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THE POWER OF PLACE IN PLAY:

A BOURDIEUSIAN ANALYSIS

OF

SEASONAL OUTDOOR PLAY PRACTICES

IN AUCKLAND CHILDREN’S GEOGRAPHIES

by

CHRISTINA REBEKKA ERGLER

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‘TOMORROW’S WORLD IS ALREADY TAKING SHAPE IN
THE BODY AND SPIRIT OF OUR CHILDREN’

Kofi Annan
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Abstract

The physical activity associated with independent outdoor play has gained attention as a way to improve children's health. Despite it fostering healthy physical, mental and social development, in many high-income countries children's autonomous play opportunities have diminished due to urban intensification and declining parental license. Regardless of these general trends, children's play varies across countries, cities, cultures and seasons. Within the context of New Zealand – which projects a ‘green and clean’ image with citizens regarding themselves as outdoor people – this thesis explores why ‘play’ might resonate differently across localities and seasons. In particular, the thesis explores the structure-agency interplay of seasonal outdoor play by examining families’ perspectives and practices of seasonal outdoor play alongside those of environmental and societal structures. I contrast the seasonal play affordances provided by the apartment dominated landscape of Auckland’s central city with those of the suburban housing area of Beach Haven.

The conceptual and theoretical framework underpinning this research is a development of Bourdieu’s triad of field, capital and habitus coupled with Gibson’s affordance theory. I draw on data derived from 73 semi-structured interviews with parents and children (8-10 years) and 38 child GPS tracks (obtained over 8 days in summer and winter 2010). Data collection included further elicited drawings, travel diaries and parental surveys. During a follow-up study child-participants became de facto researchers, analysed their data collaboratively and took non-local children on a child-led neighbourhood walk.

I advance two arguments in this thesis. First, I highlight the importance of a placed analysis of the structures and practices that shape children’s seasonal outdoor play. I suggest that the rarity of children playing outdoors unsupervised normalises supervised indoor play and reduces children’s opportunities to see outdoor play as an alternative to interior or supervised pastimes. Second, I follow Bourdieu’s theory of practice to argue that the empathy parents and children have towards outdoor play reflects locally constituted beliefs about what is seasonally ‘appropriate’ children’s activity. These beliefs are related to the type of habitus families embody (e.g. ‘outdoor habitus’, ‘curtailed outdoor habitus’ and ‘hibernating outdoor habitus’), which is formed through historical, placed and seasonal specific structures and practices. I find that the determinants of seasonal outdoor play transcend modifiable barriers such as traffic and unsuitable play spaces as well as the inevitable issue of inclement weather. The thesis concludes that a focus on place and season, which is embedded in the historical structure-agency interplay of children’s outdoor play, is well positioned to illustrate the recursive relationships between locality, seasonality and (historical) practices.
Keywords
Affordances, Auckland, Bourdieu, central city, children, environmental literacy, independent mobility, intensification, participatory ethnography, physical activity, play, seasonality, suburban
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Prologue

This thesis has taken me on a journey from Germany to New Zealand by changing my host University. It has also taken me on a journey from a master project researching stakeholders’ and slum inhabitants’ perspectives on the quality of the Indian health care system to this study exploring family perspectives on outdoor play. The thesis itself has been a journey, from first engaging with a new topic to finding my own position as a children’s geographies researcher. It has allowed me to reflect on my own outdoor play experiences as a child growing up in a detached house with a huge yard close to a forest, and the differences for children growing up today in high-rise apartment complexes in Auckland’s central city as well as those in the sprawling suburbs. Although I was ‘bubble-wrapped’ by affluence and did not experience poverty or gang culture as some of my young collaborators/participants in the suburb have, I was not over-protected in terms of independent play experiences as many children are today. My parents set rules around crossing and playing on a busy street close to our house; but there were hardly any restrictions on my outdoor play or where I was allowed to go.

When I was five I got my first bike; a tiny red cycle which took me on various excursions around our neighbourhood. It quickly carried me from place to place giving me a sense of freedom and confidence. I soon found out how fast I could go on the bike and how far I could travel without having trouble finding my way back. I created my own mental map of my neighbourhood. I recall exploring short cuts and detours; finding lovely gardens with lots of flowers and joyful moments looking at the abundance of colours when I was out exploring my neighbourhood. I had routes I would take to get quickly from my home to my friend’s place; routes I would take to test how fast I could go on my bike; and routes I would take to check how certain flowers or fruits were growing. I recall one of our neighbours had a huge raspberry bush and some afternoons all the neighbourhood kids gathered around the bush and enjoyed raspberries to the annoyance of the owner.

All my friends lived within a five minute bike ride from my home, and most of them within a two minute walk. After school I would come home and do my homework and then I would play. We played outside summer and winter. We played in the summer heat and winter rain. We played in gardens, in cornfields, on trees, playgrounds, at friend’s houses and attended organised sports, music classes or walked our dogs. We played with insects, tennis racquets and dolls. We got dirty, wet and cold. We were disappointed to stop playing when it was bedtime or got dark. However, my childhood was very different to my parents’ childhood as is the childhood of my collaborators/participants different to their parents’ one and to my childhood. I always envied my parents’ freedom and adventures. I loved to hear their
childhood stories; their adventures of exploring. My favourite story, for example, is that my father decided at the age of four to skip kindergarten and explore his city by bus.

Anecdotal accounts of changing play practices and independent mobility have always been a passion of mine, but I only began to engage with this topic academically when I moved to New Zealand and was offered a PhD scholarship associated with the Health Research Council-funded URBAN study. This project was concerned with relationships between the (built) environment and activity levels in neighbourhoods as a response to the increase in obesity and overweight in the New Zealand population. The research team offered me a new scholarly home and exposed me to new literature. The scope of the URBAN study became the space in which I developed my own research interests: children’s physical activity in urban environments. Hence, the discourse of ‘obesogenic environments’ framed my approach to children’s play practices. However, I cannot deny my own scholarly background. Soon it became clear that I was reading and assessing the literature with a holistic geographical lens and moving beyond the ‘obesogenic environments’ discourse in my thinking. Simply put, physical activity and ‘environments’ were too limiting for my geographical lens. I began to focus on ‘obesogenic landscapes’ rather than ‘obesogenic environments’. In other words, I drew on the diverse and implied notions of ‘landscape’ in a geographical sense. In this regard, environments are not dissected into factors; they are constituted as landscapes encompassing the ever changing interplay between physical features and human beings. In brief, this thesis began to examine parental and children’s experiences of outdoor play and activities and how these may be constrained by societal structures, neighbourhood settings and seasonal effects in the context of ‘obesogenic landscapes’ instead of ‘obesogenic environments’. These directions developed overtime into a broader project focusing on the nature of and influences on children’s play in the widest sense.

I have begun by disclosing my own childhood outdoor play experiences and my journey as a new researcher investigating urban children’s physical activity in this Prologue in an attempt to situate myself as a (geographical) researcher for the reader. As the researcher I am an outsider in three ways: an adult researcher of children’s experiences; someone who is not a parent; and someone who has grown up in a village in Germany and not in a house or apartment in New Zealand. I have, however, been willing to listen, to watch and to converse. As a result, this thesis is a story about working with children, as opposed to working on children. Together, we shared their experiences of play in Auckland.
Chapter 1 ‘Playing around’ with children’s outdoor play

The World Health Organisation declared, a decade ago, that obesity was a global epidemic (WHO, 2000). As a result, there is a growing body of research exploring how ‘obesogenic environments’ contribute to the increasing prevalence of obesity. Children’s play environments are one important component of the collective research focus that seeks to unpack children’s ‘obesogenic environments’. However, the human voice and societal norms and rules have, to a considerable extent, been underplayed in these studies. An improved understanding of the (built) environmental features that determine the character and frequency of outdoor play has been limited as a result. While recognising the scientific contribution of such work, I argue for an approach that takes the structure-agency interplay of children’s seasonal geographies fully into account to reveal ‘obesogenic landscapes’ instead of ‘obesogenic environments’. I choose this alternative term to indicate that the environments in which (non)activity takes place are dynamic and replete with meaning.¹

