, 2006: 44), and that when such mobile explorations are denied that these are restricted/diminished. The processes of negotiation between adults and children occur at different scales as children frequently try to struggle, resist and circumvent their exclusion in terms of presence and social use of space.

For example, this resistance can take the form of small scale struggles over ‘where to kick a football or discussions between parents and children about going out to play to wider debates concerning land use or planning for the future form of cities’ (Christensen and O’Brien, 2003: 1). While the small scale issues may appear trivial initially they directly link to my previous discussions on the right to the city as the denial of independent mobility to children are often rooted in fears over the incompetence of children to cope in dense urban environments and external threats such as strangers and traffic. This small scale link to wider issues presents the position of children as ‘others’ in adult definitions of public space (Valentine, 1996). If the aim of a socially just city is an inclusive ‘city for all’ then cognizance must be given to the ‘othered’ position of children with the urban, as individuals and as a social group (Christensen and O’Brien, 2003).
The enmeshed and interconnected nature of children’s lives in cities, which is also reflected in their mobilities, includes a range of locations such as the home, the school, the car and public spaces like parks and playgrounds. The rise of private company run commercial play spaces (Karsten, 2002), of private locations and the automobile has been a steadily increasing characteristic of children’s urban lives however (O’Brien, 2003), and ‘to protect children parents keep them at home and drive them in the car when they need to get somewhere. In many places schools are becoming more fortified with high gates, fences and guards and with restricted time spend outdoors’ (Cele, 2006: 44). The rise of the private means that children occupy sometimes ‘contradictory spaces in contemporary cities’ (Christensen and O’Brien, 2003) in that attempts to protect them from urban dangers delimit their growth and well-being, and thus cause forms of harm.

Often parental desires to protect their children through supervision is out of a sense that ‘it all used to be better’ in historical versions of the cities/streets where they are raising children as evidenced in Karsten’s (2005) research. These forms of harm/restriction do not serve to completely strip child agency, opportunities for play or resistance to structures away, but nor they do not serve to enhance independent developmental aspects of a child’s life in the city. Indeed, play does not solely occur on or in designated public play spaces, yet certain qualities of play in public environments are not replicable in private homes, an example of this are the environmental features of outdoor public play including plants, animals and range of potential mobilities through space as well as opportunities for spontaneous interactions with the unknown.

To simplify the private home as being inherently inferior would be too gross a simplification however, as the home has been noted to play an important role in developing children’s public realm competencies as they use it as a form of static base for building aspects of their identity and as shelter from a ‘changing outside world’ (Christensen and O’Brien, 2003: 4). The world of public space outside the private home however frequently becomes a more problematized realm for different categories of children. Research has shown that girls and minority ethnic children, and children from more deprived neighbourhoods have a ‘sense of struggle and low expectations about what was possible in terms of life outside the home’ (O’Brien, 2003: 144). This brings up the key point of the importance of the need for city planners to be sensitive towards child-friendly cities which promote inclusion across gender, age and class categories and further is a strong point of critique against neoliberal approaches in planning towards urban pub-
lic space which have seen the commodification of play spaces and parks both in Japan and beyond.

2.3 The personal and the everyday

Connected to the overarching ontological social constructivist position regarding space are strands of geographies/geographers influenced by feminist epistemology which have guided my approach to appreciate the importance of the everyday contexts, and, crucially, how the personal and the everyday are bound to the political (Aitken and Valentine, 2006; England, 2006). While feminist geography has traditionally been primarily concerned with the improvement of women’s lives it has spilled over into concerns for other ‘groups’ in society that struggle for spatial or social equity and into areas such as children’s geography and political geography (Dixon and Jones, 2006). From a perspective of shared oppression regarding spatial behaviour and territory James (1990) makes a direct parallel between the struggle of women and children, and states that ‘it is difficult to talk about the liberation of women without also including children’ (James, 1990: 281).

Locating oneself in a broad philosophy and paradigms of geographical thought is perhaps somewhat easier than finding within which parameters of theory one fits exactly, as these shift depending on considerations of time and place, and thus it can become somewhat tricky. From my perspective this thesis is influenced by aspects of feminist geographical theory as it seeks to critique structures which perpetuate exclusion of children and it does so by linking to the politics of both the ‘personal’ and ‘the everyday’ through parents (Article I & II) and children and young people (Article III).

The ‘everyday’ of children’s geographies has not been a dominant area within the broader discipline of geographic thought historically (Cele, 2006), but has consistently gained momentum in recent years. Despite its initial obscureness important works exist from the 1970’s with roots in both positivistic and more humanistic approaches, such as Hart’s (1979) *Children’s experience of place* in looking towards the spatial and social structuring of children’s lives. Within more contemporary scholarly works of the 1980’s and 1990’s a diversification of the field occurred. This saw issues of children and public space emerge to the forefront, but from differing perspectives which Holloway and Valentine (2000: 4) identify as the ‘Apollonian and Dionysian’ viewpoints. In these social constructions children are represented as ‘angels/good’ or ‘devils/bad’ respectively.
Research in children’s geographies during that time reflected this dichotomy and ‘was divided into two different and contradicting paths’ (Cele, 2006: 35) One path focused upon children’s anti-social behaviour and the label of youth as a problem while the alternate path examined issues of stranger danger. In the 2000’s the field diversified beyond dichotomies and now flourishes across mobilities research, emotional geographies and incorporations of quantitative and qualitative approaches in research with an emphasis on the importance of place and crucially, the ‘personal’.

The ‘personal’ refers to two levels. Firstly, ‘the personal’ regarding the people who become participants in the research and secondly, the personal regarding myself as the researcher, and the need for a reflexive approach to the field (Bloch, 1991; England, 1994). In the former, the daily experiences and struggles of people in their contextualized places constitute important forms and aspects of politics. For example, to ground this within the particularity of my own research project presented in this thesis, the people in primary focus are parents, children and young people located in Tokyo and the southerly neighbouring prefecture of Kanagawa. Within those larger geographical divisions we can dive further into the everyday spaces they use, such as urban public parks and their homes, and into the bottom up perspective rather than a top down one.

Theoretically being focused on a more intimate scale does not automatically generate or facilitate meaningful outcomes or interactions however. Primary focus has sometimes been placed upon the analysis and interpretation of urban environments through aesthetic design elements equating to favorable liveability factors (Gehl, 1996, Gehl and Gemzoe, 1996; Whyte 1980). These analyses, which pay valuable attention to the built environment and architectural features can still miss the subtle and complex meaning of place from the grounded internal perspective of the everyday user, and especially from the perspectives of/connected to children.

Other urban research on public space focuses heavily on the policies of those that produce places in official capacities, without situating children’s or adult’s embodied everyday experiences of those places as a key relational element, but rather as an aside, if included at all. Research has shown that a top-down focused approach diminishes the agency of ordinary people within the context of the city (Lees, 2003; Jackson, 1999). The top down view extends beyond constructed power relations to the actual geographic scale:

For macro theorists of urban space, the preferred social scientific means to represent cities, and to understand the life evolving therein, is to set up a
lens at least 450 miles above an urban form. Elevated out of the clamon-
ous urban miasma, the “zenith view,” produces a peculiar spatio-temporal
gestalt, through which gargantuan globe spanning flows in finance, la-
bour, commodity and information become perceptible. Free of the illegi-
ble and transient clamber of urban life’s sounds, smells, textures and fla-
vours, from the position of erstwhile angels and latter day Google
Earthers, emerge “macro spatial” maps delineating the “organising prin-
ciples” of contemporary cities (Rhys-Taylor, 2010: 7).

In this macro spatial sense, everyday public spaces become small
pieces in a large puzzle, examined from a removed perspective rather
than observing on the ground. Through a feminist approach to episte-
mology which retains a focus on the personal, I seek to close the dis-
tance from the theoretically sanitized and angelically positioned urban
perspective to the internal and the intimate contextualized with the
external and the dialectic which exists between them. These externali-
ties include the physical forms (as function follows form and form
follows function) of public space as in Article III and wider external
social structures as in Article II.

In reference the latter layer of ‘the personal’, the lines between the-
ory and method and practice become somewhat blurred as a connec-
tive thread runs through the ontological, the theoretical, the methodo-
logical and the analytical when a feminist influenced geographic ap-
proach is adopted. The methodological and reflexive aspects will be
delved into more substantially in the dedicated methodology chapter
of the thesis, but the threaded aspect of the feminist influence makes it
worthy of mention to indicate the connection between theory and
practice.

My preceding comments regarding dispassionate approaches of
traditional positivist scientific approaches run counter to the personal.
Indeed, the importance of the personal is something that is interwoven
throughout the theoretical conceptions and literature drawn upon with-
in this thesis as I endeavour to highlight the everyday struggles and
‘processes of exclusion’ facing children and young people in the city
from different perspectives (Sibley, 1998). My main criteria linking
these perspectives is exclusion based on age as research has shown
that ‘how a child’s age is believed to be the most important aspect for
achieving urban competence, rather than recognizing that experience
of environments make children spatially competent’ (Cele, 2015:
242), and in this way age becomes an organizational norm used in
terms of social justice in the city (Cele, 2015: 233).

Feminist epistemology has not been solely bound to issues of gen-
der and has been increasingly used in the examination of many subor-

ordinate position in the city, and indeed beyond the urban into rural settings too (Philo, 1992), as a ‘neglected other’ (Valentine, 1997c), based on the aforementioned age norm and regulation of their mobilities/activities (Jeffs and Smith: 1996; Matthews and Limb et al., 1999).

While I present children’s mobile spatial struggles by representing them as a group through my use of the word ‘children’ as an encompassing term throughout the thesis, the empirics include a range of different age profiles, genders, ethnicities and spatial contexts spread throughout the three articles. My reasoning by referring to children as a group is to enable a representation of their exclusion across that differentiated range.

Feminist theory has been influential in numerous geographical subdisciplines by examining injustices surrounding factors such as age, disability, ethnicity and sexuality (Holloway and Valentine, 2000; McDowell, 1992; Rose, 1993, 2012). Within the broad discipline of human geography it has exerted a strong influence within the subdisciplines of political geography, mobility geography and children’s geographies. Each of which are spheres that interconnect to this thesis and with each other to varying degrees. Feminist theory is not an ‘absolute way of knowing’ however (Aitken and Valentine, 2006: 6), and thus my reference to its influence in my research means that geographers who adopt perspectives from feminist approaches towards people and places are, from my perspective, counted within its domain. A common thread that runs through the feminist approaches are placing a value on reflexivity, empathy, and the acknowledgement of the political being located in the personal and the quotidian and not only in traditional political realms.

The importance of the everyday, as championed in much feminist geographical thought (England, 2006; Holloway and Valentine, 2000; Katz, 2008; Rose, 1993), is a common theme that runs through each of the three thesis articles. Theoretically, spatialities of the everyday matter because they often become taken for granted patterns and places which serve to hide both power relations and discourses in both social and material terms.

2.4 Materiality
The material terms are of note here, as the spatial context of urban public space is significantly constituted by its material characteristics rather than the purely metaphorical terrain of the public sphere (Low and Smith, 2006). We can conceive of the material urban landscape as
being ‘discourse materialised’ and further that these places are not isolated bubbles, but are interconnected into broader systems (Schein, 1997: 662):

If it is accepted that the landscape in its disciplinary functions is implicated in the ongoing formulation of social life—or, to paraphrase Massey (1984), that landscape matters—then it is necessary to ask how it matters. In addition to theorizing the place of the cultural landscape in the social relations and spatial arrangements of daily life, this includes understanding how a particular, identifiable cultural landscape in this place is related and connected to landscapes and social processes in other places.

In cities, within the matrix of public spaces, places such as parks, may initially seem overly banal or unworthy of attention as more dramatic material and spectacular social spaces vie for analysis in a megalopolis such as Tokyo, yet as Laurier and Philo (2006: 356) caution ‘there is much to learn from continuing to revisit the places that we assume we already know about’. Similar assumptions could be made regarding the mobilities of children running through a playground, young people dancing in a park or preschool aged children playing in a sandpit, yet these ordinary mobilities/activities are also worthy of further investigation in connection to everyday exclusion.

Children have historically and are increasingly in modern life pushed to the margins of urban public space and being seen as ‘other’ (Cloke and Crang et al., 2005), and this is something that runs against the idea of their exercising of a right to the city. My intention then is in part to highlight how that right to the city for children can become trampled upon by structures which impose material and social limits upon their everyday mobilities. Research has shown that children’s ‘access to cities are constrained by conscious acts of social and material exclusion’ (Cele, 2015: 233). While children have largely been denied their right to the city across myriad contexts often due to ‘problematizing discourses’ (Roche, 1999), where conceptions of irrationality and incompetence are associated with childhood, as a minority group burdened with social restrictions and facing institutional adultism, they are not always passive in response to their exclusion (see the resistance of the silent dancers and graffiti group in Article III).

As Cresswell notes ‘geographers, and others, have also revealed how the social construction of places are constantly contested, transgressed and resisted by the excluded. Young people gather on street corners or skateboard on street furniture’ (Cresswell, 2009: 174). These struggles and resistances are not only occurring within space but also co-constitute it in a way, as Mitchell (2003: 47) notes ‘space, place and location are not just the stage upon which rights are contest-
ed but are actively produced by the struggle’, and further, that ‘rights have to be exercised somewhere, and sometimes that ‘where’ has itself to be actively produced by taking, by wrestling some space and transforming both its meaning and its use, by producing a space where rights can exist and be exercised’. Embedded in Mitchell’s idea of ‘struggle’ as a producer is a form of collectivity in action, and the importance of this is rests in collective powers regarding the right to the city is also echoed by Harvey (2008: 23):

The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization.

While this type of collective agency to resist identified by Cresswell, Mitchell and Harvey are more possible for young people (indeed a form of bodily resistance by teenagers to attempted exclusion is explored in Article III), the symbiotic relationships between younger children and their parents/ guardians and institutions make accessing urban public space much more difficult to begin with. In order to resist in a space one must first be able to gain access to it, and this is an underlying driver in my attention towards how the mobilities of children are produced.

2.5 Mobilities

Building on the idea of the importance of the everyday, the personal and the socio-spatial dialectic are the mobilities (both as lived and how they are produced) of children and young people as a common thread running through this thesis and this connects theoretically to the mobilities paradigm. Writing on the mobilities paradigm Urry (2007: 18) succinctly encapsulates the value of the theoretical approach in that ‘it enables the “social world” to be theorized as a wide array of economic, social and political practices, infrastructures and ideologies that all involve, entail or curtail various kinds of movement of people, or ideas, or information or objects’. This allows for the breadth of the processes connected to children’s and young people’s mobilities and the production of those mobilities to be examined across a range of interconnected elements, and beyond the sole focus of the young themselves.
In this way the physical movement of a body through a park is not just a trajectory through space but a layered action with a range of qualities and interconnections. Cresswell identifies mobility as a ‘fundamental geographical facet of existence’ (Cresswell, 2006) while Hannam et al. (2006: 11) note that it is ‘a resource to which not everyone has an equal relationship’.

