

**Book review by Danielle van der Burgt** *publicerad i Children's Geographies, 16(2), pp. 218–219.*  
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**Children's spatialities: embodiment, emotion and agency**, edited by Abigail Hackett, Lisa Procter, and Julie Seymour, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015, 204 pp., \$100.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-137-46497-2, eBook: ISBN 978-1-137-46498-9

What new insights and perspectives do theories of space and place bring to the interdisciplinary field of childhood studies, and how can research with children change our thinking about space and place in theory and practice? In addressing these questions, this inspiring book seeks to contribute to the field of children's spatialities – the complex, multiple unfolding in space of social processes in children's everyday lives. It does so by applying various spatial perspectives and concepts to empirical childhood studies.

The contributors – from the UK, Denmark, Australia and Italy – work in several disciplines: education, sociology, design, media, geography and landscape architecture. The editors argue that while children's geographers, like other childhood researchers, have applied spatial theory to children's everyday lives, spatial concepts also provide fresh insights in the kind of childhood research that does not normally employ spatial theory. A spatial lens challenges the common policy-oriented view of children's lives as linear and children as 'becomings'. This book thus has an important message for policy-makers: that children's meaning-making, experience and practices are not universal; rather, as policy decisions need to reflect, they are situated in and entangled with space and place.

Throughout the book, the intersectionality between space and children's everyday lives is a central topic. The book is divided into three parts, on the themes of embodiment, emotion and agency respectively. Each of these themes guides the intersection between spatial theory and childhood studies.

How do children experience and make meaning in place? A phenomenological lens is used in Part One of the book to focus on children's embodied, tacit and sensory perceptions of place. Contributors argue that spatial theory challenges the developmental perspectives on learning that often dominate their own research fields, and show how young children's learning and interaction must be understood as embodied and emplaced. Using such concepts of spatial theory as Ingold's 'zones of entanglement' and 'dwelling perspective', and notions from Deleuze, Bourdieu, Tilley and Lefebvre, the authors discuss children's meaning-making and experience of place. Leder Mackley, Pink and Moroşanu (Chapter 1) focus on children's sensory and embodied knowledge of digital and energy technologies in bathrooms. Curtis (Chapter 2) addresses how children learn about, perceive and understand historic locations through activities there. Sakr and Kucirkova (Chapter 3) examine a young child's photography in the home, and Hackett (Chapter 4) analyses two young children's shared meaning-making in a museum.

How do emotions matter in children's lives and spatialities? In conceptualising and researching emotion and place, we need to pay attention to social and 'more-than-social' interactions of bodies and places, since emotions are relational, not 'owned' by individuals. Part Two uses an emotional geography lens to discuss how this can help us understand children's lived experiences better. Blazek (Chapter 5) overviews theoretical and methodological issues in geographical debates on emotions and spatialities in children's lives. Karoff (Chapter 6) presents a phenomenological perspective on how emotional moods are produced through children's shared play practices. Procter (Chapter 7) explores how theories of emotion and place enhance our understanding of children's experiences and emotional meaning-making in school spaces.

What is the potential for children's agency in intergenerational relationships when it comes to architecture, design and management of urban spaces? Part Three starts with Seymour's (Chapter

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8) review of new social studies of childhood and family sociology in terms of children's spatial agency. Woolley (Chapter 9) uses architectural and planning concepts to question the principles that guide provision of outdoor environments for children and young people. Satta (Chapter 10) adopts the concept of 'spatial justice' to explore how play institutions meet children's desires and promote agency.

Geographers will enjoy the thorough discussion of wide-ranging interdisciplinary theories of place and space in relation to children's everyday lives and surroundings. In analysing children's spatialities, contributors also connect spatial theory to social theory of the everyday, the body, materiality and emotion. At times, the authors' elaborate discussions of the intertwinement of the spatial and the social seem somewhat repetitive. Nonetheless, the book provides readers with divergent theoretical ideas on space and place associated with theoretical ideas on embodiment, emotion and practices, and this is one of its clear strengths.

Readers will gain insight into methods and research foci of interdisciplinary childhood studies. Variation provided by the diverse disciplines is among the book's merits, and the authors' divergent disciplinary affiliations, aims and approaches render the chapters multidirectional and complementary, however also at times somewhat diffuse. While the editors succeed well in communicating the book's structure and content in the introduction, a concluding chapter drawing together some of the chapters' central ideas would have been beneficial. In terms of purpose, I found the most rewarding chapters those (such as Chapter 4) that connect in-depth theoretical discussion with relevant research on children's spatialities as well as the research they describe.

The book highlights some significant methodological implications of the theoretical conceptualisation of researching children's practices, emotions and embodied, sensory and tacit experiences. Two are worth highlighting. First, in arguing that the experience and knowledge of (especially younger) children are very much tacit and embodied, and not always verbal, several chapters underline the need to reflect on how we give children 'voice' in research, suggesting (video) ethnographies instead of verbal methods. Second, researchers need to become 'emplaced' in the field and develop 'methodological slowness' (Horton and Kraftl 2006, 72), spending long enough on fieldwork to observe, slowly and in detail, children's interactions with their social and material surroundings.

With its key insights into the complex interrelationships of children's everyday experiences, emotions and practices, this collection will appeal to anyone interested in the spatial workings of children's everyday social processes. In the field of children's spatialities, it will facilitate interdisciplinary conversations that move both children's geographies and childhood studies forward. The book contributes to the field regarding, in particular, how to theorise about and research very young children's embodied, emplaced experiences and knowledge, and how their bodies become physically entangled in their social and material worlds through recurrent movement and embodied interaction.

Horton, J. and Kraftl, P. 2006. "What else? Some more ways of thinking and doing 'children's geographies'." *Children's Geographies* 4 (1), 69–95.

**Bibliographic information** Danielle van der Burgt, Associate Professor in Social and Economic Geography and Lecturer in Child and Youth Studies, Department of Education, Uppsala University, Sweden.