In this thesis, I employ what I term ‘near and distant participatory ethnography’ which consists of a mixed-method research design deriving from qualitative and quantitative methods. With this methodological approach and through a conceptual framework that combines Bourdieu’s (2000) triad of field, habitus and capital with Gibson’s (1979) affordance theory I deconstruct 20 families’ play practices in Auckland’s central city (dominated by apartment living) and Beach Haven, a suburban housing area. The goal is to shed light on the ‘more sustainable’ living ideologies postulated by new urbanist city designs from the point of view of families. In particular, I contend that the detection, actualisation and experiencing of independent outdoor play opportunities in these intensifying environments are shaped by environmental and societal determinants across locational, seasonal and

¹ Landscapes in a geographical sense are the arenas for diverse symbolic meanings, norms and rules; they have pluralistic and multiple natures such as Tuan’s (1980) landscapes of fear or Gesler’s (1992) therapeutic landscapes. The formation of landscapes is more than the formation of an environment. Landscapes are shaped by countless physical, societal and individual influences and interactions. The geographical meaning of landscapes emphasises the subjectivity and individuality in experiencing, viewing and valuing environments.
socio-historic aspects and families’ play dispositions. In making this argument, I offer new insights into a nuanced and placed view on both the complex social and environmental influences shaping seasonal outdoor play as well as the participants’ ‘environmental literacy’ respectively in a (highly walkable) urban environment. Hence, I contend that a placed social theory approach is overdue to inform understandings of ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

I begin this introductory chapter by embedding the thesis within the URBAN study\(^2\), the wider project within which it sits. I then outline the overall aim and objectives of the thesis and provide a brief foreshadowing of the methods applied. I ‘place’ (i.e. contextualise) the ‘obesogenic landscapes’ considered in this study before mapping the methodological journeys taken in the discipline of children’s geographies. The terms ‘play’, ‘environmental literacy’ and ‘neighbourhood’ are defined and I conclude by presenting a chapter by chapter outline of the thesis.

**Embeddings: the URBAN study**

This research comprised one part of a larger research project that has investigated the association between body size and physical activity engagement in adults and children with built environmental variables in their neighbourhood in four New Zealand cities: Christchurch, Wellington, Waitakere City and North Shore city\(^3\) (Badland et al., 2009). The project, entitled the URBAN study\(^4\), follows the IPEN protocol\(^5\) to reveal (in)activity on a population level stratified by high and low walkable areas and can be broadly placed into the research on ‘obesogenic environments’ (Lake et al., 2010, Swinburn et al., 1999). The study aimed to improve the understanding of the relationships between (in)activity and objective and subjective built environmental features to inform policy changes. The URBAN project was a response to decreasing levels of activity in adults and children and associated health risks that are linked to environmental characteristics in the widest sense (e.g. urban design, street furniture) (Lobstein et al., 2010, Pearce and Witten, 2010).

In this thesis I turn to the social sciences to find explanation for (in)activity under the umbrella of the structure-agency debate to discuss enabling and constraining characteristics of outdoor play. In this respect I examine societal and neighbourhood factors along with the practices of local agents to discuss “both the structural and agential dimensions of social

\(^2\) URBAN is the abbreviation for Understanding the Relationships Between Activity and Neighbourhoods.

\(^3\) Since the 1\(^{st}\) of November 2010 the four cities of the Auckland metropolitan area (Manukau, Waitakere, Auckland and North Shore city) are under one administration, the Auckland Council.

\(^4\) The project was funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand for a three-year grant period (Grant # 07/356).

\(^5\) The IPEN (International Physical Activity and the Environment Network) follows the same study-protocol in at least 14 countries to estimate strengths of association between detailed measures of the built environment and physical activity in adults. Results are intended to support the advocating of evidence-based national and global environmental and policy changes (IPEN, 2012).
Reality [for a] place[d]-focused” on children’s outdoor play (Blacksher and Lovasi, 2012: 177). The placed focus is gained from two contrasting neighbourhoods. Beach Haven is a study location included in the URBAN project and represents a suburban context for play. I chose to contrast this locality with the central city which is residentially dominated by apartments. The majority of studies only research the realities of suburban environments (Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009). However, by choosing these two study sites, I adhered with the overall aim of the URBAN study to stratify neighbourhoods by walkability. Thus, I compare the social reality of play in two highly walkable neighbourhoods in the Auckland region.

Aim

This thesis employs a mixed-method approach informed by Bourdieu’s (2000) theoretical and methodological principles that are combined with perspectives of Gibson’s (1979) affordance theory. The aim is to consider how children’s seasonal play practices shape and are shaped by their locational, social and historical compositions and contexts. By considering more deeply the structure-agency interplay in children’s seasonal outdoor play practices, I explore the potential for these practices to be reflected in an ‘outdoor play habitus’, a ‘hibernating outdoor play habitus’ and a ‘curtailed outdoor play habitus’ each consisting of its own internal practical logics and symbolic capitals that is needed to master what Bourdieu calls the ‘game’ in the ‘field of (outdoor) play’. In the context of Auckland, New Zealand, and in particular by comparing the highly walkable suburban setting of Beach Haven with the heart of central Auckland, I am concerned with the placed and seasonal detection, actualisation and experiencing of play opportunities (affordances) in children’s neighbourhoods. I am interested in how families manage contemporary social realities of seasonal play, and how their habitus and capital is structured and, in turn how it structures, the (socio-historic) ‘field of play’. To this end, I draw on the works of social (health) researchers, urban designers and town planners as well as the behavioural sciences and cultural ‘climatic’ geography. However, the most influential disciplinary perspective in this thesis is (urban) children’s geographies. I interlink these diverse (conceptual) approaches through a Bourdieusian lens. However, this lens is at the same time a geographical lens. I read Bourdieu’s approach informed by the history of my academic journey as a geographer. This application of a geographical lens ultimately leads to a ‘holistic’ and interdisciplinary approach to Bourdieu and the thesis as a whole.6 The net result is not only an inter-sub-disciplinary view (e.g. climate, urban and children’s geographies), but also a viewpoint that

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6 In the following I only refer to a Bourdieusian lens, but this lens has to be read from my own disciplinary and personal positionality (see Chapter 4). Further, in chapter three I introduce how I intertwined Bourdieu’s and Gibson’s approach, but refer hereafter only to a Bourdieusian lens that embraces both my Bourdieusian and Gibsonian approach unless a distinction is warranted.
draws on knowledge from across other disciplines (e.g. exercise science, planning, social health sciences). By following my geographically informed approach, I assert that a placed focus on structural and agential dimensions of these core components of children’ seasonal outdoor play can provide nuanced views on children’ seasonal outdoor play patterns. Such a placed focus can help unpack the deeper meaning of play activities in an intensifying urban environment by considering the locational, societal and historical contexts and compositions that are (re)shaping these patterns.

**Research questions**

The broad area of inquiry that underpins the thesis can be broken down into a number of more specific research questions that I address:

- Where and with whom do children in an intensifying and highly walkable urban environment (central city, suburban) spend their (play) time? Do their roaming patterns vary within, between and across localities and seasons?

- Which historical, social and built environmental conditions shape parents’ and children’s views on ‘appropriate’ (seasonal) outdoor play and structure children’s pastime?

- What kind of ‘profits’ do children and parents evaluate as enabling or constraining elements for experiencing independent (seasonal) outdoor play in their neighbourhood? What does children’s ‘environmental literacy’ look like?

- How are the neighbourhood environment, societal beliefs and families’ play practices intertwined? In which ways do families’ play dispositions influence their evaluation, actualisation and experiencing of (potential) affordances in their neighbourhood environment? How is the embodiment of play dispositions and families’ symbolic capital reflected in children’s detection of (seasonal) affordances?