The fundamentality and inequality of children’s mobile relationships to the city and urban public space have been in flux and are significantly different from adults. Children’s mobility is strongly interconnected to their parents and guardians decisions as gatekeepers surrounding their activities and age based institutional systems of protection which are barriers that many adults do not need to contend with. This aspect of children requiring a gatekeeper to mediate their mobility reflects what Cresswell described as ‘prosthetic citizens’, as wider narratives in the metaphorical public sphere surrounding issues like ‘stranger danger’ and children’s safety in urban environments combine to shape their everyday mobilities.

Such a citizen—unlike the universal mobile citizen—is a subject whose capacities for mobility depend on the constraints of the public sphere. Mobility, in a world in which people and things are intimately interconnected, is clearly not a capacity of individual inalienable properties of bodies, but a product of a multitude of human/ environment interfaces—a product of geography (Cresswell, 2006: 167).

The role of parents/guardians and systems of protection regarding mobility are central considerations for this thesis given their primacy as gatekeepers and producers/organisers of children’s and young people’s mobility. My approach here is a response to Urry’s statement that ‘social science needs to reflect, capture, simulate and interrogate movements across variable distances that are how social relations are performed, organized and mobilized’ (Urry, 2007: 44). For my approach, the key elements in Urry’s statement are the interrogations of movement, their organisation and performance, as these both reflect the structures that produce and set the scene for children’s and young people’s urban public space mobilities.

Returning to consider how mobility can be conceived of in different ways to clarify my theoretical position: in the case of urban public space, at its most basic level it entails the physical movement of the body, such as walking or dancing, or other forms of embodied movement in/through spaces of the city. In addition to the physical aspects are associated underlying meanings of that movement and representational presence in space.
Further, mobility can be conceived of as an outcome of a set of processes and as containing emotional, political and social elements ranging from the internal perspective of the embodied actor engaged in a particular form of mobility, to the external analysis of what a mobile act means in a particular spatio-political context. In this way it is not always the actor engaged in mobility that is of sole prime importance, but also what influences set the parameters on her mobility.

Mobility also links to the previous discussion regarding the ‘right to the city’ and as an element in the imbuvement of meaning in the creation of place. As Ann Bartos (2013: 89) notes the essence of a place is created by mobilities, activities, experiences and the coming and going which occur within it. This meaning can have emotional aspects in the development of a sense of connection to a neighbourhood park through frequenting it and developing a sense of spatial ownership, yet also political aspects as the right to the city is bound to the embodied mobilities of the everyday. This is because ‘mobility is as much about meaning as it is about mappable and calculable movement. It is an ethical and political issue as much as a utilitarian and practical one’ (Cresswell, 2010a: 552), and as it is tied to politics it follows that mobilities are caught up in power geometries of everyday life (Massey, 1994). This adds layers of complexity to mobilities. For example, where mobile activities may initially seem independent but are bound to a set of limits and pressures acting on the mobile body at different scales.

2.6 Neoliberalism and officialdom

While parents and guardians are important to the limits that are set on children’s mobility (Cele, 2015), and institutions, such as schools and law enforcement, can exert both limits and pressures, one of the overarching limiters on children’s mobilities is the official political agenda towards urban public space development in Japan. This is important as officialdom (such as local authorities) has the power to most readily shape the materiality of urban public space. This material aspect is important as ‘mobility is always located and materialized’ (Hannam et al., 2006: 210). The stone, concrete, glass and metal of public space set some of the parameters for the potential mobilities which can occur and once embedded they can last significant amounts of time and be costly to redevelop into more equitable space. As Winner (1980: 124) notes ‘structures of concrete and steel embody systematic social inequality, a way of engineering relationships among people that, after a time becomes just another part of the landscape’ and this idea links to
Richard Schein’s (1997) concept of ‘landscape as discourse materialized’, and of a visible material scene which can be examined critically. Planning and development policy can have a significant impact on the material characteristics of public space. Recent times have seen the entanglement of private interests in neoliberal development policy approaches to the city throughout Japan.

How am I utilizing the term neoliberalism? Here I draw on Peck’s (2014: 397) classification of the components of neoliberalism in connection to the city, those being: ‘privatized governance and public-private partnerships; the outsourcing and localization of risk; an orientation to speculative investment, along with the commodification of place and place assets; and heightened competition across the spheres of production and consumption, as well as in the distribution of public resources’. In relation to urban public space in Japan, the key aspects of this are the impacts on the everyday mobilities of children and young people arising from the commodification of place and place assets and public private partnerships built into expressions of entrepreneurial governance of urban public space through planning policy.

Research has shown (Cele, 2015: 233) that there are negative outcomes for children in relation to neoliberally influenced planning approaches and neoliberal conceptions of the urban as a trickle-down effects from policy bleed into ‘conceptions of citizenship, community and everyday life, all of which are crucial to children’s access to the city’ (Cele, 2015: 235). As Cele (2015: 233) states: ‘neoliberalism is expressed as contemporary urbanism. This specific urbanism is not compatible with children’s independent mobility and easy access to nature and play spaces’. The manifestations of neoliberal planning can be seen in both physical and social terms regarding the material design of spaces and in the social values or norms that to public spaces project.

### 2.7 Belonging and encounters with difference

One essential quality of ‘the public’ is that it is constituted primarily by people who are not personally known to us in the form of strangers (Ahmed, 2000). The public can be conceived of ‘as a socio-political collective that is constructed through dialogue and action’ (Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009: 2), and public space acts as a platform where encounters with strangers can occur beyond metaphorical space. ‘The public’ is something imagined and discursively formed rather than a fixed entity into which entry can be unambiguously traced (Staeheli and Mitchell, et al., 2009), yet feelings of inclusion and exclusion can
be examined in relations between a majority population and a minority population to analyse a sense of belonging to ‘the public’.

Similarly to how I previously described the dependence of younger children on their parents as gatekeepers for enabling their mobility, for preschool aged children their urban public space mobilities are symbiotic. This symbiosis thusly provides opportunities to explore how public encounters unfold for immigrant parents and their pre-school aged children. This is explored in Article I of the thesis in the context of Tokyo, where negative feelings emerge in relation to social exclusion.

Research has shown that there is a need ‘to understand the regulation of belonging for migrant groups as an affective process which shapes their ability to feel ‘at home’ (Noble and Poynting, 2008: 2748) and as such emotion is an aspect which must be considered. The emotional is bound to the mobilities, narratives and experiences of daily life and in encounters with difference. Visibility and corporeal appearance (Jansson, 2016) become highly important in the inclusion or exclusion which results in these quotidian encounters in public space, and these in turn can have consequences on the mobilities which emerge from feeling a sense of belonging or feeling excluded (Noble and Poynting, 2008).

Writing on the benefits of emotional geographies Thien (2005: 451) notes that they allow for an understanding on ‘how the world is mediated by feeling’ and that the work carries forward poststructuralist challenges to a strictly ‘rational’ and masculinist social science (Rose, 1993) by addressing spatialities of emotions. Geographers Anderson and Smith make a case for furthering research on emotions, suggesting we are in need of work that acknowledges the emotions as ways of knowing, being and doing in the broadest sense, and using this to take geographical knowledge’s beyond their more usual visual, textual and linguistic domains (Thien, 2005: 451). They call for sharper ‘geographical sensibility so that we might understand what is currently half hidden, if not invisible in some research: emotion as a fundamental aspect of human experience’ (Anderson and Smith, 2001: 9).

The aspect of an emotional topography has been identified as a challenge as Wood (2013: 53) notes that ‘one of the challenges of research into emotional landscapes is the difficulty in ‘capturing’ the affective and the emotive within both formal practices, such as interviews, and informal processes. This is in part because abstract and ‘emotional’ concepts such as belonging are difficult to ‘see’, and problematic to articulate’. This difficulty must be engaged with however
given the important role emotion has within daily life and in the constitutive nature of encounters with difference in public space.

One of the key areas to become impacted upon by exclusions related to children’s mobilities, across a series of reasons, from parental fear, to institutional systems of protection, to pay to access public space, is the potential for mobilities of play and senses of belonging. The consequences of these impacts can be significant and research has shown that concerns for safety combined with increasing regulation are leading to more sedentary indoor activities which in turn are generating deficits in ‘social, physical, cognitive and emotional health, fitness and well-being amongst children’ (Frost, 2012: 117). Accessible outdoor play spaces potentially allow children to generate meaning and connection to their environments through familiarity and knowledge derived through embodied mobility as well as possibilities develop their social ties and community in close geographic proximity. In this way ‘space’ becomes ‘place’ and a geography of belonging may develop (Den Besten, 2010).

This formula does not always occur in an unproblematic fashion however, as I argue in Article I. Research has shown (Van der Burgt, 2008) that children who possess a sense of connection to their neighbourhoods and are familiar with how it functions perceive it to be a more peaceful and quiet place and that they are able to cope better with potential sources of fear that would be amplified if they did not encounter such sources regularly. By play mobilities shifting to indoor and virtual environments (Gleave, 2009) this familiarity of children’s local public spaces are lost thus making space seem potentially more threatening and more intimidating, and denying the opportunity for the formation of coping strategies. This has the potential to initiate vicious circles in family permissive mobilities where parents are less willing to allow children to venture to play outside due to their lack of environmental knowledge and in turn children’s own sense of a lack of security arising from the local becoming more alien instead of becoming more familiar space.

Factor (2012: 325) highlights the core reasoning surrounding children’s play: that being the ability to gain mastery in life: ‘children play seriously and energetically: they need to, to develop their power over the experiences of life, and a child reduced to passivity is made impotent in dealing with life…the games enact aspects of life, and in doing so enact a criticism of life: in them the child asks, how to live?’.

Regarding gender, Karsten (2003) notes that the restrictions on children in public space are not gender neutral as her research has
shown that girls are experiencing greater limitations on their ventures into public space than their male counterparts:

While children of both genders are restricted, girls, in particular, experience daily constraints on their freedom of movement (Karsten, 1998; Katz, 1993; Nissen, 1992; Sebba, 1994). Playgrounds are intended to compensate for the daily restrictions that children growing up in urban environments encounter. But are playgrounds serving girls and boys equally? Studies point out that girls use playgrounds and other locations for playing less frequently than boys, and, if they do use them, they tend to go to play areas that are closer to home (Cunningham and Jones, 1991; Hart, 1979; Moore, 1989; Rijnen, 1984; van Andel, 1985; Visser, 1991). Furthermore, females occupy less territory for their play activities than males (Karsten, 2003: 457).

One of the benefits of boys and girls having the opportunity to play together in more natural spaces, such as parks (including green non-playground space) is that research has shown that nature spaces offer good opportunities for the promotion of gender equality in children as natural environments are not inherently gender coded and promote play activities where girls and boys play together (Ånggård, 2011).

2.8 Fear, ‘stranger danger’ and ‘futurity’

Children’s role within cities, within public space and how they fit into the concept of being an urban citizen generally, have been problematic historically, and this remains the case in contemporary urban settings both inside of Japan, and beyond in numerous cities in other countries, such as the United States and the U.K. (Katz, 2008; Pain and Smith, 2008). Just as a growing securitisation as a response to fear in everyday life has rolled out in many international contexts such as the ‘If You See Something Say Something Campaign’ (I.Y.S.S.S.S.) or ‘Project Argus’ (Tesfahuney and Dahlstedt, 2008), children have become enveloped in these securitizations on banal levels (Katz, 2008). Both the I.Y.S.S.S.S. campaign and ‘Project Argus’ represent the lateral responsibilization of citizens in the surveillance of public space and other urbanites (Andrejevic, 2005; Tesfahuney and Dahlstedt, 2008; Reeves, 2012).

In the case of I.Y.S.S.S.S. it forms part of an anti-terrorism campaign based in the United States, while the Swedish ‘Project Argus’ focuses on a community watch style approach to identify potential illegal immigrants. These ‘lateral surveillance’ (Andrejevic, 2005: 488) initiatives bound to visuality and corporeal appearance root fear into the fabric of the everyday and have negative impacts which alter
the usage and mobilities in urban public space by children through parental limits and on those who are deemed deviant. The problems with such outsourcing include the potential ‘fracturing of the social’ through such ‘responsiblezation’ (Reeves, 2012: 235). Here I propose a parallel may be drawn here between neoliberal approaches to the city regarding responsiblezation (Peck, 2014) and the outsourcing of responsiblezation to citizens to monitor urban public space (Reeves, 2012), as a form of social fracturing is linked to both forms of responsiblezation. As Peck (2014: 398) notes:

The erosion of urban-governmental capacities define the conditions under which cities have become increasingly ‘responsiblezized’— in the dual sense of political responsibility for their own fortunes and for economic growth itself. Neoliberalized rules of the game have further upped the stakes in interurban competitions for public and private investment, media attention, jobs and businesses, even as the odds of success have lengthened. Cities must act, and be seen to act, even if the aspirational reach continually exceeds the effective grasp.

Article II, which focuses on a city in Kanagawa prefecture, examines this issue of responsiblezation specifically in seeking to understand the production of the limits imposed on children due to underlying fear and ‘stranger danger’ at parental and institutional levels. What makes the Japanese case interesting in relation to fear and risk is its consistent and exceptionally low crime rates internationally. Children’s agency regarding mobility and activity in Japan is largely limited by the institutional structures and by their parents/guardians, and their presence in public space is often highly monitored and regulated based on an underlying idea of a need for protection from growing urban menaces such as fear of predatory strangers.

Within children’s geography, research has shown (Kallio, 2008: 286) that ‘children are officially disempowered agents in most fields of life. This simple fact reveals the specificity of childhood as a social position’. And, as noted previously: ‘regardless of the circumstances, children’s actions always reflect the prevailing conditions, which for the most part they cannot choose for themselves’(Kallio, 2008: 286). Within these ‘prevailing conditions’ children of course find ways to resist, negotiate and engage with organizing structures as part of their agency, but it is important to understand how prevailing conditions and associated (im)mobilities come to be, and what they are when these emerge from fear.

What is fear? This is a difficult question to answer as fear is somewhat of a problematic term, as Pain (2000: 367) notes ‘it is not a fixed trait some people have and some do not, but rather ‘transitory and
situational’ and further that ‘we all move in and out of shades of fear’. In relation to ‘stranger danger’ it can be thought of as ranging from banal parental anxiety (anxiety being: a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome) to being more directly afraid of someone or something as likely to be dangerous, painful, or harmful. The qualitative approach adopted in the research presented in the thesis allows for the ‘plurality’ of the meanings of fear to be present and to reflect its undulating topography in everyday contexts (Pain, 2000: 369; Pain and Smith, 2008).