I address these questions through a mixed-method approach. This chosen approach allows accounting for the structure-agency interplay that shapes children’s play. The empirical investigation comprises two phases. The main data collection stage involves conventional (elicited drawings, semi-structured interviews, surveys, travel diaries) and unorthodox forms of ethnographic research (GPS logs) in the two study areas in the summer and winter of 2010. In the course of conducting these parts of my research children became increasingly engaged beyond the normal character of a researcher-participant relationship. It became clear that a second phase was warranted and that this phase could be led by the children.
themselves. So, in this stage they became *de facto* researchers and we cooperatively analysed their previously collected data on two days at the end of 2010. In addition, local children took non-local children from the suburb and the central city respectively on a (child-) guided neighbourhood tour. More detail is presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

The resultant data sets were then analysed through a Bourdieusian lens and this process demonstrated the importance of telling individual stories that are embedded in the physical location of neighbourhoods, wider societal structures and climatic conditions. I contend that the play practices of children within individual families may be unique in terms of their particular content (stories), but they are shared in their structure with others of the same social ‘play class’. Members of one ‘play class’ share structurally similar positions within the ‘field of play’ that provoke structurally similar experiences of outdoor play and its processes and structures. However, by emphasising the importance of the physical location in which these social realities of outdoor play are situated, I argue that the affordance theory can shed some light on the underutilised aspects of physical locations in Bourdieu’s work (Lossau and Lippuner, 2004, Painter, 2000). Affordance theory has been applied frequently in the context of children’s play spaces (Heft, 1988, Kytta, 2004) and I argue in Chapter 3 that this theory can extend Bourdieu’s spatial lens.

As already suggested, this thesis could have been ultimately situated in any of the other disciplines on which I draw. However, I argue that a placed geographical view on the contexts and compositions of urban children’s outdoor play is central in an attempt to enrich the discussions on addressing and reducing the frequency of children’s ‘obesogenic environments’. In doing so, I expand the traditional view on ‘obesogenic environments’ by introducing the term ‘obesogenic landscapes’. This is an alternative term chosen to indicate that landscapes are always in the making and replete with meaning; they are not simply the ‘canvas’ in front of you, but build the physical arena in which practices are shaped by, and reshape, physical and societal structures of play environments. Utilising this term allows me to move beyond the relationships between activities and physical environments. Indeed, it offers the possibility to discuss how physical and societal structures (re)shape both the practices and the environments in which play activities take place.

**Placing ‘obesogenic landscapes’**

Obesity has reached epidemic proportions. On a global scale, at least 1.5 billion adults and nearly 43 million children (under the age of five) were overweight in 2010 (WHO, 2012). In the New Zealand context, one out of five children is deemed to be overweight according to the most recent New Zealand Health survey (Ministry of Health, 2008). Obesity and being
overweight have been linked to various health threats such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, some types of cancer and musculoskeletal disorders as well as poor psychosocial outcomes such as depression (Lobstein et al., 2010). Children's well-being is not only threatened by the spectre of obesity through childhood, but negative aspects are also likely to be transposed into adulthood (Hertzman and Power, 2004).

From a physiological perspective, obesity and being overweight are the result of an energy imbalance: caloric intake outbalances expenditure (physical activity) (Black and Macinko, 2008, WHO, 2008). However, multiple determinants cause obesity beyond the simplicity of this equation (Kumanyika et al., 2002, Swinburn et al., 2011). Obesity rates vary between individuals and this can be linked to biological, socio-economic, behavioural or psychological factors; all are seen as triggers for the development of this disease (Pearce and Witten, 2010, Poortinga, 2006, Waters et al., 2010). Obesity and being overweight have emerged as critical public health issues in New Zealand over the last decade promoting strategies like ‘HE-HA’ (Healthy Eating Healthy Action) or ‘Mission on’ (Clark, 2006, Ministry of Health, 2003). However, the prevention and treatment for obesity has, for a long time, simply focused on pharmacological, educational and behavioural interventions on the individual level with limited overall success as its increasing prevalence within all age groups, socio-economic levels, genders and geographic locations indicate (Lobstein et al., 2004, McLaren, 2007, Merchant et al., 2007). While the above-mentioned interventions seem to be necessary, they do not appear to be sufficient to solve the obesity epidemic.

A more recent approach to addressing obesity is to link individual characteristics and behaviours such as dietary and physical activity patterns with the wider environmental characteristics (e.g. (non)walkable (suburban) environments) in which people live, work, eat, and play. The research focus has shifted to environments which promote a sedentary lifestyle and high energy intake: ‘obesogenic environments’ (Public Health Advisory Committee, 2008, Swinburn et al., 1999). The relationship between the built environment and obesity has especially attracted the attention of researchers from a range of disciplines, including geography, psychology, planning and urban design as well as sports and exercise science and nutrition (Lake et al., 2010, Pearce and Witten, 2010). At times, these researchers also include weather or climatic conditions as an environmental feature impacting on outdoor activities. However, these environmental characteristics are frequently viewed as external barriers structuring participation in outdoor activities. Indeed, such research is population-based and large scale using mainly quantitative methods (e.g. surveys, accelerometers, Geographical Information Systems analysis) (Tucker and Gilliland, 2007).
Nevertheless, studies have begun to emerge that focus on children’s and adolescents’ social and cultural environments in diverse environmental settings and have the goal of examining (non)participation in active pastimes (Hume et al., 2005, Trost et al., 1999, Veitch et al., 2007). Differences have been shown by age, sex, ethnicity and socio-economic status as well as in diverse urban environments (Davison and Lawson, 2006, Holt et al., 2009, Kelty et al., 2008). Such research attempts to overcome an otherwise narrow understanding of social context in prevalent approaches to obesogenic environments (Oliver and Schofield, 2010, Panter et al., 2008, Swinburn et al., 1999) to explain the differences in (in)activity.

Despite an increasing focus on social determinants and context-related explanations, acknowledging the value of social theorising for understanding the relationships between ‘obesogenic landscapes’ and (non)participation in activities is still in its infancy. A key contribution in this direction is Kearns’ (2010: 279) incorporation of a broader picture on the creation of ‘obesogenic landscapes’ that argues for physical activity being viewed beyond a simple context-dependent behaviour “rationally chosen by individuals”. Discourses, for example, are also one aspect “of social structure that constrain agency in a less visible, but no less forceful, way than does the built environment” (Kearns, 2010: 279). Similarly, Blacksher and Lovasi (2012: 177) come to the conclusion that a “placed-focus” on physical activity, which accounts for the structural and agential dimensions of social realities, will be “more effective” in tackling the obesity epidemic than traditional approaches. This thesis is embedded in this recent perspective and aims to shed light on the relationships between activity (here formal and informal play), neighbourhoods and agents. Furthermore, the seasonal aspect is not viewed as an external barrier, but rather is grounded in everyday experiences. I draw in this regard on cultural (climatic) geography. In doing so, my approach attempts to reveal the diverse characteristics and influences shaping children’s placed play under the umbrella of ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

With this context in mind, I sought to obtain children’s views on their placed outdoor play. Such a view is grounded in their everyday experiences and allows the researcher to deconstruct how their lived social reality (re)shapes their detection, actualisation and experiencing of seasonal outdoor play. In this perspective children are held to be the experts about their seasonal playing practices. The thesis argues a need to move beyond adult-centric views on outdoor play to integrate children’s experiences, definitions and conceptions of play into understanding their ‘obesogenic landscapes’ (Chawla, 2001, Freeman and Tranter, 2011, Holloway and Valentine, 2000, MacDougall et al., 2004). In turn, this argument implies that the traditional methods (e.g. large scale measures) used in revealing ‘obesogenic environments’ are not sufficient. Children’s geographies is a sub-discipline that unpacks and develops methods to include and acknowledge children expertise on issues
concerning their everyday life and it is to this discipline that I turn for methodological guidance (Barker and Weller, 2003a, Morrow, 2001, van Blerk and Kesby, 2009). However, listening to children’s voices is not sufficient. Many of their perceptions of outdoor play practices are mediated through parents and the society in general as well as the localities in which play occurs. My focus therefore also included parental voices with a particular interest in how their symbolic capitals and habitus (re)shapes the play habitus of their children. Hence, my aim is to literally 'play around’ children’s outdoor activity both theoretically and methodologically. As the introductory quote to this chapter suggests, I discuss the emotions that children experience playing outdoors, but within the contexts that shape and alter children’s seasonal outdoor play. I now turn to place the historical and methodological underpinnings of my thesis within the sub-discipline children’s geographies; the ‘playground’ for my encounters with children’s placed seasonal outdoor play.

**Moving beyond passive participation with children’s geographies**

Over the past 40 years a vibrant and creative subdiscipline of children’s geographies has emerged (e.g. Holloway and Valentine, 2000, Holt, 2011, Skelton, 2009, Smith and Ansell, 2009). Researchers in this field try to overcome the discrepancy that sees adults creating environments for children invariably without consulting children on their environmental needs, ideas and wishes (Freeman and Tranter, 2011, Spencer and Blades, 2006). Children’s geographers, therefore, aim to work with young participants instead of on their behalf, in order to reveal, create and design truly children’s environments. I sketch the long walk from observing children to children as researchers in the following paragraphs as one way to illustrate the increasing acknowledgement of children as competent actors and to unpack their lived social realities.

The different ways in which geographers have contributed to understandings of the many worlds of children’s environments reflects shifts in geography more generally: from geography as a positivistic spatial science to geography as a fully social science emphasising subjectivity, experience and meaning of places. Two studies in the 1970s (Blaut and Stea, 1971, Bunge, 1973) paved the way for a further development of “Children’s

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7 By drawing on Bourdieu’s concept of habitus I can unpack both the societal components and contexts shaping a certain habitus, but also the agential immanent dispositions, the parental points of view. However, these agent-bound practices always need to be viewed in the wider context of the ‘field of play’.

8 The term ‘children’s environments’ encompasses in this context the multiple realities of childhood by acknowledging that children are not one homogenous group, whilst their childhoods are structured by societal norms and rules. Therefore, children’s environments are not limited to the physical, haptic environments. For recent reviews see Smith and Ansell (2009), Skelton (2009) and Katz (2009).

9 This characteristic is also true for the ‘new geographies of climatic accommodation’, which are introduced in more detail in chapter two and factored out in this introductory chapter as children’s views are still absent in these.
Geographies” as a research field. Studies by Blaut and colleagues brought children into the research agenda of geographers, but these were highly influenced by positivistic ideas in seeking to explore children’s experiences and mapping skills (Blaut, 1987, Blaut and Stea, 1971). This work researched children’s spatial literacy and initiated geographical research on children’s developmental stages (Blaut, 1987, Blaut and Stea, 1971). Matthews (1985) followed in Blaut’s footsteps and showed Piaget’s (1997) misconception of children’s development in relation to mapping abilities. In contrast, and inspired by the emerging social turn in geography, Bunge’s (1977: 336) “geographical expeditions” applied qualitative methods to reveal children’s well-being in an urban environment and to highlight inequalities in people’s everyday geographies in deprived areas. Other geographers (e.g. Hart (1979)) followed his example in employing a humanistic approach when researching children’s experiences. These researchers drew upon the research methods of environmental psychology and ethnography (e.g. participant observation) to explore children’s place experiences, their independent mobility, their understanding of environmental processes and cognitive mapping abilities. Research examples which influenced geographers include Ward’s (1978) work on inner city slums in London in the 1970s and Lynch’s (1979) work on growing up in cities. These early studies were highly descriptive in origin, but provided an in-depth perspective on children’s environments. Nonetheless, children were (unintentionally) objectified in the research process. For instance, Bunge describes observing children’s behaviour as “similar to bird watching.” (Bunge, 1973: 336).

This flaw of objectification, which also implies failing to take children seriously as competent actors, was acknowledged at the beginning of the 1990s when researchers increasingly highlighted children as experts on their own lives (Christensen and O’Brien, 2003, Christensen, 2000, Holt, 2004). Informed by feminist and postmodern thought most of these studies promoted work with children instead on their behalf (Cele, 2005, Driskell, 2001, Holloway and Valentine, 2000). Children became participants and co-researchers (Barker and Weller, 2003a, Christensen, 2004b, Hemming, 2008) and some studies explored the potential of children as researchers (Alderson, 2000, Kellet, 2005, Porter, 2008) to overcome the (unintentional) objectification of children through the choice of methodology. Consequently, qualitative, child-centred methods (e.g. in-depth interviews, elicited drawings, radio shows) have been developed, refined and further explored during this period for a

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10 The work presented here is inspired by these early studies, but amended in various ways acknowledging the named flaws of these early studies, which could however only have been made from my contemporary knowledge and perspectives on children’s play.

11 The term “children” in this thesis follows the definition of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines a child as "a human being below the age of 18 years" (UNICEF, 1995). I acknowledge that this encompasses different stages of childhood, but my participants were all 8-11 years old.

In the beginning of the 1990s geography was more a follower than a pioneer on children’s interactions with their environments, which was surprising as place/space interactions are a core concern of geographers. This neglect led to Sarah James’ (1990) essay “Is there a place for children in geography?”, which has been answered with various special issues in journals such as Area and Geografiska Annaler and by numerous edited books\(^\text{12}\) (Holloway and Valentine, 2000, Holt, 2011, Skelton and Valentine, 1998). At the same time it became hard to distinguish between disciplines whose practitioners were undertaking children’s research. Studies have been summarised under the interdisciplinary ‘new social studies of childhood’ (James and Prout, 1990). These studies discuss new approaches in theorising and exploring childhood and children’s lives from disciplines including, anthropology, sociology, education and social policy (Chawla, 2001, James et al., 1998, Katz, 2004, Porter et al., 2010).

Two helpful trends contributed to the popularity of children’s geographies. Firstly, the call to empower children to participate as full citizens in political, social and economic life was fostered by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1995). This convention put children on the political agenda or at least obliged bureaucrats to consult children on decisions that might affect their lives. However, as Spencer and Blades (2006) highlight, the environments in which children play are often designed by adults and, in the worst case, are relict spaces left over from the adult world. Theory and practice do not often match. Secondly, seeing young people as competent social actors who transform their own social worlds was promoted (Christensen, 2000, James et al., 1998, Jones, 2001, Kraftl et al., 2007). It mirrors the changing perspective on children’s status in society (James and Prout, 1997, Valentine, 2004): children are capable social actors and should not simply be addressed as invisible agents as part of a group such as a family or learning institution (James et al., 1998, Matthews, 2001b, Valentine et al., 2001). Children and childhood then are not viewed as universal and uniform, but diverse, influenced by socio-economic aspects and historical understandings as well as the geographical location in which children are placed (Philo, 2000, Smith and Ansell, 2009). Therefore, the ways in which children’s lives are structured by our adultist society and resulting power struggles should remain a central reflection for understanding children’s worlds (Gallagher, 2008, Holt, 2004, Matthews, 2001b). I argue, that in order to be able to move to a deeper engagement and better

\(^{12}\) Despite the popularity of compiling special editions on children’s geographies such an endeavour runs the risk of making children’s geographies exclusive for children geographers instead of highlighting the impact of studies on the wider research community as the emphasis lies on children instead of topical themes (Skelton, 2009).
understanding of ‘obesogenic landscapes’, we need to reveal the ‘struggles’ children and parents are caught up in, the norms and rules structuring their practices, besides the place-based landscapes in which activities take place. I place my approach within the historical and methodological embeddings that emerge from ‘obesogenic landscapes’ and children’s geographies research. In my approach I build on these perspectives by adding to Bourdieu’s (2000) interdependent and co-constructed trio of field, capital and habitus as well as the affordance theory initialised by Gibson (1979).

Before I move on to define the key terms in this thesis, Table 1-1 below summarises the key approaches and contributions from selected disciplines, which have informed my understanding of children’s ‘obesogenic landscapes’. These come from children’s geographies, social (health) researchers, urban designers, town planners, the behavioural sciences and cultural (climatric) geography.

**Defining ‘play’ and ‘physical activity’: two sides of the same coin?**

According to Dyson play is “multifaceted, diverse, and complex. It resists easy definition” (Dyson, 2008: iv). Indeed, there seems to be a lack of clarity with regard to any differentiation between the terms physical activity and play. Several authors who have written about playing or physical activity seem to assume that their readers know what playing and physical activity is and do not offer any distinction (Pellegrini, 2011).