Valentine (2004) identified the tensions that are often present between public space, children and increased fears surrounding security leading to an ongoing trend, of what she labels as, a ‘retreat from the street’. While children are present in public space regarding functional and stipulated endeavours, such as going to and from school throughout Japanese cities, it has been noted that street play of children has declined. In Tokyo for example, street play has declined sharply since the 1970’s (Frost, 2012) as Keiki Haginoya’s lifelong photographic documenting of street play ended in 1996 due to no longer being able find such activity occurring in public spaces such as vacant lots and streets of the city.

These ‘retreats from the street’ are also connected to research that has shown that ‘children’s opportunities to independently access their local environment are subject to parental control and influence; children’s independent mobility is constantly subject to re-negotiation in response to real or perceived changes within the neighbourhood’ (Little, 2012: 93). Similarly, Francis and Lorenzo’s (2006: 217) analysis that ‘childhood is over-controlled and over-structured by adults’ and that this change has led to ‘children spending less time outdoors, including on streets, in parks and natural areas in favour of indoor, institutionalized and virtual environments. The loss of outdoor childhoods is especially pronounced in cities today’.

The mobilities and immobility of children discussed in the preceding paragraph are connected to wider underlying conceptions of what it is to be a child. These conceptions have largely emerged throughout the previous century and stretch into our currently existing one (Valentine, 2004).

The twentieth century has therefore witnessed the emergence of a conception of a coherent ‘universal’ childhood. Namely, that a child is temporarily set apart from the adult world and that children are associated with being vulnerable, incompetent, and dependent, on both parents and the State. These aspects are frequently accompanied by views that childhood is a happy, uncomplicated and free time lacking responsibilities. This simpli-
Some researchers assert that ‘modern day children are described as inhabiting spaces within an adult constructed world, outlawed from public spaces and effectively corralled within institutions’ (Elsley, 2004: 156). These conceptions of childhood are hierarchical and have spatial and political implications, as children are frequently considered to be incapable or too vulnerable for actions such as independent mobility in contemporary urban public space. Cele (2015: 235) states that ‘children’s politics is based on the autonomy they have over their bodies in everyday life, but how children can practice everyday life is controlled by adults’ politics’. Geographers (Bosco, 2010; Cele, 2006; Kallio and Häkli, 2013; Van der Burgt, 2008) focused on the complexities of children’s everyday geographies have shown that that children’s politics and their perspectives on their neighbourhoods and their everyday spatial negotiations are both sophisticated and complex and such research challenges assumptions of age based incompetence.

Conceptions of incompetence and vulnerable dependence (which counters previous conceptions of children at earlier periods in time when they were viewed as economic assets and carriers of responsibility) have mingled to produce their everyday decline from public space, but also a general absence from the official processes of urban change, such as planning projects and urban redevelopment designs, and often a hierarchical or tokenistic approach is present when participation does exist (Thomas, 2007). In this way children’s exclusion in relation to urban public space can be found at both macro and micro scales in cities, in official channels and family fears, and in ‘representational space’ and ‘representations of space’ (Franzén, 2002; Lefebvre, 1991). The vulnerability and incompetence related to the position of the child also transforms as children grow older into views of young people/teenagers as being troublesome or excluded ‘irritants in the system’ (Sibley, 1998).

As Dee (2008: 20) notes ‘the lack of proper involvement in planning for provision and community life connects with the generalized situation of children and young people as counting for little in the here and now, because their place apparently lies in the future, as potential, in a phenomenon described… as futurity’ (Dee, 2008: 20). This concept of ‘futurity’ bounds the ideas and aspirations of children in a type of stasis and potential until they are old enough to generate official changes as adults. In this way the ‘futurity’ and ‘potential’ are used in denying rights ‘that might otherwise be claimed and operationalised by children’ (Dee, 2008: 21). The problem with this situation is that
the priorities for adults are usually different from those of children, and thus the needs or aspirations that an individual has when they are 9 years of age will not match when they are 30, or 50 years of age. Cele (2006: 38) notes ‘how difficult it is for adults to recapture the vividness of the sensory impressions that a child experiences’. This means a huge untapped wealth of ideas and potential improvements are lost in successive generations due to a holding pattern which is skewed by temporality, to always prioritize the adult. The thoughts and dreams and vibrancy of childhood remain in the shared conversations of imagination between children, or may never come to be expressed outwardly to officially impact their urban surroundings (yet it may be expressed in other forms).

That is not to say that there are no initiatives where children’s viewpoints are counted and can be used to enact change, but at the macro level and in the mechanism of state interventions in the environment children remain largely a subordinate group or secondary style of urban citizen in myriad international contexts (Cele and Van der Burgt, 2013).

2.9 Japanese public space, childhoods and neoliberal planning

One important question that merits consideration is how well the application of theoretical concepts that have been developed primarily concerning western public space can be applied to non-western contexts, and can fit regarding the Japanese case. As urban public space, and indeed childhood, is not a completely uniform construction globally, it is important that spatial contexts and approaches to factors, such as planning, share some similarities. Through a brief historical examination of the development of urban public space in Japan it can be seen that commonalities are increasingly present in contemporary settings and beyond, and facilitate the use of much western theoretical literature. That is not to state that western concepts of what a public space is or should be are in a position of primacy, but rather, that when examined, shared urban dynamics have emerged historically and are occurring such as the ‘multi directional circulation of planning ideas’ and ‘global learning processes’ (Dimmer, 2013: 3).

In Japan, the development context of urban public space has a different historical lineage to western contexts, yet with the end of World War Two, and even prior to this, myriad close similarities emerged with established modernist mindsets dominating in both western and Japanese approaches towards the city and reflections in concepts of
childhood. Indeed, Japan has been identified in the immediate post-World War Two decades as ‘the only non-Western country to have modernized’ (Platt, 2005: 966) in that period. With Japan’s defeat in the Second World War a shift occurred involving the restructuring of a significantly aerially bomb damaged urban fabric in Tokyo and throughout many of Japan’s other urban centers, and these material changes and imports reflected changes occurring across many levels of their society at the time (Dimmer, 2003).

While historical western visions of urban public space usually conjure images in the geographical imagination stretching back to a Greek Agora, which was itself hardly a bastion of ‘publicness’, with the exclusion of women, slaves and others, from the debates which occurred within it (Knox and Pinch, 2006: 49), Japanese urban public space emerges from a different socio-cultural context.

Following Japanese isolationism, which largely ended with Western imperialism opening interactions and belligerent relations throughout Asia and with Japan (Platt, 2005), the Meiji Period (1868-1912) saw the first shifts towards physically manifested conceptions of public space in the form of specifically dedicated public parks. During this period processes of western hegemony encamped constellations of ideas and institutions central to the experience of industrialised modernity in Japan, including: the structure of schools, the concept of modernist childhood as a distinct life stage and the political formation of the nation-state rather than a decentralized feudal system.

Japan then, saw its survival in the face of American and European imperialism in the mobilisation of human resources in service of the nation-state and this included children as such a resource (Platt, 2005: 965), and city planning as a tool of modernity.

Prior to the Meiji Period the Edo Period (1603-1868) was a time when Japan embraced its isolationist policies and a strict feudalist social hierarchical structure, open urban public spaces were not a politically minded dedication to a ‘public’ but rather as practical spaces to escape urban fires which sprung up without a formal planning system in place. Yet research has shown that, while not dedicated public spaces, that ‘temples and shrines were broadly accessible for all social classes and were important recreational and entertainment places’ (Dimmer, 2003: 144) during the Edo period. This absence of western style public spaces such as the Italian style market square does not mean that forms of public life did not exist however, and as Kitahara (2004: 3) notes regarding the early 19th Century, that a vivid outdoor life of people occurred everywhere in the city and that ‘there were many people enjoying places and a lot of temporary furniture such as
wood benches, tea stalls and vendors booths which supports peoples activity’.

During the early part of this period Japanese educational institutions went through a period of growth as a combination of samurai, Shinto priests and Buddhist monks opened schools in expanding urban centres such as Kyoto and Osaka in order to service a growing class of urban dwellers with disposable income. The focus of the curricula was towards the mastery of Confucian texts (Platt, 2015: 967). The period also saw a secondary surge in urban schools between 1830-1868 with governments assuming control and a growing shift towards conceptions of children in cities being focused towards preparing for work and life in industrialized capitalism, and further to be in service of the nation-state rather than the more traditional Japanese decentralized feudal political model. In this way both the structure of urban space and the structure of childhood evolved towards an ever more centralized and regulated mode of being.

The year of 1889 saw the introduction of a major redevelopment project throughout Tokyo called the Tokyo Civic Improvement Ordinance which corresponded with the consolidation of the centralized approach to public infrastructure planning. During this period the opening of Tokyo’s first western style park to the public occurred in 1903 (Sorenson, 2002). Approaches towards childhood in these years saw myriad factors emerging in Japanese cities to create new institutions aimed at children (Uno, 1999) and this included preparation for work and national military conscription service. As Platt (2005: 976) states in relation to Japanese children:

The effects of these changes upon children and families were similar to those that had precipitated the growth of child-targeted institutions in Europe and America. To begin with, many of the children themselves were removed from the household to work in factories. By the turn of the century, fifteen percent of factory labor was provided by elementary school-age children, and those that did not work in factories were often sent out of the home for apprenticeships in smaller commercial and manufacturing shops.

The first two decades of the twentieth century saw extraordinary change in Japan under the Taishō Period (1912-1926) regarding urbanisation and ever increasing industrialization (Sorenson, 2002: 85). Tokyo's population rose from 1.2 million to above two million during this period, while Osaka grew from 483,000 up to 1.4 million urbanites. Japan saw a quadrupling of industrial manufacturing output from its cities during this time (Platt, 2005). Notably, 1919 brought with it the introduction of City Planning and Urban Building Laws which saw the application of a comprehensive planning system to all major cities.
and urban areas. Within these 1919 laws, one was especially relevant to public space, that being the ‘Scenic Area’ zoning law. This theoretically was designed to directly protect the natural environment in suburban fringe areas (Dimmer, 2003: 146) while development of residential and industrial activity started to spatially dominate.

In this early part of the 20th century: industrialization, urbanization, growing communications systems, the expanding volume of exchanges between Japan and the West, the formation of a mass society dominated by middle-class consumers and ‘the increasing interest among social elites in social regulation converged to produce a variety of institutions relating to children’ (Platt, 2005: 976), as well as laws to ‘protect children from society and vice versa’ (Platt, 2005: 979). These included a juvenile court system to deal with public space offences, day care centres to alleviate urban poverty and keep children off the streets, public youth reformatories, and a view towards green public space as a cure towards social ills of the working class sections of urban society.

This approach of a structural/material response for societal problems reflects similar attitudes that emerged in western industrialised urban contexts (LeGates and Stout, 2007). At the time the Japanese media relayed stories of a ‘dark subculture of youths on the streets of the big city, telling stories of young people who joined gangs and scavenged and stole’ (Platt, 2005: 977) and this in turn fed into wider public discussion where children were viewed not solely as victims of modern urban society but ‘as social problems in and of themselves’ (Platt, 2005: 978).

In 1923 the Great Kanto Earthquake struck the Tokyo-Yokohama area (Yokohama is located in neighboring Kanagawa prefecture) and this caused mass devastation. Arising from this devastation planners saw a need for greater open public space not only from a social reformist stance, but from a disaster mitigation standpoint (Ishikawa, 2002). This was a key moment for urban public space as 52 parks were developed with ‘great speed’ along with 1,700 bridge plazas, which were interconnected by newly planted trees that lined the sidewalks (Sorenson, 2002: 112). This embedded the idea of public space and parks into the consciousness of the wider population and ‘they quickly became the focus for community life’ (Dimmer, 2003: 146).

The first large notable zoned Scenic Area arose in the form of the Meiji shrine precinct between the change from the Taishō Period to the Shōwa period (1926-1989) in 1926, and during this time public space constructions arising from the earthquake in 1923 were ongoing,
as ideas concerning the creation of recreational space for urban populations gained in popularity.

The period around the earthquake saw a rise of urban services targeting children such as: orphanages, poor schools, nursery schools, child medical clinics and vocational bureaus (Uno, 1999). This reflected the central government stance, as stated by the Home Ministry’s Social Bureau Chief at the time that: ‘the social weaknesses regarding children are the root of all social problems’ (Platt, 2005: 979; Uno, 1999). To tackle this concern surrounding children the print media saw a dramatic increase in publications such as: *The Family Companion*, *The Family Magazine*, *The New Family*, *A Guide for Childrearing*, *The Family's New Taste* and *Family Education* (Platt, 2005: 979). These publications dedicated to child rearing through scientific methodologies and saw the conception emerge of *kodakara*, that being ‘child as treasure’ (Jones, 2010) (see Article II where this was raised by interviewee).

Reflecting this *kodakara* societal discourse surrounding children, playgrounds were developed specifically for children and publications recommended parents taking their child to such public space locations referred to as ‘child countries’ (Platt, 2005: 979). Tokyo saw the development of an 8000 square meter playground called ‘Children’s Paradise’ in 1917 that was designed by a team of psychologists (Jones, 2010). Research has shown that these *kodakara* parks and playgrounds reflected an ‘urge among middle class parents and social commentators to seal off the world of urban modernity’ and further that a perception existed that ‘protection and regulation of children was essential to overall societal health’ (Platt, 2005: 980).

World War 2 saw the use of general public spaces such as parks dominated by both martial interests and uses, until organised reconstruction began in 1946 with the enactment of the Special City Planning Law (Ishikawa, 2002: 833). These post war laws saw an approach to urban land use that was influenced by Abercrombie’s Great London Plan of 1944 which sought to create self-contained population clusters and intentions towards ample use of green belts and open public spaces. With these laws the focus switched away from martial considerations towards recreational public space as being dedicated to ‘the public’, rather than as a space borrowed from the state. And this concept filtered throughout Japanese society across the spectrum of children and adults. While the plan was not fully implemented it saw shifts towards regional planning approaches emerge in the National Capital Region Development Plan (Dimmer, 2003; Ishikawa, 2002; Sorenson, 2002). This regional approach included Tokyo and its seven
nearest prefectures, thus including the southerly neighbour of Kanagawa.