Generally, the term ‘physical activity’ is used in transportation, sport science and nutrition literature. It is defined as “bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle that increases energy expenditure above the basal level” (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996: 20). Often, physical activity is analysed within the context it occurs – during periods of time spent in leisure, transport, home or other locations. To make it even more complicated, the terms ‘physical activity, physical fitness’ and exercise are often used interchangeably but have different meanings which are not explicitly discussed in the literature. In ‘children’s geographies’ and the social sciences more generally, the term ‘play’ is preferred to physical activity and the terms ‘formal, informal and active play’ are also used in behavioural and activity studies.

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13 **Physical fitness** can be defined as the “ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue, and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and to meet unforeseen emergencies” (Caspersen et al. 1985; Pate 1983). The term can be used to describe either athletic- and performance-related fitness or health-related fitness (DHHS 1996).

14 **Exercise** can be defined as “physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive, and purposive in the sense that improvement or maintenance of one or more components of physical fitness is the objective” (Caspersen et al. 1985).
Play is often described as the ‘creative, innocent and natural’ aspects of children’s activity. It is often defined as a purposeless behaviour that is enjoyable (Burghardt, 2011). Play also carries the notion of development (Piaget, 1955a, 1962, 1997, Sutton-Smith, 1997, Winnicott, 1977). In this respect, play is seen as ‘learning through play’. Children engage in play out of their own desire and often structure it by themselves. Play is defined then as the free-flowing manner in which children utilise a great variety of objects, languages and symbols to define their own rules. Developmental psychologists have especially been fascinated by play as a means to foster development and enrich children’s education as they exercise their own initiative, imagination and creativity (Göncü, 2009). For example, Piaget (1962, 1976, 1997) tied specific forms of play to specific ages and stages of cognitive development, whereby the child’s development could be defined by the progress of play. In another example, Winnicott (1977) understands the developmental aspect of play involving children learning to defend themselves against anxieties. Hence, it enables them to cope with past and contemporary experiences of affective significance. However, play needs to be understood in relation to a particular time and place. As the context changes, so does play. Children’s play can only be understood in its historical relation to the broader social, political and economic contexts that inscribe themselves into children’s play practices (Roopnarine, 2011, Schwartzman, 1980, 2001, Sutton-Smith, 1981).

In this thesis, play is viewed very broadly and also encompasses children’s own definitions which incorporate active and sedentary, and formal and informal characteristics of activity. Each child defined their understanding of play differently, but accordingly to their habitus. Similarly, inspired by a Deleuzian framework Harker (2005: 57) argues that play is “irreducibly an embodied activity”. To fully understand the specificity and complexity of play it is important to take the “contingent role [of] objects, sounds, ideas and socio-cultural habits” into account. I also draw on this argument and extend it so that not only habits, but also Bourdieu’s triad of field, capital and habitus should be considered when we aim for deeper insights into the structures (in)forming children’s play performance and their ability to bypass and influence these structures through their play performance. This approach allows me (following Harker) to consider much broader conditions and mechanisms constituting different playing performances.
Table 1-1: Selected contributions of various disciplines to contemporary understandings of children’s play and activity environments.
(inspired by Sallis et al. (2009); abbreviations: “S.” = Sciences; “G.” = Geographies; “E.” = Environments)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain*</th>
<th>Health S.</th>
<th>Behavioural S.</th>
<th>Exercise S.</th>
<th>City planning</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Urban design and G.</th>
<th>Leisure and recreational S.</th>
<th>Children’s G.</th>
<th>Social studies of childhood</th>
<th>Cultural (climatic) G.</th>
<th>Social health S.</th>
<th>Sociology</th>
</tr>
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<td>Settings of interest</td>
<td>Recreational facilities</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Design of communities</td>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>Recreational facilities</td>
<td>Home, School, Playground, Neighbourhood</td>
<td>Global and local settings</td>
<td>Society, population subgroups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Recreational or leisure time</td>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td>Active transport</td>
<td>Vigorous leisure activities</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>All ‘placed’ climatic practices</td>
<td>Active transport</td>
<td>Car-reliance</td>
<td>Embodiment</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key concepts</td>
<td>Physical activity in certain settings, Socio-economic E.</td>
<td>Availability, accessibility and quality of activity E.</td>
<td>Home and neighbourhood E.</td>
<td>Walkability</td>
<td>Car-reliance</td>
<td>Residential density</td>
<td>Land-use diversity, design, destination</td>
<td>Choices and constraints to leisure practices</td>
<td>Children as competent actors</td>
<td>Independent mobility</td>
<td>Place attachment</td>
<td>Affordances</td>
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<td>Direct observation</td>
<td>Self-report</td>
<td>Accelerometer</td>
<td>(participatory) GIS, GPS, Self-reported data integration</td>
<td>Rating of aesthetics</td>
<td>Observation, child-centred (qualitative) methods</td>
<td>Observation, interviews, document analysis, qualitative methods</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Qualitative methods</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key contribution</td>
<td>Measures of social and built E. Attributes and activity settings</td>
<td>Multiple measurement methods</td>
<td>GIS methods</td>
<td>Land-use concepts</td>
<td>Conceptualisation of recreation E. Characteristics, measurement of aesthetics</td>
<td>Conceptualisation of childhood, favourite play spaces, place attachment, roaming licences, choices and constraints in accessing E., social capital</td>
<td>Calling for and enriching the discussion on an experienced physicality of everyday life</td>
<td>Theorising the relationships between class, health and life-styles</td>
<td></td>
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*Although presented here as separate domains, disciplines informed each other and some authors presented under one domain are hosted by another domain, while their focus fits more under the domain presented.
However, for a more practically based operationalisation of play, I draw on MacDougall and colleagues (2004: 381f) whose research can be located between physical activity research and children’s geographies and embraces similar interests to that of the study at hand. Derived from focus group discussions with children, play in their definition represents activities that are ‘owned’ by children and involves spontaneous decisions and children’s own norms, rules and practices. Play embraces activities associated with fun and spontaneity. Play contrasts with boredom. Play is often cooperatively carried out with friends, which enhances children’s excitement for play further and also connects children with their wider community; their attachment to places. Play carries the connotation of the absence of competition and aggression. Children creatively and naturally utilise the available facilities and equipment to adjust them to their play needs. I further suggest that children not only utilise the available play spaces (adult prescribed play settings), but also transform the ‘placelessness’ of ordinary environments for their needs (Relph, 1976). There are, as Duff (2011) asserts, many ‘enabling places’, to engage in play, not only the ‘institutionalised’ ones such as playgrounds and parks. While the term play embraces the notion that adults do not direct and only sometimes stimulate play, sport or physical activity is viewed as owned by adults, as they direct and provide the necessary resources. These activities take place in defined settings and are less child-focused than independent outdoor play. In these play contexts children need to follow the norms and rules of the adult world. In the thesis I extend this view not only to sporting activities, but also all activities that are carried out under adult supervision, for example extra-curricular activities or after-school-care.

**Conceptualising ‘environmental literacy’**

The concept of ‘environmental literacy’ encompasses children’s awareness and knowledge about their (natural) surroundings. Maps have often been used to test children’s spatial awareness and to produce a spatial representation about their understanding of the world, place attachment to and relationships with their surroundings (Blaut, 1987, Freeman and Vass, 2010, Hart, 1979). Given the complexity of children’s maps that often show their roaming patterns and social aspects of their lives, they require explanations from the artists themselves (Cele, 2006, Moore, 1986). However, many researchers focus only on the spatial literacy of children, the accuracy of how they represent their movements in space on a two-dimensional map (Badland et al., 2011a, Holt et al., 2008, Hume et al., 2005).

However, the term ‘environmental literacy’ can also be read beyond the notion of spatial literacy. In environmental education the term ‘environmental literacy’ became popular around

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15 I cater for this aspect in the study at hand through the inclusion of the affordance theory.
the 1970s and emerged from a concern about the sustainability of current behaviours and management of environmental resources (Roth, 1992). Researchers saw a need to ‘educate’ people on how human interactions with the environment were (and are) affecting the planet’s health (Berkowitz et al., 1997, McNeill and Vaughn, 2012). The term in the broadest sense encompasses a person’s ability and willingness to critically think about and assess environmental issues; to make and take informed and responsible decisions about solving these problems (Hawthorne and Alabaster, 1999, Monroe, 2003, Roth, 1992). However, Stables and Bishop (2001) propose to distinguish between ‘environmental literacy’ and environmental education. While education should focus on raising awareness about environmental issues and guide actions, ‘environmental literacy’ should be viewed in a broader sense. They propose a model of environmental literacies that embraces the cultural production of the understanding of environments and the sense children make of their surroundings. In this way, cultural, aesthetic and individual (embracing even irrational) views on the environment can be taken into account. While the authors stay within the limits of their discipline and understand the term in relation to environmental sustainability and health they do, however, attempt to distinguish between reading and acting towards the environment (‘environmental literacy’) and acting upon knowledge gained from being educated about environmental problems. They call the latter the writing process.

In this thesis, I am concerned with both aspects of ‘environmental literacy’: the spatial and acting towards an environment. Children’s spatial literacy represents their understanding of neighbourhoods and the connection between their play places and their neighbourhood. In this way, I follow Freeman and Vass’ (2010) proposition that children’s maps show their varying environmental cognitions and literacies. These maps are indicative of children’s abilities to independently negotiate their surroundings. Similarly, I draw on and expand Stables and Bishops (2001) understanding of ‘environmental literacy’ to children’s outdoor play as I am not interested in children’s understanding of environmental health problems in this study per se. In this respect, I am also inspired by Malone’s (2007) broad definition of the term ‘environmental literacy’ which she conceptualises as children’s ability to read the environment in terms of its key environmental, social and cultural elements. Such an understanding also recognises that children’s capabilities and confidence grow through forming relationships with their surroundings, but only if they are able to establish these understandings without adult supervision (environmental competency). While Malone distinguishes between these two aspects, I combine these following Stables and Bishop’s (2001) proposition that reading the environment also means reacting to it, but not taking action for an improved ecological health.
An attempt to define neighbourhood

While the terms neighbourhood, area, context and community are often used interchangeably, the definition of a neighbourhood or study area is complex and varies across the literature utilised in this study. Various studies have used census data, mesh blocks, administrative units and statistical areas for understanding activity patterns on a ‘neighbourhood’ level (Black and Macinko, 2008). Examples include studies assessing the availability, accessibility and quality of neighbourhood destinations or the general walkability of a chosen measurement unit (Badland et al., 2010b, Frank et al., 2003, Frumkin et al., 2004, Witten et al., 2011b). However, neighbourhoods are more than what lies within their physical boundaries and possible destinations within these boundaries.

A neighbourhood can also be seen as a district in an urban area comprising a community of individuals suggesting (at least to some degree) social integration (Johnston et al., 2000). For example, social capital, cohesion, community building and social interaction in a neighbourhood are seen as contributing to feeling well in an environment (Carpiano, 2006, Cohen, 2004, de Vries, 2010, Kawachi et al., 1999, Leyden, 2003, Wood et al., 2008, Ziersch, 2005). Public open spaces often serve as the arena in which a general community well-being is created. Parks, for example, are more than just pleasant features for the eye or an arena for activities; they can act as facilitators of social interaction and community building (Baur and Tynon, 2010, Goltsman et al., 2009). Seeing, meeting and interacting with neighbours on a casual basis in public places creates a sense of familiarity and trust, a sense of neighbourliness (Carpiano, 2006, Kim and Kaplan, 2004, Sullivan et al., 2004). Neighbourhoods lacking these arenas create places with little cohesion and place attachment (Chawla, 2001, Witten et al., 2003b). This aspect is especially important for children’s ‘environmental literacy’ and the development of their own social networks and cultural learning opportunities (Freeman and Tranter, 2011, Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004). The more parents perceive their neighbourhood as a safe place, the more likely children can independently explore their surroundings and gain ‘environmental literacy’ (Carson et al., 2010, Lim and Calabrese Barton, 2010, Prezza et al., 2001). The perception of a place or neighbourhood as safe is primarily reserved for locations in which “levels of social capital are high and trust is well-developed” (Weller and Bruegel, 2009: 640). Consequently, parents may equip their children with a licence to greater independence, which in turn contributes positively to their ‘environmental literacy’.

In this thesis, I conceptualise neighbourhood as a complex entity encompassing the physical surrounding and furniture of a neighbourhood (e.g. play destinations such as parks and playgrounds) and the social environment. Neighbourhood in this study is seen from these
two perspectives: the use of administrative boundaries to define the neighbourhood (e.g. for socio-economic neighbourhood statistics); and an application of the subjective experiencing and defining of the term ‘neighbourhood’ used and explained by participating families, which is embedded in the wider discourse on the socialness of neighbourhoods. In this way, I conceptualise that the neighbourhood is more than the setting in which children get active and explore. It is an arena in which they enlarge their ‘environmental literacy’, when trust, social capital and neighbourliness are well developed.

**Thesis overview**

The remainder of this thesis is organised into eleven chapters. In **Chapter 2**, I review the literature concerned with children’s outdoor play in an urban environment. In particular, I examine the concept of ‘obesogenic landscapes’, combining the views of ‘obesogenic environments’ and children’s geographies’ researchers. In this chapter I advance two arguments. First, I call for the inclusion of a social science perspective that takes the structure-agency interplay into account to shed light on structures and practices contributing to ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Through intertwining work conducted by children’s geographers and those researching ‘obesogenic environments’ I attain a position where they mutually inform each other by integrating children as experts on issues concerning their well-being. Second, I argue for a move towards a subjective engagement with placed climatic practices under the umbrella of ‘new geographies of climatic accommodation’ to expand the view on weather and climatic conditions beyond being a ‘barrier’ to outdoor play.

**Chapter 3** introduces the conceptual framework employed throughout the thesis to account for my call to integrate the structure-agency interplay. I argue that Bourdieusian and Gibsonian approaches can mutually inform each other. While the affordance theory allows a nuanced view on the environmental objects and features fostering outdoor play, Bourdieu’s approach allows us to unpack why individual children detect and actualise affordances differently in their neighbourhood environments. In doing so, I argue two points. First, for understanding the determinants of children’s ‘obesogenic landscapes’ an expansion beyond the traditional play spaces usually researched (e.g. playground) is warranted. Second, combining the affordance theory with Bourdieu’s triad of field, capital and habitus can account for the complex amalgamation of perceptions, experiences and evaluations based on families’ play dispositions in relation to the structuring structures of (social and physical) ‘obesogenic landscapes’.
In Chapter 4, I follow Bourdieu’s call to extend his work practically and methodologically and introduce his ‘methodological principles’ and the research method ‘near and distant multi-sited participatory ethnography’ which moves ‘beyond passive participation. I argue that for revealing the structure-agency interplay a move beyond conventional methods is warranted. Through the near participatory methods (interviews, elicited drawings, travel diaries) I gain access to the rich and detailed accounts of families’ everyday play practices viewed through their lens, while the distant methods (GPS tracking, parental surveys) allow me an understanding of children’s habitual activity and roaming patterns. I take this approach ‘beyond passive participation’ to accommodate a follow up study in which children became de facto researchers assisting me to analyse the previous collected data. The research process itself is detailed in Chapter 5. The last part of this fifth chapter spells out how the diverse ‘data sets’ are triangulated under a Bourdieusian lens.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 introduce the local context in which this thesis is embedded. Chapter 6 localises the study sites of Beach Haven and the Central city. I also briefly introduce the climatic and weather conditions of the Auckland region as they also structure the outdoor practices of families. In Chapter 7 I present the social history of play in Auckland. In this chapter I deploy the concept of field as both the site and the product of social struggle to describe the symbolic struggles which turned Auckland into a city of managed childhood. These historic struggles characterise contemporary struggles and outdoor play practices.