The 1960’s and 1970’s saw massive urban sprawl, further ‘rapid urbanization’ (Ishikawa, 2002: 834) and modernist approaches to city planning that were ongoing in many western cities during the same period. The space between satellite cities surrounding Tokyo began to be encroached upon and clear urban boundaries began to blur, as green belts became eaten up amongst the constant development. Within this period the rise of prioritising motorization occurred (Kitahara, 2004). As Kitahara (2004: 5) states: ‘traffic engineers claimed that the most important role of the street was to accept traffic flow and that staying and rambling of people was merely an obstacle to this function’. Again, this Japanese approach reflects similar trends occurring throughout many western cities at the time. Specifically within the Tokyo area private development interests were noted to dominate over public interests in planning terms (Dimmer, 2003: 149).

The current Heisei Period (1989- present) has seen both attempts to counter some of the mistakes of modernism which placed the car as the core constituent of the city rather than urbanites. It has been more focused on attempts at greening the city and creating natural environments and public spaces along the shore of Tokyo Bay (Ishikawa, 2002; Kitahara, 2004). Examples of this were the Tokyo Plan 2000 and Plan for a Green Tokyo 2000 which endeavored to be a form of long term ‘environmental renaissance’ with a target of 2050 as a completion point.

While intentions to reverse the modernist material manifestations in the urban fabric were present, an entanglement of public and private interests began to occur. As Dimmer (2003: 153) notes: within this contemporary period ‘the greatest dynamic in the production of open space emanates from the private sector’, and further, that ‘more and more the public authorities make trade off with the private investors to gain attractive open space’. This prominence of the private reflects neoliberal official policy towards urban public space development as Tokyo Metropolitan Government specifically seek to ‘harness the power of the private’. This harnessing has seen the creation of a raft of quasi-public spaces, privately managed public space and, as discussed in Article III, reflects a trend towards shifting economic factors from the public sector to the private sector in long term leases of public space to private companies for major redevelopment projects which problematize issues of access, mobilities of children and young people as their everyday geographies are connected to wider macro urban political dynamics.
Two clear examples of how neoliberal strategy has been ‘place-specific’ in its deployment can be seen in the form of policy approaches (Brenner and Theodore, 2002: 368). Firstly, in the 2010 revision to the key Development Policy of Urban Planning for Park Green Space states one of its key aims as being: ‘the founding of a new mechanism to harness the power of the private. To target urban planning, park green space in the center core area of high development potential, to expand the green space by private developers’, while a second and more recent example is evidenced in the 2013 Tokyo Metropolitan Government Urban Renewal and Creation of Quality Communities plan which states, ‘in the heart of the city, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is leveraging the dynamism of the private sector to promote urban development through public private collaboration’.

This planning policy style of private outreach in the development of public space perhaps reflects the pervasiveness of entrepreneurial governance in the ‘credit rated cities of today’ (Peck, 2014). Peck states that ‘the credit-rated cities of today exist in a state of continuous market surveillance; and they must increasingly go to ‘the markets’ to fund basic infrastructure, not just speculative projects, which are awarded according to development potential and rate of return, rather than social need’ (Peck, 2014: 400). The problematic issue of this neoliberal approach can be found ‘when private actors are given more influence over what is being built and which spaces are developed, there is a deliberate transition from welfare-planning values and the belief that children and adults have equal rights to urban neighbourhoods’ (Cele, 2015: 233).

Article III in this thesis explores the results of such attempts at harnessing in the example of Miyashita Park in the Shibuya Ward of Tokyo. Fears emerged around the over-commercialisation of space arising from a Nike Corporation Japan naming deal for the park, the neutering of political activism, the physical removal and exclusion of homeless people and an introduction of charging children to access to park sports facilities amounting to the commodification of public space. It became high profile enough to surface in the press such as the following in the Japan Times (2010):

Those who oppose the plan, the Coalition to Protect Miyashita Park from Becoming Nike Park, say the favorite spot for rallies and demonstrations is becoming commercialized.

As Skelton (2009: 1431) notes ‘there are power relations embedded in the definition, recognition and provision of play. In some parts of the world, play spaces are becoming extremely commercialised, struc-
tured and sanitised’. Previous research on Japan has noted this emphasis on the ‘attractive’ in architectural form as a priority over social use in Tokyo (Cybriwsky, 1999). Most recently the ‘openness’ of this privately and public/private developed space has now been questioned as trends in Japan towards a shrinking ‘publicness’ of public space reflect much of what has been criticized in western cities regarding exclusionary elements (Harvey, 2012; Knox and Pinch, 2006; Low and Smith, 2006), and where the production of non-commodified space become physical and metaphorical ‘islands in a ruthlessly commodifying ocean’ (Peck, 2014: 399) which ‘excludes the public from much of what passes for public space’ (Harvey, 2012: 160).

In this way we can see forms of meta synchronization occurring across national boundaries between Japanese urban public space development and western counterparts, and debates starting over factors such as access and openness (Dimmer, 2010), and other co-occurrences, such as rising fears of ‘stranger danger’ for children in urban contexts which impact upon their everyday mobilities (Drianda, 2010). In western contexts, research for some time has shown (Flusty, 1997: 51) that traditional public spaces are increasingly supplanted by privately produced and managed ones through neoliberal market logics and that this leads to reconfigurations of the urban infrastructure (Harvey, 1989; Peck, 2014).

This neoliberal approach to planning and urban public space links to questions over the ‘right to the city’. I hold the position that Harvey (2008: 23) identified as one of the most ‘precious yet neglected of our human rights: ‘the right to the city’, is not only a concept that should be applied to a particular set of places, but rather, a globalized right which should be strived for. The importance of this is made clear when we again consider the socio-spatial dialectic. This symbolic or physical gating process through privatization and planning seeking to harness the private through commodification of place has had impacts upon children’s and young people’s usage of these spaces, and their ability to play, explore and engage in community formation activities.

Beyond a specific focus on children, one of the problems identified in with the privatisation of public space is seen where Jacobs (2004) proposes that the absence of opportunities to congregate assists in the collective forgetting, and that public spaces are places for citizens to congregate and bear witness to both positive and negative past events as a community. Another negative result arising from an absence or reductions of accessible public space in the city is that people become more cut off from each other and informal contact and socialisation becomes more problematic (Gehl, 1996). Children participate in the
life of urban communities but often have little power in the shaping of
the structures, both physical and social, which they negotiate/resist
and in which they are embedded. This again raises issues surrounding
their ‘right to the city’, equality and questions regarding how re-
sistence to their exclusion is manifested (Harvey, 2008).

The neoliberal approaches to planning and urban public space also
raises questions over ‘visibility’ in a political context (Staeheli and
Mitchell et al., 2009), regarding children in the city and others as their
ability to congregate, either for play or for protest become more chal-
lenging. Being visible is an important aspect of gaining political force
as Jansson (2016: 6) notes in order ‘for bodies to have broad political
force, they need to be visible. Making oneself visible in public space
has long been an important political tactic’. While the intentions of
children who go to play in a park may not seem political within itself;
the meaning of their underlying visibility and mobility or absence
from public space arising from accessibility can be considered as po-
litical. It forms norms surrounding spatial usage practices and children
being part of the fabric of everyday public life in the spaces of the city
rather than being viewed as anomalies in adult public space and be-
longing in the private sphere.

This idea of the importance of visibility in political terms has also
been researched regarding its value in immigrant community contexts
in the United States (Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009). Visibility is a
method in encounters in public space in ‘struggles for inclusion in the
public’ by occupying space even temporarily and is not without risk
(Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009). Frequently this goes beyond ne-
oliberal logics of access or the political aspects of mobility and into
the emotional geography of the encounter between strangers in public
space as bodies become visible to one another or are envisaged and
incorporates fear of the stranger (Ahmed, 2000).

2.10 Theoretical Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has laid out the theoretical approach adopted
from an ontological foundation through to the key theoretical and
conceptual points of departure which surface in Article I, Article II
and Article III of the thesis. The theoretical underpinning of mobilities
links across the articles while specific elements connected to the per-
sonal, the institutional and the official combine for a comprehensive
approach which builds towards examining mobilities and exclusion
across a range of scales while maintaining a bottom up perspective.
Having discussed the main theoretical concepts of importance the following chapter proceeds to present the qualitative methodology used in each of the three thesis articles and the underlying rationale of approach towards those methods.
3. Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology adopted in the research. It opens with a brief overview and subsequent discussions on the links between my ontological and theoretical positions in relation to feminist epistemology and the mobilities paradigm. Following this an examination of my personal point of departure is made before specific discussions on each of the particular methods that were used during my fieldwork in Tokyo and in Kanagawa prefecture, as well as experiences outside of the field proper. The primary methods utilised include: semi-structured interviews in both on-site and off-site settings and observation in both participant and general forms which in some cases overlap with the on-site interviews.

3.1 Overview of fieldwork

The total fieldwork time for the research comprised of almost eight months spent at locations in both Tokyo and Kanagawa prefecture between May 2013 and March 2015. The fieldwork spread across multiple trips which encompassed different seasons. The fieldwork began with an initial ten day Japanese pilot study in May 2013 which facilitated my familiarization with the broader urban field and opportunities to work out practical issues. During the pilot study I established contact with two individuals from the Department Of Housing and Architecture Faculty, based at the Japan Women's University of Tokyo (JWU), whom I had been put in contact with through one of my supervisors (Danielle van der Burgt) whom had been engaged in research on children in Japan previously. Those contacts did not remain involved outside of my Japanese pilot study however a useful joint visit occurred where I was accompanied to Miyashita Park. From my perspective this gave me valuable insights from a local standpoint at the outset of my fieldwork in that space despite a personal familiarity with the park prior to engaging in fieldwork. During the pilot study I also utilised another support contact that was established through my own means, this was a Japanese Junior High School teacher who guided me to smaller parks that I was unfamiliar with in Tokyo and
assisted me with some initial translations. These were small scale neighbourhood parks that were located in densely populated multi-level residential areas and helped me to develop a sense of the urban fabric. These meetings with support contacts assisted in a general familiarization and observation while not being directly engaged in fieldwork with participants.

Having previously lived and worked in Japan myself as a teacher in a public Junior High School and two elementary schools north of Tokyo I was able to utilize established knowledge, such as how to navigate public transport to fieldwork locations and the ability to use educational networks to build connections for the upcoming longer fieldwork trips (such as sourcing translators). In addition to the Japanese pilot study, while not directly connected to my research in Japan itself, I had undertaken two earlier pilot studies in the initial phases of my PhD which significantly aided my fieldwork proper, as I was able to carry my experiences over from them.

I had conducted a significant pilot study in Fitzgerald Park and with a primary (equivalent of elementary) school, which are both located in Cork City, Ireland. This pilot study took place in autumn 2012 at the outset of my PhD, prior to my decision to solely pursue the Japanese cases. And while the Irish pilot study was conducted in a different international context it gave me important insights into conducting interviews (both on-site and off-site), engaging in observation and photography, using go-alongs, managing cold approaches in public space and undertaking school based questionnaires. In addition to the larger Irish pilot study was a brief study carried out in summer 2013 with the Parklek service at a playground in Humlegården, Stockholm. This involved both observation of playground interactions and activity, and approaching parents who were active with their children in or near the playground for interviews as well as interviewing playground staff.

Between the three pilot studies I was able to bring many valuable experiences into the main research fieldwork phases, with the exception of working with translators in more in-depth sit down interviews, as this was something that was new for me in interview contexts of Japan. The methods discussed in this section do not represent the entirety of the work carried out during the fieldwork periods in Japan, as much has been left on the cutting room floor in a process of narrowing down my focus over time. Examples of this are observational fieldwork and questionnaires conducted at Yoyogi and Ueno parks, at several parks in Coastal City, Kanagawa and interviews with a range of actors. While those experiences are not presented within the three
thesis articles or this comprehensive summary they still served to inform my overall knowledge of ‘park life’ in the wider Tokyo and Kanagawa areas.

Table 1. Overview of connections between thesis articles, fieldwork locations and methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article/Title</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Field Location</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article I. &quot;Some type of force field&quot;: Immigrant parents everyday encounters with exclusion and turns away from public space mobilities.</td>
<td>Examines kind of impact of social exclusion on production of preschool aged immigrant children’s mobilities.</td>
<td>Central Preschool, parent’s homes and four park playgrounds located in Minato-ku, Tokyo.</td>
<td>Main: Semi-structured interviews with immigrant parents of preschool aged children. (n=19).  Supplementary: Observation as component of on-site interviews at park playground locations examining social encounters and mobilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article III. Creeping forms of children’s and young people’s exclusion in public space: ‘pay to play’ redevelopment on a Tokyo park</td>
<td>Examines kinds of impacts of neoliberal planning and approaches to urban public space on the mobilities of Japanese children and young people.</td>
<td>Miyashita Park and area surrounding park, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo</td>
<td>Main: Semi-Structured Interviews with young people, members of homeless community and general adult park users. (n= 36).  Main: Observation in extensive analysis of material design and social life and mobilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the three specific thesis articles the primary method used was semi-structured interviews. A total of 75 interviews with participants including parents, children and young people, teachers, people who are homeless and general adult park users form the primary empirical data source.

3.2 Ontologically and theoretically informed methodology

Building upon my social constructivist ontology and philosophy as a bedrock (discussed in chapter 2), where truth and space are not seen as singular but rather viewed as pluralistic dialectic constructions, and my desire to engage in research which was centered upon aspects of social justice for children in the city, I sought an epistemology which reflected my ontological position. It was important that the epistemology respected the importance of the everyday and also gave value to aspects of the lived urban experience, such as the emotional and not only the rational (Simonsen, 2013). While ontology may initially appear to be something that is removed from the practicalities of methodology or ‘doing’ geography, feminist geographers have provided an alternate view of ontology as being closer to a practice theory (England, 2006; Haraway, 1991; Harding, 2004; Rose, 2004). This is evidenced in a ‘feminist relational ontology of self–other mutuality and continual process’ (England, 2006: 288).

This relational aspect allows for an incorporation of the plurality of truth and for the researcher and the participants to be bearers of partial perspectives. It can be considered to form a feminist objectivity. Regarding feminist objectivity Haraway (1991: 188) succinctly states that ‘feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges’. This situated knowledge challenges conceptions of an objective unitary truth as existing outside of social practices and productions, and critiques scientific approaches that position the researcher as a detached expert claiming totalized objectivity through the ‘god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere’ (Haraway, 1991: 189). As England (2006: 288) notes ‘situated knowledges means that there is no one truth waiting to be discovered; and those knowledges are situational, marked by the contexts in which they are produced, by their specificity, limited location, and partiality’.

Even with a practical approach to ontology the choice of methods remain highly important as they are the interface between ontology, theory and the people on the ground who become participants in the research (Aitken and Valentine, 2006). This brought me to examine
aspects of feminist epistemology as a compatible framework with my ontological and theoretical positions to proceed from in the field.

Given that much feminist research has been focused on issues of subordinated groups with an emphasis on the political being found in the personal and the everyday, and that children have been in a subordinate position in urban hierarchies in both spatial and social terms that are reflected in myriad forms of exclusion, such as in planning discourses and narratives of risk and fear, I felt this reflected a shared perspective regarding addressing banal oppressions. To uncover geographies of oppression in its different forms, feminist approaches, both towards and use of methods, have been crucial tools. As Dixon and Jones (2006: 47) note: ‘feminist geographers have become leaders in the collection of primary, field-based data, precisely because such data are necessary to reveal women’s everyday spatial experiences. Though methodologies such as interviews, focus groups, ethnographies, participant observation, and surveys are more time consuming than simply downloading data from secondary sources, such as the census, they are necessary to bring to light the complexities of those experiences’. The idea of bringing light to the complexity of experience through the feminist approach brings important aspects into the fold for methodological consideration such as: reflexivity, positionality, power dynamics between the interviewer and interviewees (especially important when interviewing children and young people) and challenging the taken for granted. England (2006: 288) states that: ‘sensitivity to power relations lies at the very heart of feminists’ discussions about methodology’ and I tried to be aware and sensitive to the power relations the different social and locational contexts of my fieldwork.

The other strand of theory which influenced my methodological choices was the mobilities paradigm (Cresswell, 2012; Urry, 2007). Given that the focus of this thesis is on children’s and young people’s mobilities and their production related to exclusion and restriction in urban public space it was important to explore the methods which reflect the topic, and in this I found a dynamism and openness of approach as Urry (2007: 39) notes ‘research methods also need to be on the move, in effect to simulate various ways the many and interdependent forms of intermittent movement of people, images and objects’. This can be thought of as a style of mobile ethnography which can ‘involve walking with, or travelling with people, as a form of sustained engagement within their worldview. Through such ‘co-present immersion' the researcher moves within modes of movement and employs a range of observation and recording techniques. It can also involve participation-while interviewing, in which the ethnog-
raper participates in patterns of movement, and then interview people, individually or in focus groups, as to how their diverse mobilities constitute their patterning of everyday life’ (Urry, 2007: 40). This ‘on the move’ aspect reflects ethnographic influences in my methodological approach in the idea of ‘walking with’ participants rather than only looking at them (Kusenbach, 2003). While I have been influenced by ethnographic approaches adopted in areas such as the mobilities paradigm I do not view my research as strictly ethnographic or myself as an ethnographer, but rather as ethnographically inspired and influenced. In this way I have taken useful elements from different yet compatible perspectives.

It should be noted that I do not view theory or methods as absolute strict equations to be applied in unconditional fashion to the world for replication, because this would ignore the particular contexts of my own research. Rather, I view them as conceptual guides from which aspects can be drawn and utilised. For my approach to make internal sense however, a shared ontological base must be present for an eclecticism to work. In the case of feminist epistemology and the ethnographically influenced mobilities approach to methods, a shared value is placed on the relational, the everyday and the personal. In this way they complement each other in theory and practice through a selection of qualitative methods. Given the feminist epistemological influence discussed thus far, the following section starts with a personal point of departure. As to discuss methods solely, without contextual reflexive and positional information from the outset, is in my opinion, akin to handing someone a map without a compass. They need the ‘compass’ to understand which way your magnetic north is pointing that underlies the research. As England (2006: 289) notes: ‘among of the most influential elements in feminists’ theorizing about the research process are the concepts of positionality and reflexivity’.

Similarly to how Choudry (2014: 76) describes that research produced outside of official ‘dominant modes and processes of academic research’ can be marginalised, so too within official academic structures an encounter occurs over methods, processes and practices. In contemporary research environments the issue of ‘value’ and theoretical justification from a utilitarian standpoint appears to be constantly gaining momentum. This is evidenced within our discipline of geography, as positive and assuring vision statements emerge on our validity aimed at state agents as patrons, academics in other more defined disciplines as potential colleagues (Baerwald 2010; Hulme, 2011), and in the quotidian practical experiences of geographic researchers making funding project applications (Whatmore, 2013).
A significant question then that can follow in relation to more qualitative style research is: what is the utilitarian value of your work? This perhaps reflects a worry noted by Everts et al. (2011: 4) that sometimes there is a risk of ‘intellectualisation of social life - a term used to denote the tendency of social scientists to read intention, motivation, reason or cause into routinized action and behaviour’. Frequently I have encountered the position that in order to represent underlying structures of social inequality or injustice, and to substantially tackle them, that a top down approach could be prioritized to challenge those in power directly. From the feminist epistemological perspective however, and from my perspective, there is great value in adopting a bottom up approach to challenge inequality from the position of the everyday, the personal, and to give scope to the particular. As ‘space is fundamental in any exercise of power’ (Gregory, 1994: 63) the opportunity is present to look at the everyday user of that space as a source for participation, information and perspectives, and allows for their perspectives to be represented and interpreted.

As my research is based on the underlying philosophy that, knowledge, urban space and what occurs within it, is a social construction, I cannot claim to have unearthed a ‘singular truth’ through my research methods or my use of theory. Part of the social constructivist approach is attempting to be self-reflexive as a researcher, and to be critical of that which seems to be taken for granted. I cannot ignore the former in favor of the latter, as who I am is the starting point for all the practice that follows, as each decision and step carries the imprint of my biases, my hopes, my failings, my emotions and my thoughts. What impact does such an imprint have on the methods and empirics I choose to make my arguments about the world with? I am expected to challenge the taken for granted aspects of urban space and make them visible, but I must also challenge the taken for granted within myself as we are ‘never un-touched of the world around us’ (Simonsen, 2007: 175).

3.3 Personal points of departure

The first and most basic question I had to deliberate over at the outset of considering undertaking my research in Japan was whether to do it or not. This was partially rooted in the practicalities of issues such as fieldwork financing, distance from support structures, the necessity of working with translators for some interviews, and overall being a more challenging task than undertaking similar research in a more proximate location to Uppsala. While each of the factors proved a
challenge to be overcome in themselves, I also viewed them as developmental opportunities to be engaged in. Opportunities to learn how to apply and succeed in securing fieldwork funding, to develop skills in navigating interviews together with translators and not only viewing them as linguistic tools, but as people with valuable situated knowledge of their own. And further, to view the distance of ‘the field’ as an opportunity to contribute to bridging geographic divides rather than being subservient to them.

The question of whether to engage in a field that is not your own culturally, and an assumed position as an outsider, has been raised by feminist scholars and beyond, as potentially problematic in other research projects (Aitken and Valentine, 2006). This is centered on concerns over the ‘politics of fieldwork’ where only those deemed to be ‘insiders’ who are inherently linked to the struggles of the participants and their culture are considered compatible for engaging in fieldwork within those contexts. Merriam and Johnson-Bailey et al. (2001) describe the basic ascriptions of insiders and outsiders:

> It has commonly been assumed that being an insider means easy access, the ability to ask more meaningful questions and read non-verbal cues, and most importantly, be able to project a more truthful, authentic understanding of the culture under study. On the other hand, insiders have been accused of being inherently biased, and too close to the culture to be curious enough to raise provocative questions. The insider’s strengths become the outsider’s weaknesses and vice-versa. The outsider’s advantage lies in curiosity with the unfamiliar, the ability to ask taboo questions, and being seen as non-aligned with subgroups thus often getting more information’ (Merriam and Johnson-Bailey et al., 2001: 411).

From my perspective a strict approach towards boundary lines between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ as sorting mechanism for entering the field or not ultimately leaves the researcher with being limited spatially and culturally, and restricted to work with only the most familiar of settings. This approach, is too narrow a view and reduces the opportunities for perspectives of those not intimately bound or struggling within the ‘taken for grantedness’ of a society to be able to look at it with differing perspectives, and to simultaneously focus on commonality rather than difference. I found Kobayashi’s argument useful regarding this issue of who should be entitled to engage in fields outside of their own culture, and on the politics of fieldwork. Kobayashi (1994: 76) states that ‘commonality is always partial … [and so] field research and theoretical analyses have more to gain from building commonality than from essentializing difference’. Considered in this way, the different insider/outsider positions we occupy are not fixed,
but rather dynamic both within the culture we are most familiar with and in cultures/fields less familiar to us.

I accept that I am not a removed impartial observer of the occurrences within the urban sphere, as was a common goal in much behaviorist approaches of the 1960’s, rather, I enter research and the field, as all researchers do, knowingly or not, transitioning from insider to outsider and vice versa, with both implicit and explicit notions of how the world works and what is of value within it, and what moments/people to make visible. ‘Classically, in geographical research, the researcher remains mysterious, distant and silent while the field subject discloses more and more information: in this case, the visibility of the researched obscures the presence of the researcher. In contrast, feminists emphasize that, like her or his objects of analysis, the researching subject is likewise constituted or positioned’ (Dixon and Jones, 2006: 57).

The personal endeavors and experiences that go to form us as individuals then, both within geography, and beyond, cannot be instantaneously stripped from us and placed in a box of subjectivity, under lock and key for safe keeping while we enter the field and engage in practices of ‘capturing’ everyday social life that unfolds there. Similar to Simonsen’s (2007: 169) ‘rejection of the classic Cartesian notion of subjects as isolated and disengaged beings made up of disparate parts’. So I too cannot disengage the everyday practices which go towards forming me in and outside of the field.

In addition to the acceptance of subjectivity in my work I also seek to be self-reflexive within the research process given the importance of this aspect as emphasized within feminist epistemology (Aitken and Valentine, 2006; England, 2006). Bloch (1991: 194) notes however that ‘introspection is of course a notoriously dangerous procedure’, but that it is also vital to the fieldwork process, and further that it does not necessarily detract from the value of the work produced. Fieldwork does not automatically end as soon as you leave ‘the field’ proper. Indeed, this reflexive information removes the veil of abstracted approaches which constantly strive for an unobtainable pure objectivity that is forever beyond reach, and arguably, redundant as a pinnacle aim in certain areas of social scientific research. I do not discard all positivistic approaches in a more general sense as there are issues that are effectively tackled by using such means (GIS, climate data, demographics etc.), but in order to access subjective experiences and moments when using methods such as interviews, reflexive and subjective awareness are both necessary and ultimately inform a more open approach in the context of my research. Although Bloch’s point
on introspection is referring to the context of longer term anthropological style research, there is a universal aspect to incorporating introspection without undue angst. The notion of reflecting on the ‘basic dimensions’ behind and in the work of interpretation is important in generating both stimulating and self-aware research (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008).

My passion which drives my interest in the research is centered on attempting to make a positive dent in the world in relation to children and the city. This has its roots in my former work in education both in Japan and in Ireland at various levels ranging from teaching at elementary school level to tutoring undergraduate university classes. While engaged in this educational practice I learned how meaningful the experience of interacting with children and young people can be in witnessing their academic progress, but also in coming to understand the daily challenges and pressures they face socially and spatially. I view my research in this thesis as a continuation of the process of educational care through attempting to increase children’s social and spatial justice in the city, through emphasizing their right to the city (Harvey, 2008) and enhancing equitability in urban citizenship for children through critical examination of the production of their mobilities.

As discussed in the theoretical chapter regarding the interconnectedness and enmeshed quality of mobilities, this means that children are not the sole empirical focus or participants in the research however, as the barriers they face regarding mobility are largely connected to their parents/guardians as gatekeepers and other adult regulatory and protective structures. Being cognizant of this interconnectedness of children’s mobilities, parents are the core participants in Article I and Article II which examine the impact of parental fear and stranger danger on elementary children’s mobilities, and the impact of failed social encounters on the playground between preschool aged children on their parent’s perceptions and everyday mobilities respectively. Article III focuses on young people as the primary participants in the resistance to their exclusion in the setting of a neoliberally pressured urban park.

3.4 Qualitative methods selection

Choosing a feminist epistemology and the mobilities paradigm to inform my position did not dictate the exact methods in a case by case scenario and thus I made a choice of particular methods based on my need to access both the internal subjectivities as well as external fac-
tors, such as materiality, of a public space and unfolding mobilities. The specific methods I selected to use were to cater to the internal/external aspects were semi-structured interviews conducted at on-site and off-site locations, and observation which also included visual methods.

The first general methodological selection filter however was my desire to approach the field and the people in the field in an ethical manner. Approaching the field in an ethical manner means that harm is not incurred on behalf of those participating in the research (Aitken and Valentine, 2006). This aspiration for an ethical approach was heightened given that some of the participants were going to be children and young people through park observation and interviews, and so the power dynamic between myself as a researcher and the children as participants (Article III) would be asymmetric from the outset. This asymmetry is common in social research projects and is of course present in many situations, but is more pronounced when working with younger people. This ethical sense also arose from my previous teaching experiences of working with children in Japan and Ireland, and understanding their vulnerabilities regarding interactions with adults in interrogatory positions of power, and an awareness that almost all adults hold a position of power over children as a default. Research has shown that (England, 2006: 288) ‘sensitivity to power relations lies at the very heart of feminists’ discussions about method/methodology’.

This desire for an ethical approach was not merely to fulfill an expected standard but emerged from a deeper subjective sense of wanting to conduct research that actively protects the individual participants and further that through my research I would do no harm (England, 2006). The role of the researcher is not only to show up to a field location and extract information, but also to protect the ethical relationship between the participant and oneself. For example, this aspect of protection is especially true for the immigrant parents interviewed in Article I of the thesis who discuss quite emotionally difficult moments in their daily lives linking to their preschool aged children’s exclusion on playgrounds based on their visual characteristics, as they form part of a small population in the Minato-ku area of Tokyo. I felt an ethical responsibility in the protection of their identities and to be honorable in respect of their decisions to open up to me as a person and not only as a researcher.

Another example of how this ethical approach was achieved in practical terms was by not utilizing photographs of the children, parents or homeless people that I interviewed outside of a fieldwork anal-
ysis setting in the final versions of the articles. Photographs of structures and design elements are utilised in this comprehensive summary and in Article III. The fieldwork photographs captured some important moments as social scenes can unfold faster than field notes can always accurately account for, and further they informed my arguments, yet the participants do not feature in the final articles. The use of my visual fieldwork material initially seemed to enhance the arguments I was trying to make and my representations of the participant’s positions and mobilities, yet upon reflection and a helpful discussion of my dilemma on a National PhD Course I decided that while they form an important aspect of the analysis, the ethical supersedes the aspiration for their inclusion. There is no simple or clear cut correct decision to be made in relation to the inclusion photographs of participants, and ultimately the decision rests with me as the researcher to make the decision regarding their representation.