Drawing upon the parental narratives, Chapter 8 fulfils two purposes. First, it introduces participating families and their decisions to inhabit Beach Haven and the central city. Second, I argue that how well families feel connected to their surroundings and how well their habitus fits within their living environment impacts on the detection and actualisation of affordances in their neighbourhood environments. This chapter is important for understanding children’s and parents’ evaluation of their neighbourhood environments, understandings that are further elaborated in the next chapter. In Chapter 9, I map children’s seasonal roaming patterns and their independent mobility as revealed in their travel diaries. In a second step I provide an account of how parents and children view their neighbourhoods in terms of choice and constraint for seasonal outdoor play. Chapter 10 advances the argument that (seasonal) norms and rules structure the logic of practice in relation to the (non)actualisation of affordances and that the exposure to a certain living environment cultivates a sensibility for certain play preferences in those inhabiting this area. In Chapter 11, I move away from the sample as a whole to demonstrate that an ‘outdoor play habitus’, ‘curtailed outdoor habitus’ and a ‘hibernating outdoor habitus’ can be found in both locations. Which habitus children or families generally possess depends on their play dispositions and capital endowment. This chapter reveals the complexities involved in seasonal outdoor play in more
detail. In sum, these chapters argue that outdoor play needs to be viewed through a locational, seasonal and intergenerational lens.

Finally, in Chapter 12 I reflect on the thesis findings and what they might mean for a geographically informed approach to tackle the obesity epidemic. In reconnecting theory and empirical findings I remap the contours of the thesis. In looking forward, I suggest how the links between localities, seasonality and generations as three key components of play structures and practices may be useful in future studies interested in children’s outdoor play.
“Obesogenic landscapes”

“Children and young people are now recommended to take part in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity […]. Yet how easy is it for young people to achieve this required 60 minutes in modern cities that are dominated by traffic and busy roads with miles of low density urban sprawl promoting high car dependence, with young people living in increasingly larger homes built on smaller blocks with busy parents concerned about personal and traffic safety?”

(Kelty et al., 2008: 7)

Chapter 2 ‘Obesogenic landscapes’ in children’s geographies: mapping key debates and perspectives

Since economic growth picked up after World War II, car dependency, technological improvements and urban sprawl have changed the play environments of children significantly (Chawla, 2001, Christensen and O’Brien, 2003, Dixon and Broom, 2007, Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). Not only the public open spaces in neighbourhoods (Gleeson and Sipe, 2006, Valentine, 2004), but also private play spaces have transformed or shrunk (Freeman and Tranter, 2011, Karsten, 2005, Malone, 2007). Hence, as indicated in the introductory quote, the recommended time for engaging in healthy active pastimes has been challenging how these diverse ‘obesogenic landscapes’ are presently constituted and influence children’s geographies.

The term landscape is used to indicate that both physical and less tangible elements structure ‘obesogenic environments’ in children’s everyday life (Kearns, 2010). In my choice of this term I have been inspired by works undertaken by Relph (1976), Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) and Massey (2005). I draw from their views that these ‘obesogenic landscapes’ are complex in the making and replete with meaning beyond being the physical arena in which activities take place. Indeed, I move in this literature review beyond the relationships of activities and physical environments to draw attention to their social and imagined features; societies and landscapes are, as discussed by Valentine, “mutually constituted” (Valentine, 2001: 7). In light of this claim I view ‘obesogenic landscapes’ both as the result of a particular historical outcome (e.g. urban sprawl, current definition of childhood)

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16 Bringing up the need to discuss healthy active pastimes in itself is a change compared previous generations. Active pastimes has long been the norm and not deemed worthy as such to be emphasised, which changes with the increasing prevalence of obesity.

17 The term landscape has a long tradition of carrying spatial and cultural implications. For a recent review see Colten (2010).
and as landscapes shaping social practices, which in turn (re)structure both practices in and the physical arenas of activity. Similarly, the term children’s geographies has to be understood also as at least two-layered. First, we can refer to the physical or map-able geographies of children such as their roaming within a certain environment (the physical landscape). Second, it embraces norms and rules that comprise present childhoods (e.g. the view on children and childhood and their contexts of everyday life, their landscapes of experiences).

For considering key debates and perspectives on ‘obesogenic landscapes’ in children’s geographies, I developed a particular lens presented in Figure 2-1 through which I view the literature in question. I do not, however, claim that this lens is exhaustive. Rather, the purpose of this conceptual framework is to provide an account of the diverse aspects shaping children’s play and physical activity-related practices beyond the (non)availability, (non)accessibility and quality of neighbourhood/play spaces so commonly focused upon under the umbrella of ‘obesogenic environments’ (Almanza et al., 2012, Jones et al., 2009b, Tucker et al., 2007). Consequently, a common theme in the literature reviewed is the tension between structure and agency or, as labelled by Dyck and Kearns (2006), the contribution of choice and constraint in human experiences structured by societal beliefs, norms and rules.

The child in the city is placed in the centre of the framework as cultural and socio-economic characteristics of individuals and their home environment still play a role in the participation in diverse activities (e.g. outdoor play or supervised afternoon activities) (Karsten, 2005, Kimbro et al., 2011). Depending where the home is located the child has access to a garden or playground (e.g. in an apartment complex), but access also depends on how parents view these environments in terms of safety and whether, or to what extent, they grant their child the licence to play independently (Freeman and Tranter, 2011, Kytta, 2006). The dotted lines used in Figure 2-1 indicate the permeability of environments for some children who move naturally and independently between play environments at home, their neighbourhood and outside their neighbourhood. In contrast, for others, these same environments are more restricted (Brown et al., 2008, Malone, 2007, Matthews and Field, 2001); they may be ‘obesogenic landscapes’ for these children from which they retreat indoors to more sedentary pastimes. Children’s map-able geographies vary. Further, the fading arrows indicate that for the age group 8 to 10 years in question the scale at which activities take place autonomously are less important the further the children move away from their home environments. Parents often accompany children on trips (e.g. events or activities taking place in and outside the neighbourhood environment), which is illustrated by the play and transport arrows. In the diagram, the arrow for urban design is not fading as the arrangement of the built environment determines not only the home and neighbourhood a child is living in,
but also how the city is arranged more generally (e.g. a compact or sprawling city). Seasonality intersects all scales and is also dependent on the geographical location of the case study sites, but also dependent on parental beliefs and attitudes towards outdoor play in different seasons and weather (Børrestad et al., 2011, Brodersen et al., 2005, Castonguay and Jutras, 2010). More importantly, however, seasonal play is viewed as being grounded in children’s everyday experiences, which is implied through the location of the shape ‘seasonality’.

Figure 2-1: Conceptual framework for reviewing ‘obesogenic landscapes’ in urban children’s geographies

Urban children’s outdoor play insights from ‘obesogenic landscapes’

Physical activity accumulation through independent outdoor play has come to prominence for researchers concerned about the increasing threat of an ‘obesity epidemic’ among urban children, especially in high-income countries (Sallis et al., 2000, Veitch et al., 2007). Echoing Australia, North America and many European countries, an unacceptable, low proportion of New Zealand children participate in healthy levels of sports and active leisure practices
(Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2008, Salmon and Timperio, 2007, SPARC, 2003). Differences have been shown by age, sex, ethnicities, and socio-economic status and in different urban environments (Holt et al., 2009, Jones et al., 2000, Kelty et al., 2008), but the majority of studies neglect the fact that many urban environments consist of suburban settings and central city areas with residential high-rise complexes.

Earlier interventions aimed at increasing children’s activity in more structured settings (e.g. school, sport clubs) have had limited success in combatting the threat of obesity (Sluijs et al., 2007). Studies have revealed that time spent outdoors engaged in active play correlates positively with higher objectively measured activity levels (Cooper et al., 2010, Mackett and Paskins, 2008). Herein lies a paradox. While researchers and policy makers have begun to highlight the positive effects that independent outdoor play has on children’s healthy mental, social and physical development (Harten et al., 2008, Moore, 1986, Rissotto and Guiliani, 2006), recent decades have seen a decline in this form of play (Karsten, 2005, Mackett et al., 2007b, Wen et al., 2009). For example, a New Zealand survey showed that almost half of the children interviewed have some days where they engage in no play at all18 (MILO, 2012).