On the one hand, the photographs show the participants engaged in mobilities or in their own embodied presence and in ways that goes beyond the written account of them. On the other hand is my consistent awareness of not causing them to be further excluded should their resistance be highlighted in personally identifiable ways through fieldwork photographs I include. The stakes of this exclusion are not as dramatic as fieldwork undertaken in more extreme or sensitive research areas yet I feel an accountability to the everyday experiences of the participants and towards not perpetuating their exclusion through my actions. As England (2006: 173) states ‘we need to be accountable for the consequences of our interactions with those we research’. Article II does feature photographs however that are from publically accessible school and police websites. These images are not of fieldwork participants and serve to inform the argument in Article II which is centered upon visibility and regimes of visuality related to elementary children’s mobilities and systems of protection in public space (Jansson, 2016).

A final example of taking the ethical aspects seriously is by changing the names of the International preschool located in the Minato-ku area of Tokyo, of the Japanese elementary school located in Kanagawa prefecture and of the participants involved in the research, as per standard practice in protecting the identity of participants. The protection of participants anonymity brings my research in line with the combined ethical guidelines from the American Sociological Association (ASA, 1999), the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK (1999) and the British Sociological Association (2002).
3.5 Semi-structured interviews

As noted earlier in this chapter, a total of 75 interviews inform the main empirical material in the three articles in this thesis. Before explaining the rationale for my choice of interviews as a method I will present a breakdown of the location and participants across the articles. In Article I the locational focus is on an area of Tokyo called Minato-Ku. Here the study is comprised of 19 interviews of immigrant parents of preschool aged children ranging from two to five years of age. 13 of these parents came from North America while six came from Europe. These interviews were conducted in English and so a translator was not necessary. Three locational platforms were used for these interviews to take place including: parents homes, an international preschool and public park playgrounds. Nine interviews took place in the immigrant parent’s homes. Four interviews took place at an international preschool, designated as Central Preschool. Six on site interviews took place at four park playgrounds located near Central Preschool. In Article II, which focused on Coastal City (pseudonym) in Kanagawa prefecture. I conducted 15 interviews with parents of 9 and 10 years old children and 5 interviews with teachers. These interviews took place at Coastal Elementary school with a translator present. All of the parents and teachers interviewed were Japanese in Article II. In Article III, which was focused on the location of Miyashita Park in Shibuya, Tokyo, I conducted 13 interviews with young people, 7 with people who were homeless and 16 with general adult members of the public. All of the interviewees were Japanese. These interviews all took place in and around the Miyashita Park area with the assistance of translators.

The parental interviewees in Article I and II principally present more female perspectives through both sets of mothers of the elementary and preschool children, as well as the interviewed teachers while in Article III the interviewees were predominantly males. While a balance between the genders would have been desirable, Miyashita Park is largely a male dominated space across both children and young people and adults, and so the sample reflects this gendered socio-spatial usage aspect. In Articles I and II more mothers than fathers were present in both the schools and park playground spaces and more opted into participating in interviews.

The primary method across the three thesis articles was interviews. I chose to use semi-structured interviews as a tool to provide insights from the participants’ perspective, to allow for flexibility and to balance my external observations as needed. Research has shown that interviews allow access to the affective and the internal (Thien, 2005)
viewpoints of informants and this justified their inclusion as a valid methodological tool in placing my importance in the everyday and bottom up perspective championed by feminist epistemology. The semi-structured approach to the interviews allowed for flexibility rather than an overly rigid structure of interviewing and this facilitated a conversational flow to frequently develop especially in relation to the interviews conducted with the immigrant parents. The interviews took place at a number of locations which included: on-site interviews at fieldwork the park locations, at the Japanese elementary school, at the international pre-school and in participants homes.

This spread of interview locations brought with it both benefits and drawbacks. For example the public on-site location interviews in the parks counteracted what Kusenbach (2003) identified as a pitfall of sit-down interviews. That is: taking people out of the environments where the activities discussed usually take place. Conversely, one of the challenges is that on-site interviews tend to be shorter in nature as people are engaged in daily mobilities or activities and they can be impacted upon by sudden changes in weather such as rain showers (or as experienced on one fieldwork day, earthquake tremors). The on-site interviews reflected what Urry (2007: 39) called for in his mobilities paradigm approach to methods in that I was on the move with the participants in some cases and was able to observe important moments of their mobile practices such as the silent dancers in Article III in tandem to the interviews. In this sense the semi-structured on-site interviews contained elements of the participant led mobile go-along (Cele, 2006). Lee and Ingold (2006: 67) noted that go-alongs allow for sharing the same vistas and that the concept behind the method is ‘not to walk into but to walk with’. Research has shown (Cele, 2006: 55) that walks are used not only as a method to work with empirically, but also as ways of exploring the concept and experience of the city’.

A mixed approach was adopted for the sample selection of participants in the three articles. This was rooted in desire for my research to cover a gamut of ages and cases, but also based on the practicalities of fieldwork, such as which schools were willing to actively participate. The sample selection was undertaken by giving cognizance to the lens provided by Curtis and Gesler et al.’s (2000: 1003) six sampling strategy parameters. Table 2 overleaf illustrates my considerations of these sample parameters for each article.

The sample selection for Article I began with contacting multiple international schools within the 23 special wards of Tokyo with an aim to gain access to the experiences of immigrant parents and children. Tokyo contains the densest immigrant populations in Japan and
this was my rationale for focusing my requests there. The international preschool (designated as Central Preschool) which came on board were the only positive responders to my request for participation letters, and thus the practical aspect guided my possible sample in this particular case. The parental interviews at Central Preschool allowed for an entry point into which park and playground spaces were popular amongst immigrant parents, and I was able to use a snowball technique to establish connections with other parents to expand the study to conduct interviews at on-site parks and in parent’s homes. Taken together the samples in each of the articles cover a range of ages and participants.

The sample selection for Article II was based on examining the mobilities of elementary aged children outside of the megalopolis of Tokyo in relation to fear and security and this was achieved through bringing Coastal Elementary School in Kanagawa prefecture on board.

In Article III the physical redevelopment of the fieldwork park (Miyashita Park) arising from a controversial redevelopment deal constituted a key factor in my focus, and thus on-site interviews were a priority based on those who actively used the location or had been displaced by the redevelopment (such as the homeless people who lived outside the park proper). This meant initial cold approaches for interviews with young people and homeless people, yet rapport and familiarity was able to be built over time through my extensive observation spent in the park. Additional interviews were undertaken with adults in the park who primarily used it as a transitional space and these interviews were to build a picture of their view of the space as a form of background knowledge.

Different approaches were needed with different participants in the different settings and this reflects the myriad ‘hats’ researchers wear in the field and also how different aspects of ourselves cannot be left behind in the process of entering the field. For example, with interviews occurring in the Japanese elementary school the aspect of myself having been employed at a Japanese public school in the past brought some commonality into the sphere in working with my translator in that context who was a professional teacher in the Japanese public school system and these small moments of rapport building can help set the scene for productive and more comfortable interviews.
Table 2. Relevance of sample selection to fieldwork based on Curtis and Gesler et al. (2000) sampling parameters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling Parameter</th>
<th>Article I</th>
<th>Article II</th>
<th>Article III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Relevance to conceptual framework and research questions</td>
<td>Presents immigrant parents experiences and impact on children’s mobility arising from social exclusion.</td>
<td>Presents parental and institutional processes of protection and impact on mobilities arising from fear and securitization.</td>
<td>Presents everyday experiences and impacts on mobilities of young people in neoliberally planned urban public space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Potential to generate rich information</td>
<td>Opportunity for dynamic and static interviews to generate rich information.</td>
<td>Static nature of school based interviews allows for in depth interview process.</td>
<td>Opportunity for dynamic on-site observation of mobilities and participant perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Potential to produce believable descriptions/explanations</td>
<td>A range of nationalities and ethnicities allow for this.</td>
<td>The parents and teachers are embedded within and co-create systems of protection.</td>
<td>Sample selected actively using/used park and thus have situated knowledge of everyday life in the space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is the sample strategy ethical?</td>
<td>Yes. Description of research provided to school. Voluntary opt in for on-site interviews. Home based interviews arising from sample invitation.</td>
<td>Yes. Initial presentation made at school to provide insight into the research project. Voluntary opt-in.</td>
<td>Yes. By focusing on young people and being aware of power dynamics. Utilising observation rather than approaching younger children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is the sampling feasible?</td>
<td>Yes regarding size and platforms of school, home and park playground.</td>
<td>Yes regarding size and school as platform for interviews to occur.</td>
<td>Yes regarding size and location. Ease of accessibility to sample in/near fieldwork park space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While interviewing the young people in Miyashita Park in Tokyo the aspect of myself being a student eased the perspective of me as being an authority figure of some kind. These moments are largely atmospheric and intuitive. The interviews with the immigrant parents in Article I at the international pre-school in Tokyo, at on-site park playground locations and in their homes took place in English and so these were undertaken without the need for a translator while the remaining interviews with Japanese native speakers took place with translators assistance.
I adopted an informal approach whenever possible in my mannerisms and opened the interviews with small talk to try to relax the participant(s) and myself into the situation, with the exception of interviewing older Japanese teachers at the Japanese elementary school, as culturally a high expectation is placed on formality in those situations. Here I felt my prior situated knowledge of working in the Japanese education system came to be very useful as I was able to navigate some of the customs and expectations in greetings and building rapport through demonstrating such an awareness (for example I knew it was important to take my coat off prior to entering the room as a demonstration of respect). I used both a Dictaphone and my personal mobile phone to record the interviews based on Rudqvist’s (1991) description of the benefits of recording over note taking, as it allowed more visual attention to be given to the participant rather than necessitating lengthy writing of notes of participant responses during exchanges.

This approach afforded me the opportunity to take notes of comments or moments that seemed of particular importance or interest and my own reflections. I found that the mobile phone served as an ideal medium compared to other audio recording devices for interviews as it is a less obtrusive technology that people feel more comfortable with and they tended to forget about it once it was recording given its per-
vasiveness in daily life. The usage of the Dictaphone tended to make people more aware of the technology as they would frequently gaze at it and it occasionally took longer for the interview scenario to become more relaxed. These aspects are not quantifiable but are more related to my perceptions of the atmosphere and interactions. I will discuss challenging aspects of emotions and atmospheres presently.

In my methodological selection of interviews I sought a platform for the participants to express their thoughts, feelings and opinions surrounding daily urban existence in public space mobilities. I needed tools that allowed access to the internal world of the informants. This filtering process led to examining ethnographic methodologies and to draw important aspects from them into framing my conscious approach to the interviews, although my research is not purely ethnographic in a traditional anthropological sense. The key aspects of an ethnographic methodological approach I distilled complement the feminist epistemology in that they facilitate bottom up situatedness, and research has shown (Lees, 2003: 110) that ethnography ‘addresses the richness and complexity of human life and gets us closer to understanding the ways people interpret and experience the world’. The success of accessing the internal world of the informants varied according to the particular fieldwork context. I felt this internal access or sharing was achieved most successfully in my interviews with the immigrant parents of the preschool aged children living in Minato-ku, while interviews conducted with a translator with Japanese parents of elementary students in Kanagawa proved more challenging at the initial phases as I was engaged in a learning curve of the flow and dynamics of working with interpreters in interview situations.

The topics of discussion and questions during the interviews varied across the three articles as the primary participants were different in each location. The interviews in Article I exclusively examined the situation of immigrant parents and preschool aged children in the Minato area of Tokyo. These questions explored their sense of connection to local urban public space, their everyday mobilities with their children to playgrounds and the social encounters which emerged. In Article II, the focus was on the attitudes of parental protection of their children aged nine and ten, and the perspective of teachers in an elementary school located in Kanagawa prefecture. The questions here explored their historical and contemporary perceptions of safety in urban public space within the city, the meaningfulness of parks and the mobilities of their children. The interviews with the school teachers explored their perceptions of the place of children in society and the city and issues of child safety/protection related to the
school. In Miyashita Park, featured in Article III, the young people were the main focus of the interviews conducted there with supplemental focus people who were in the homeless community attached to the park and other adult users. With the young people the interviews were focused on their everyday urban experiences, independent mobilities, positive and negative perceptions of the fieldwork park and their place within it. Interviews with the people who were homeless focused on their eviction from the park space, their perceptions of their spatial future and their daily urban existence. Translators were used for the interviews in Articles II and III which were conducted primarily through Japanese, while I conducted the interviews in Article I without translators as the immigrant parents spoke fluent English.

In tandem to an ethical approach discussed previously is the importance of an empathetic approach towards participants. In this sense I am not solely a researcher looking for information, but also a person working with and communicating with other people. This empathetic aspect was expressed in numerous ways during the interviews, such as how I look at the person, how my voice expresses my sense of awareness surrounding what they are telling me and through my body language to let them know that I am listening carefully to what they are saying. These moments of ethical empathy are not limited only to occasions encountered during the interview sections of the fieldwork however and I think it would be a mistake to consider that an empathetic switch can be turned on only for those aspects.

That being said, an empathetic approach was something I strived for while in the field whenever possible as it places value on the narratives that people are willing to share. Empathy is, from my perspective, an undulating topography, similar to other emotions such as fear (Pain and Smith, 2008) and not something that is fully attainable at all times, as that counters the human aspect of it. It can be nebulous and occasionally challenging in the meeting of two or more minds that are not familiar or where a personal connection is lacking. Empathy links to moments of recognition, that the parents and children involved in the interviews were not solely there to act as nodes of data or access points, but exist in their own contexts that are ongoing regardless of my research was important. The simultaneous desire to maximize the opportunities for the research and the amount that could be accomplished sometimes needed to be put into second place so that the experiences of the people I worked with on a human and emotional level were given priority and respected.

The analysis of the collected interview material from the different fieldwork interviewees followed the same approach for each of the
three thesis articles. This analysis was an ongoing process with the articles, rather than a strictly chronological one beginning with Article I and finishing with Article III. The analysis process began with an initial listening to and transcription of the relevant interviews and by looking at my field notes taken down during the interviews. Once this initial phase was complete I spent time reading through the transcripts making further notes of initial themes and thoughts that emerged, and I sought to become as familiar as possible with the gathered material.

This can be considered the ‘open coding’ (Crang, 2005: 222) part of the analysis. I then began to sort the material accordingly into more specific themes to look for deeper connections and meanings within the material. I was conscious during the analysis process of Crang’s (2005: 224) caution that ‘codes are not there to be rigidly reproduced, nor to be counted, but as an aid to the researcher in making sense of the material. They are not an end in themselves. Codes provide a means of conceptually organizing your materials but are not an explanatory framework in themselves’.

One fortunate aspect of the analysis process was that my fieldwork was spaced out over multiple trips to Japan rather than occurring in a single block. This meant that there were periods of time in between analysis sessions that proved very beneficial in approaching the material with a certain freshness of perspective.

3.6 Observation

Observation was selected it as it has been identified as an effective qualitative tool for understanding the culture of a particular place and its contexts (Dwyer and Limb, 2001). Observation was specifically used as a significant tool in Article III and as a supplementary tool in Article I and II as a way to inform my understanding of the field settings. Within Article I and II the observation took place largely as part of the interviews and being present in the spaces, and while it informed perspectives on understandings on the mobilities of preschool parents and children and the Japanese elementary school related structures my discussions primarily focus on the contents of the interviews.

Allan B Jacobs’ book, Looking at Cities (1985) was helpful in demonstrating how to perceive clues within the urban park environment for Article III. Jacobs’ methodology consists of keen observation while walking through the field and this offers a practical means for skilled observing. Although his work is based on a non-Japanese context, observation skills can be applied across geographic boundaries and so could readily be applied to my Japanese cases. In the case of
Article I, I was able to observe the playground interactions discussed by immigrant parents of preschool aged children during our public onsite interviews together. For Article II, I was able to be present in the school environment and observe lessons, interactions and pedagogy as part of the wider process of being there to undertake interviews.

Observation connected well to my ambition to gain meaningful insights into factors such as the materiality of the Miyashita Park in Article III and into the mobilities of children and young people and of the adult general public. It proved to be a method which facilitated a familiarization with both the field and the participants and it enabled me to develop a holistic perspective of the space. Using observation also allowed me to gather first hand knowledge on the social life of the fieldwork sites rather than relying on secondary interpretations. In this way I was able to observe in person the physical changes which had occurred in Miyashita Park arising from a redevelopment deal rather than solely read about them.

In Miyashita Park the process of engaging in observation was interesting and while time consuming it allowed for depth and dynamism rather than a simplistic presence or absence to be examined. Observation allowed me to get to know the field space well in its symbolic internal boundaries and divisions as well as the physical and architectural elements of which it was constituted. One practical problem however with observation experienced was being at the mercy of the weather on days when it was snowy or wet for example as my fieldwork took place across multiple seasons and across multiple trips.

The fieldwork observations also included visual methods in the form of photography as a qualitative tool. In this way a certain distinction between the methods is blurred, as some researchers consider photography to be a part of observation while others prescribe it as its own distinct category. I am counting it within the category of observation. Taking fieldwork images can allow for temporal capturing of events that unfold in real time. This gives the method an analytic advantage over methods such as observational field notes where writing down everything that is unfolding in a social scene can be challenging (Buscher, 2005; Rose, 2012). Photography was also used to analyse static design differences between ‘pay for play’ and free space in the park for example, as well as to capture representative moments of mobility to analyse later.
Regarding representation Laurier and Philo (2006: 354) state that: ‘to put a subtle idea very baldly, the insistence is that there are things that we humans can feel, sense and express that are unspeakable, unsayable and unwritable. Dance, tears, shock, touch, faces, gestures and more that are indeed aporias, puzzling and yet fundamental to life…but trying to say or write them, so it goes, inherently loses them’. As discussed in the ethical section of this methodology chapter I decided that ethically, while the visual methods can inform my analysis of the mobilities that they were not necessary in the final form of the articles given the potential repercussions on the participants.

3.7 Translators
In order to be able to undertake meaningful interviews with fluent Japanese speakers in the interviews for Articles II and III, I decided it was necessary to use translators for this process. This was a decision taken early in my planning phases and was something I factored into my funding applications. My Japanese is at a basic level and thus would not facilitate the frequently complex conversations that can emerge in fieldwork contexts. Working with the translators during my fieldwork trips proved to be a learning process for me with both advantages and disadvantages. Prior to entering the field previous research undertaken in my department utilising translators in other
Asian contexts in qualitative and ethnographic methods had indicated to me that such benefits and drawbacks were to be expected and it was useful in calibrating my expectations (Lindeborg, 2012).

One of the disadvantages is that the words which emerge in the interview materials were not coming directly from the interviewees, but were instead mediated by a translator who, similar to me, carries with them their own set of assumptions, feelings, and values. This adds a layer between the interviewees and their own words and my interpretation of those words. Conversely, an advantage is the knowledge which the translators were able to bring to the research through their localized understandings of social contexts and useful background knowledge, which may have been more difficult to obtain without their assistance. In this way, they provide useful knowledge which amounts to a form of a guide. The usefulness of having people to act as a form of local guide in fieldwork had also been written about in the specific Japanese context by research undertaken previously at the department (Nobuoka, 2010).

One of the steepest learning curves was the flow and dynamic of conversations during interviews conducted with a translator present as opposed to interviews I would conduct on my own in Article I. Initially, the interviews with translators took on a staccato form with stops and pauses as we negotiated our patterns of communication. I also noticed that I tended to drift towards looking at the translator rather than at the interviewee on several occasions. This was something I became more cognizant of addressing over time in order to demonstrate to the participant that I was actively listening to them. Understandably, on occasion, the boundaries between who is conducting the interview can become somewhat blurred as one of the translators would become engaged in micro conversations within the interviews themselves. These boundary issues can require a delicate approach to redirect the interactions back towards a communicative path and it is something that I felt that I improved at managing over time.

3.7.1 Desktop study of documents

In addition to the interviews and observation used directly in the field was consistent desktop style study which examined media reports, policy documents, newspapers, social movement/protest websites and other forms of relevant material to the ongoing research. Translators assisted me in accurately understanding relevant documents. While this study was not enacted in ‘the field’ locations such as the parks or playgrounds it still informs the research.
3.8 On being a male researcher

It has been an interesting experience being a male researcher/PhD student focusing on children’s and young people’s mobilities and exclusions in urban public space when I consider gender reflexively within my project’s fieldwork and beyond it. Interesting, in that it has brought with it a set of less concrete challenges than deciding on more practical methodological factors such as, whether to choose Japan as a fieldwork location, about funding and working with translators. The nebulousness of these ‘emotional challenges’ (Jansson, 2010: 19) rests in my perceptions and everyday embodied experiences associated with encounters of atmospheres surrounding the positionality of ‘maleness’ and my chosen topic. These fleeting and sustained atmospheres have been a consistent feature since I began my project. Leyshon (2002: 181) notes that ‘the problem of positionality is an everyday occurrence in the field as the researcher negotiates the self which emerges and is modified in social interaction with the researched and as the situation undergoes change’. Yet I contend that ‘the problem’ of positionality is not limited to the field but also in less written about aspects, through interactions, through academic courses I have undertaken and within the broader academic milieu that I encounter as part of my everyday experiences which go towards informing emotions and approaches towards informants and methods.

Research has shown (Jansson, 2010: 19) ‘a reluctance of academics to publicly discuss the emotional impact of research on the researchers themselves’, and further that ‘feeling rules’ (Bondi, 2005; Hochschild, 1979) are often in play within the dynamics of myriad situations encountered by the researcher where we perceive which emotions are expected to be expressed or experienced. This section then, seeks to succinctly address this personal emotional aspect of the research in relation to my own position as a male both in the field and in the academic milieu, as this aspect has impacted the research since its outset, and further, it has relevant associated methodological issues of ‘feeling rules’ connected to it.

The closest words that encapsulate the aforementioned atmospheres which emerged across different places are suspicion on one end of the scale, and surprised curiosity at the other. It is important to note that this is not a statement of universal truth as I have encountered many people/places where this reaction/atmosphere has not arisen, yet it has been present consistently enough to be in my thoughts. The impact of this, has, I think led me away from my initial focus and theme on children themselves as the central informants surrounding their own feelings regarding public space and parks, and more towards the relational
social ecology of parental, adult orientated and institutional barriers which both produce and regulate children’s mobilities. I remain convinced of the importance of examining these barriers, and the resistance to them, as they are key limiting factors in aspects such as children’s right to the city and their opportunities for engagement with people and themselves in the urban environment. Yet, I have pondered numerous times if my slide away from children themselves within the research has been a result of a type of internalization of my quotidian experiences related to my position of being a male researcher and the atmospheres of suspicion/curiosity I steadily encounter.

This self-guided slide towards the parental perhaps reflects a type of rebellion of the psyche in what Jansson (2010) calls ‘the head vs. the gut’ where the self-prejudices of the researcher can create problems in interview contexts. However, while Jansson (2010: 20) faced emotional challenges pertaining to his own self acknowledged prejudice towards the ideals of his politically right wing interview sample and a sense that those people were ‘alien’, in my case the issue was one of internalization and a sense that the ‘feeling rules’ in place surrounding my maleness connected to suspicion of intent which became manifest in atmospheres. In essence I felt myself to be a form of ‘alien’ in the context of researching children.

Initially I thought these atmospheres would not be representative of a broader experience, yet, now, towards the end of this project I can retrospectively say that they have, somewhat unfortunately from my perspective not been anomalies. The atmospheres I refer to are not quantifiable, but instead represent aspects of my lived experience in different settings in the field and in the milieu of the academy. The power of emotions arising from my positionality as male and the challenge of figuring out how to deal with them is largely unchartered territory as ‘graduate training focuses exclusively on intellectual preparation for research’ (Jansson, 2010).

Within the field I have come to expect that a higher bar is set for me as a male in terms of my considerations of my interactions and proximity to children in my research process. This has been a feeling I have had of a need to reassure parents in interviews undertaken when their children have been present (such as in Article I with the parents of pre-school children) that I have a legitimacy in my approach and my intentions. This aspect has been mitigated significantly in working with the schools as gatekeeper entry points, as my previous work in education has enabled me to demonstrate such a legitimacy and record of work. I do of course think this is important for all researchers involved in working on topics concerning children and young people.
and is not something solely linked to gender, yet I have felt it is an additional factor which I have had to give concern too.

Within my academic milieu a consistent theme that has been couched in humor in academic settings that I myself am ‘the stranger’ which inspires a type of phobia or ‘terror talk’ (Katz, 2006: 107) regarding the safety of children urban public space, because it is deemed strange somehow that a man is concerned with the bullying and exclusion children and seems to require additional layers of justification for such concerns. This has been evidenced to me in comments by peers on courses that I have taken, and has been a consistent and persistent feature of my environment. Outside of more indirect comments there have been more unwavering exclusionary remarks which have been surprising when they occur in academic courses or informal conversations with those engaged in different forms of social justice themselves. This perhaps represents the divide between what we ‘do’ as academics and who we ‘are’ as people, with our own prejudices and biases which I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, that we (and I) cannot leave behind.

Here is perhaps an opportunity to highlight the case that ‘emotional training is appropriate and even necessary’ (Jansson, 2010: 20) as part of the preparation for research. To speculate (which is a risky endeavour), I expect that were I a female researcher I would perhaps not experience these situations/atmospheres as frequently in academic and non-academic contexts. That is of course a rather sweeping statement, but when in the presence of other PhD students/researchers who have been focused on children, in courses or more general interactions, the comments rooted in suspicion/curiosity have steadily been directed towards my work rather than theirs. This has been true even when a great deal of overlap has been present in my own topic and others present.

To briefly draw some conclusions on this issue. Firstly, it has been a valuable learning experience and one of the lessons when looking ahead for potential future research is for myself to be more prepared for potential process of internalization of emotions and how to negotiate between the ‘head and the gut’ (Jansson, 2010). Secondly, I have learned the difference between reading about issues occurring compared to the lived experience. Thirdly, it has made clear to me how we carry parts of the research environment and ourselves through many fuzzy geo-social boundaries.
3.9 Methodology Conclusion

This chapter has presented the rationale for the methodology used in and out of the field proper in Tokyo and Kanagawa and the associated reflections connected to its deployment. It has demonstrated the cognizant path of methods selection and given a broad perspective of the approach adopted in the practice of the research through establishing complementary linkages between the ontological, the theoretical and a feminist epistemology. The chapter has also focused down onto the individual methods used, those being, semi-structured interviews and observation as well as examining associated methodological benefits and challenges.

Through these relational preceding aspects I have sought to present a comprehensive research framework around which the empirics will be presented from the informants in the articles. I have also particularly sought to demonstrate the reflective aspects emerging from engaging in the field and in the milieu, which allows for the experience of myself as the researcher to present an internal perspective to balance the outward focus of the research praxis and the empirics which follow. Having now presented the overview of the thesis in the introduction, the theoretical perspectives adopted and the methodological approach deployed, the following chapter moves to give a brief summary of each of the three thesis articles.
4. Summary of the thesis articles

While the three articles that comprise this thesis are quite different individually when their findings are considered together they present a relational network on how children’s and young people’s mobilities are being curtailed at different scales by barriers from the official, to the institutional to the parental, and further, how urban public space is shrinking physically and metaphorically for children and young people across a spectrum of ages and locations. The barriers are not fully discrete in each case but overlap and connect. The articles articulate the associated problems linked with this mobile and spatial shrinkage in political terms, but also in material, social and emotional expressions as mobility and space are interconnected in myriad processes and factors which demonstrate dialectical relationships (Cresswell, 2006).

The three articles have a shared qualitative methodological approach as semi-structured interviews formed the primary overarching tool, with the addition of extensive observation being utilized in Article III, and observation as a supplementary tool in Article I and II. Regarding samples: Article I focuses on immigrant parents of pre-school aged children while Article II focuses on parents of Japanese elementary school children. The key sample for Article III are young Japanese people. By spreading the sample of participants connected to children and young people of different ages across a spectrum the articles allowed for an examination of different slices of mobility and the different barriers that were involved, both in its production and curtailment, and to then compile these slices into an overall mosaic or social ecology.

Article I focuses on the kind of impacts that social exclusion can have on the production of everyday mobilities for pre-school aged children of immigrant parents in the Minato area of Tokyo. It examines the role of bodily difference in generating exclusion and the forms of self-segregation and negative feelings which emerge and generate turns away from public playgrounds towards virtual mobilities and online play in countries of origin which has consequences for political visibility of minorities in public space.
Article II is about the impacts of fear and securitisation on the production of Japanese elementary children’s mobilities. It looks at institutional and parental perceptions of fear and stranger danger and how these fears become manifest in systems of protection which inversely negatively impact upon the everyday mobilities of children and others in a city in Kanagawa prefecture. These systems of protection involve forms of visual pedagogy and the mapping of suspicious strangers and the article examines how these are actively produced and embedded with political repercussions.

Article III focuses on the impacts of neoliberal planning and approaches to urban public space relating to the mobilities of Japanese children and young people. It examines how children’s and young people’s mobilities are curtailed as a result of official policy which adopts a neoliberal approach to public space in Tokyo. It explores the political aspects of young people’s mobilities as they attempt to resist their exclusion, and the materiality and norms which arise dialectically in a controversially redeveloped park space.

The following sections give more detailed outlines and the main findings for each of the three articles.
Article I: “Some type of force field”: Immigrant parents everyday encounters with exclusion and turns away from public space mobilities

This article examines the impact of social exclusion experienced by immigrant parents of preschool aged children in public park playgrounds in Tokyo. Negative parental feelings arose from social exclusion due to unsuccessful encounters and play interactions between children which were perceived to arise due to visible bodily differences, such as hair colour or skin colour. The article argues that this exclusion is socially and politically problematic as some immigrant parents feel negative emotions when using public playgrounds, turn away from local public space mobilities in a style of self-segregation as coping techniques.

Self-segregation has political consequences regarding ‘visibility’ and ‘absence’ across different spatial contexts and the significant meaning and importance of both states (Jones, 2012; Miller, 2012; Robinson, 2012; Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009). Regarding public space, in addition to behavioral norms, one of the important factors that draw boundaries between those who belong and those who are excluded is being visible. This visibility has two levels of meaning. Firstly as a political and symbolic statement by being present in/mobile through public space, and secondly in the particular characteristics of the corporeal body (Jansson, 2016; Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009). Norms, while not constituting actual laws, ‘set the stage for the relationships within the public sphere at any given time’ (Staeheli and Mitchell et al., 2009: 12). Which ‘bodily appearances’ and ‘visual styles’ constitute adherence to or transgression against a norm are geographically, temporally, and culturally dependent (Jansson, 2016: 2). Staeheli and Mitchell et al. (2009: 11) note that regarding immigrants norms can act as pathways to inclusion and acceptance within the public, or as barriers leading to exclusion.

Methodologically the article is based upon interviews conducted with immigrant parents of preschool aged children located in the Min-
ato-ku area of Tokyo. The interview locations varied and included an international preschool, at parent’s homes and on-site interviews at park playgrounds. This sample of interviewees contained a mixture of ethnicities including Black, Hispanic and white parents. The parents came from European and North American countries and the interviews were conducted through English given the participants fluency.

The main findings of the article are that the impacts of negative feelings arising from failed social encounters on the playground lead to turns toward virtual mobilities and online play dates with countries of origin, and an increased focus on private home centered play through. The use of online play dates sees a connection to the global while a certain separation from physical local public space occurs.
Article II: Regulating fear: the processes of creating ‘stranger danger’ and their impact on Japanese children’s urban public space mobilities

This article argues that school based systems of protection and attitudes of parental protection regarding stranger danger in parks and urban public space in Kanagawa Japan are creating a self-perpetuating embedded narrative of excessive risk and fear which reflect the ongoing securitization of everyday life (Andrejevic, 2005; Tesfahuney and Dahlstedt, 2008; Reeves, 2012). It builds on myriad research on children’s independent mobilities in urban public space that has shown that they are a group that become highly affected by parental and institutional shifts in perceptions of local safety and the supposed risk of dangers posed by strangers (Pain, 2000, 2004, 2006; Pinkster and Droogleever Fortuijn, 2009; Stokes, 2009; Tomanović and Petrović, 2010; Valentine, 1996, 1997a; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). It argues that narratives of stranger danger are impacting negatively on children’s independent mobility and that it is socially counterproductive with political ramifications (Ahmed, 2000). Importantly, the article examines elements which are particularly Japanese and thus contribute to the debate over restrictions on children’s urban mobilities in new ways.

The particular systems and attitudes of protection examined in the article are 1. Teaching the dangers of strangers and the ‘reading’ of strangers by police in school based classes 2. the real time reporting/mapping of strangers deemed to be suspicious in parks and public space.

The article finds that through these actions boundaries are being placed on children’s mobilities and that these ‘processes of inclusion and exclusion’ form part of the boundaries for communities (Ahmed, 2000: 6). Both of these regulatory systems involve processes using a ‘visual pedagogy’ in which the stranger becomes known and is read as being ‘out of place’ in public space if their corporeal appearance transgresses a ‘regime of visuality’ (Jansson, 2016). Jansson’s concept
of the ‘regime of visuality’ builds on the idea of creating the ‘other’ through visual coding where those viewed as being against the mainstream are seen as out of place.

Methodologically the article utilized semi structured sit down style interviews with parents of children aged 9 and 10 which took place at a mixed gender local elementary school at a city located in Kanagawa, referred to as Coastal City in the article. Coastal City is a satellite city of the prefectures capital Yokohama. Interviews were also undertaken with teachers at the school working across a range of ages. The purpose of the parental interviews was to gain an understanding of their views and feelings surrounding their children’s independent and accompanied mobility to parks, issues related to strangers and their own personal historical connection to parks, and public spaces in Coastal City. The decision to interview teachers was taken to gain general additional external insights.

The study in Coastal City demonstrates how the ongoing slide of children away from public space in Japan (Frost, 2012; Kinoshita, 2009) also represents a form of political exclusion as children’s opportunities to practice their own form of social interactions and mundane politics in the city are lessened (Skelton, 2013). In addition to hampering children’s independent mobility spillover effects were present from the efforts to create highly protected parks and public spaces. This occurred in the exclusion of those deemed to have a deviant corporeal appearance, such as homeless people, who become mapped through suspicion. The article posits that this could lead to problems regarding reductions in the opportunities for diverse interactions to occur for children when they are mobile in public space (Hillman, 2006; Pain, 2000) as well as risk fracturing social bonds through lateral surveillance initiatives (Reeves, 2012).
Article III: Creeping forms of children’s and young people’s exclusion in public space: ‘pay to play’ redevelopment on a Tokyo park

This article argues that neoliberal planning and approaches to public space are impacting upon children and young people in the Shibuya Ward of Tokyo as are being excluded, and that their real and potential everyday mobilities are negatively impacted upon through an ongoing process where the publicness of public space is atrophying. Similar processes of atrophy have been noted to be ongoing in western contexts for some time (Cresswell, 2006; Hannam et al., 2006; Harvey, 2008) but a gap exists regarding examination in the Japanese context and thus this article seeks to contribute in closing such a gap. Miyashita Park is the presented fieldwork location which saw a redevelopment occur under a controversial naming rights deal between Nike Japan Corporation and the local authority for Shibuya Ward. The redeveloped park demonstrates the negative impacts on children’s and young people’s grounded everyday play and political activity through park restrictions and imposed immobility due to factors such as ‘pay to play’ access to sports amenities and heavy rule sets which cause their priorities to focus on resisting adult structures.

The article illuminates contradictions which arose between the official redevelopment discourse for the park would be like by using imaginary mobilities of mixed social uses occurring with an emphasis on the redevelopment being for children in particular, and what then ultimately unfolded on the ground. This is similar to Skelton’s (2013) observations of ‘child centric’ projects which promise spatial freedom but are instead constituted by mobility constraints and discipline (i.e. pay to play and overly restrictive rule sets). As Sheller and Urry (2006: 211) state ‘mobility and control over mobility both reflect and reinforce power’ and in the case of Miyashita Park the reflection of power and control over mobility link to neoliberal policies or development and redevelopment.
The main methods used in the study involved semi-structured on-site interviews and observation. The interviews took place with young people as well as members of the park’s homeless community that were removed from sheltering inside the park due to the redevelopment, and with other adult users of the park space. The rationale for diversification outside of solely interviewing children and young peoples was inspired by Philo and Smith’s (2013: 144) approach where they state that ‘on some occasions there might be reasons for concentrating solely on children and young people, but even then there will probably need to be at least some nod to the understandings, roles and practices of others, including diverse adults’. The onsite observation occurred in different seasons and across multiple fieldwork trips to gain an informed view of the daily social life and mobilities of the park space.

The article demonstrates how a process of mobile and political exclusion is occurring in tandem with wider neoliberal approaches as the park is within a plan to be transformed into a commercial site under a proposed 30 year lease to a different corporation. This trend illuminates the challenges to children’s and young people’s everyday political practices and mobilities in public space.
5. Conclusion

When considering again the overarching research question of this thesis set out in the introduction, that being: how do the processes of social exclusion, fear and securitisation and neoliberal planning influence the exclusion and restriction of children’s and young people’s mobilities in urban public space in Japan? I argue that there are three processes linked to production which are actively acting as barriers to children’s and young people’s mobilities and these are centered upon social exclusion, fear and security, and neoliberal planning and approaches to public space. I break down these individual barriers to children’s and young people’s mobility into their constitutive parts to explore the particularities and the context of each case encompassing different ages and locations through Article I, II and III.

Article I showed the complexity of interactions on playgrounds between immigrant parents, their preschool aged children and their Japanese counterparts. The messiness of community belonging and citizenship became evident here in the profound barrier like impacts that a sense of social exclusion was shown to have emotionally and in the turning away from public space for some of the immigrant parents, and thus, due to mobile symbiosis, for their children too, towards virtual mobilities. This reconfigures the social terrain of the immigrant preschool aged children towards online space and reduces the visibility of the minority groups in physical public space. This raises questions surrounding the reproduction of legitimate belonging and the purification of space.

The virtual connections which emerge in Article I as a response to social exclusion occur in digital space and so are not happening in physical public space, but nor do they match a purely metaphorical Habermasian model of a public sphere of open access (Habermas, 1989). The virtual connections and play dates originate in private space of the home to another private home between select individuals within closed familial networks. In this way, a crucial aspect of the public is missing, that being, strangers. This ultimately leads to the potential emergence of a thirdspace (Soja, 1996) where children’s virtual mobilities are occurring outside of public space and the public
sphere, but retain some aspects of both. Further research into third-space play mobilities could be a worthwhile endeavour in tracing new forms of hybrid activities amongst the immigrant population of Tokyo.

The findings of Article II illustrate the interconnectedness of different actors which congregate in the production of elementary children’s mobilities in relation to fear and security in Coastal City, of which the parents form one crucial piece of a puzzle alongside the school, and by proxy the police, as regulatory institutions. This interconnectedness highlights the social production and reproduction aspect of mobilities in that the practices are self-reinforcing, cyclical and complex as evidenced in the biographic comparisons engaged in by the parents through their historical comparisons of how they viewed past versions of society and public space. The unequal power structures and dichotomies of insider/outsider became evident in the lateral outsourcing of surveillance. I argue this illustrates how visions of what public space ‘is’ and who it is ‘for’ can become hegemonic and that systems of protection can ultimately serve to exclude and act as a barrier to the very subjects they sought to guard (i.e. children).

When taken together I argue that a link can be drawn between article I and II in that a background atmosphere of fear exists in both of settings but in different contexts. Fear of the ‘other’ emerges in relation to the public spaces of each Article and demonstrates the counter productiveness it can have in impacting and rippling through different communities and those outside the communities by shrinking space for both sets of people. In both articles children’s mobilities are limited or curtailed or morphing away from public space and this is a concerning finding.

The findings of Article III argue that neoliberal approaches to official planning and public space reflect problematic aspects of shaping dominant political power in the materiality of the urban landscape and the social norms which then become layered onto that material fabric. The political aspects of children’s mobilities in this case become a struggle against exclusion through resistance against a hegemonic force in physical and social terms. As indicated in that article, the fundamental question here is not regarding the benefits of children organizing into a resistance orientated mindset, but if the purpose of public space should be structured in a way that attempts to exclude them and necessitates acts of embodied resistance. The socio spatial dialectic is a key concern here as neoliberal forms and norms increasingly come to dominate and act as a barrier.
When these barriers from each article are combined and considered as a whole, we can see the main argument of this thesis emerge. That argument being: that when the article findings are considered together they demonstrate a relational web or social ecology within which children’s and young people’s mobilities are being curtailed at different scales and in different settings. From the parental, to the institutional to the official, and further, that urban public space is shrinking for children across a range of ages from preschool children to young people and incorporating Japanese and immigrant children alike. I argue that these reducing spatialities of the everyday are important because they have the potential to become taken for granted mobility patterns and places which serve to hide power relations and discourses in material and social terms.

This relational web paints a problematic picture for Japanese urban public space as the social production of children’s and young people’s mobilities demonstrate their mobile embodied presence in public space is under threat from multiple angles. And thus their opportunities to engage in their own versions of political practice and to engage their right to the city are also threatened as factors such as exchange value trumping use value. By their ‘own versions’ of political practice I am not referring to commercial ‘walled gardens’, but equitable spaces where basic facilities for activity, mobility and play are available within the dense urban fabric of the city.

As noted previously, one of the underlying positions in the thesis is that the right to the city is a human right with my inclusion of the constituent parts of participation and appropriation (Lefebvre, 1996), and so it is something to be aspired to in order to ensure children and young people have social justice in the city. The right to the city bridges the moral and ethical rights of the UNHCR into a tangible right of urban citizenship. The practical aspects of the denial of this right is that it reduces children’s experiential opportunities and spatial knowledge as well as potential physical activities. Previous research (Cele, 2006: 207) on children and the city has shown the value and the ‘importance of allowing children to interact with an environment so that their senses and minds are awakened by the experience’. My research is in alignment with this perspective in that opportunities are being lost regarding both human and non-human environmental interactions.

Methodologically the thesis has enabled the perspective of a bottom up approach to be highlighted in the parent’s (Article I and Article II) and young people’s perspectives (Article III) rather than focusing on a top down perspective. Through this qualitative approach the
social production of children’s and young people’s mobilities can be seen to emerge in the different contexts of a parental sense of social exclusion, parental/institutional fear and of neoliberally pressured public space. This adds a new layer to the Japanese discourse on children’s mobilities in urban public space given unique factors such as the exceptionally low Japanese crime rate, the unique systems of protection such as parental and school involvement in mapping strangers, and to the public space debate in the Japanese case more broadly regarding the ongoing neoliberalization of approaches in planning. In this way it adds knowledge outside of the debates which have been ‘strongly centered on European and North American cities’ (Dimmer, 2013).

The implications of this research are that opportunities must be taken and implemented across parental, institutional and official scales to promote the everyday mobilities of children and young people in urban public space in order to prevent them becoming anomalies, in independent or accompanied mobility terms and politically. As the thesis has shown, parents and school related networks are a key gatekeeping factor in this process and creating less fearful cities and public space narratives should be promoted to match the low risk factors whenever possible.

Furthermore, while children are sometimes capable of resisting and negotiating adult structures, to expect them to overcome them is an unjust expectation as their role in the city should be equitable and not solely one of struggle. The key aspect of public space is it’s physical attribute which makes it uniquely different from the metaphorical spaces of the public sphere. Given that rights have to exercised ‘somewhere’ (Mitchell, 2003), the importance of public space should remain as the material ‘somewhere’ for that expression. Be that in Shibuya, Minato, Kanagawa or beyond. In hopes for full, mobile and engaged young lives in and with the city.
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