Studies interested in children’s physical activity reveal children’s activity patterns and can point to diverse types of destinations and activities that children currently favour. Their research involves, however, more removed forms of statistical techniques unable to reveal the ‘nitty gritty’ day to day experiences of (non)participation in an active lifestyle. In contrast, researchers embedded in the sub-discipline of children’s geographies have explored children’s everyday experiences, but mainly in suburban, semi-urban or rural settings. These studies can complement the former, although they have so far not explicitly investigated ‘obesogenic landscapes’ from the point of view of children and their parents. In an attempt to deconstruct the more nuanced reasons for the decline in independent outdoor play, I survey children’s play environments through the lens ‘obesogenic landscapes’ in the contexts of their home, their neighbourhood and the wider urban environment.

The ‘home’ environment as ‘obesogenic landscape’

The home environment influences children’s play in a diverse range of ways including the play equipment, play spaces and parental beliefs. Numerous studies have focused on children’s play experiences in their home determined by the physical building and the social constructions of and around the ‘home’ (e.g. Chawla, 2001, Christensen and O’Brien, 2003,

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18 It is arguable that given a leading company of engaging in questionable labour practices in developing countries to harvest the cacao used to produce a milk mix drink sponsored this research and following campaigns for more independent active outdoor play, they brought a well-published concern of the academic world into the public eye. Especially, worthy to note is the irony that much public funding goes into research concerned about the marketing of unhealthy food to children (e.g. Hastings and Cairns, 2010) and outdoor play in New Zealand maybe connected with this brand in future.
Holloway and Valentine, 2000). For example, some researchers have explored routines and practices that create ‘home’ (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, Sibley, 1995), while others have paid attention to ‘changing families’ and implications for children’s home settings and play experiences. Studies have considered patchwork families19, gay or lesbian parenting and the strengthened bonds with family friends (Aitken, 1998, Freeman and Tranter, 2011, Smyth et al., 2008, Taylor, 2009). Discourses around ‘good mothering’ or ‘good parenting’ in general have been frequently discussed (Dowling, 2000, Pain, 2006, Scott et al., 1998) and reveal societal expectations imposed on parents that structure children’s play. A ‘good parent’ is nowadays one who gives greater importance to protection, rather than to the child’s independence (Timperio et al., 2004, Valentine, 1997). A parent seems expected to supervise children in public spaces and to chauffeur them between institutionalised settings, thereby constraining their independent mobility (Banwell et al., 2007, Dowling, 2000, Valentine, 2004). Moreover, parenting styles impact on children’s use of spaces within their home: some parents allow children to play outdoor games indoors, while others put restrictions on children’s creativity on utilising the indoor environment for playing (Karsten, 2005, Valentine, 1997). It is well established that children’s play patterns in and outside the home have changed over the years. Less information is, however, available on how the complex relationships between societal demands, parenting beliefs and children’s play experiences have worked together to result in that children engaging in more sedentary pastimes at and around their homes. But we do know that electronic entertainment has increased and altered children’s pastimes.

The ratio of time spent playing outdoors relative to ‘screen time’ is a significant predictor of BMI (Body Mass Index) (Carson et al., 2010, Escobar-Chaves and Anderson, 2008, Vandewater and Cummings, 2009) and is associated with eroding social interaction (Freeman and Tranter, 2011). Nonetheless, studies have shown that being ‘plugged in’ is one form of socialising in families and with friends (Holloway and Valentine, 2003, White and Wyn, 2008). Barriers reported to reduce children’s ‘screen time’ are commonly associated with slack parental rules and electronic equipment a seemingly cost-effective babysitter. Watching TV or playing computer is also often a synonym for ‘not getting bored’ in a world that is perceived to lack ‘safe’ alternatives, for example outdoor activities (Jordan et al., 2006). Similar barriers have been reported by a recent New Zealand study, which primarily focused on Pacific Island and Maori families (Dorey et al., 2010). In industrialised countries it is common that children watch more than three hours TV or play for an equivalent length of time on the computer or with game consoles each day. This situation is only exacerbated

19 A patchwork family is defined as a new family made of the remnants of divorced (or prior) families. They are complex stepfamilies or multi-fragmented families (Adams and Trost, 2006, OECD, 2011).
when this equipment is available in their bedrooms (Gorley et al., 2004, Jordan et al., 2006, Sisson et al., 2011). The increasing availability of smart phones and tabloid computers is adding to this issue as they facilitate being ‘plugged in’ 24/7. Less information is, however, available on how seasonal aspects (e.g. changing daylight hours) and the attraction of electronic entertainment are intertwined. This question is considered, but not reported on, by a British study (Atkin et al., 2008).

Further, environmental factors (e.g. crime, walkability) may have been overemphasised as attributes of shaping ‘obesogenic landscapes’ warranting a deeper engagement with how dispositions and perceptions influence children’s partaking in active play in or outside their home environment.

In a recent US survey it was found that children spent more time actively playing outdoors and watched less TV in neighbourhoods with high collective efficacy20, but children growing up in neighbourhoods with disorder and in public housing surprisingly played more outdoors and watched more TV than other children (Kimbro et al., 2011). The authors hypothesised that these children have more unstructured time at their disposal, which they fill with both free play and watching TV (see also Holloway and Valentine, 2003). Interestingly, Moore (1986) revealed more than 20 years ago that children who reported to watch long hours of TV were also the ones most knowledgeable of, and creative in, utilising their environment. Being literate in playing outdoors and electronically seems not to be mutually exclusive suggesting that other factors beyond the simple-context dependent behaviours may also be at play in shaping ‘obesogenic landscapes’. In the context of car dependency, Hinde and Dixon (2005) draw on Bourdieu (1998) to argue, that population subgroups develop certain sets of social practices to position themselves. I see a need to explore the complexities around active and sedentary pastimes more explicitly from the point of view of parents and children as only some studies have offered them an opportunity to explain themselves, their actions and desires regarding children’s pastimes.

The common view that ‘time plugged in’ stops children from doing anything, is contested by Bell (2011). She offers an analysis on the increase of more sedentary pastimes embracing the wider socio-economic context in New Zealand. She revealed that children may resist the pressure of living faster lives in a neo-liberal society by taking space to rest; they resist the pressure of being busy at all times through electronic entertainment and use these moments as ‘still time’, break. Children who utilise electronic equipment and watch TV excessively may have a higher BMI and benefit health-wise from a more active life-style, but there is a need to further unpack the relationships between more sedentary lives and wider societal

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20 Neighbourhood or collective efficacy embraces, for example social cohesion and trust or informal social control (Twigg et al., 2010).
structures to fully understand families’ decisions about electronic entertainment and the declining attractiveness of outdoor activities around the home setting. To prevent children losing their ability to play actively and spontaneously, we need to understand better how these patterns are formed, but also how they are adjusted and transformed by children, parents and society. The shaping of ‘obesogenic landscapes’ is more complex than the sheer engagement in electronic pastimes, which may further be determined by the physical structure of the home and neighbourhood.

Parents still tend to view the suburb with its detached houses as the best place to raise children. Consequently the majority of studies interested in children’s physical activity are placed in suburban or semi-urban environments\(^1\) (Holt et al., 2008, Jones et al., 2009a, Timperio et al., 2008, Villanueva et al., 2012). However, sections on which houses are built are becoming smaller and increasing house sizes leave hardly any space for children to play outdoors and this is altering their playing practices indoors (Cunningham and Jones, 1994, Dowling, 2008, Malone, 2007, Tandy, 1999). Veitch et al. (2006), for example, disclosed that children with a suitably sized backyard and safe streets utilise neighbourhood parks, courts and playgrounds less frequently. In contrast, Whitehead et al. (2006) and Louv (2005) found that access to a garden does not necessarily imply engagement in active outdoor pastimes. Despite these conflicting views, there is consensus that children enjoy being active outdoors on their trampoline, swings or running around in the backyard (with their dogs) as well as playing diverse (ball) games outside the house (Christensen and O’Brien, 2003, Holloway and Valentine, 2000, Tandy, 1999, Tipper, 2011). Play equipment is frequently drawn in children’s elicited maps in cases where parents are able to afford toys (Darbyshire et al., 2005, Holt et al., 2008, Hume et al., 2005, Ziviani et al., 2008). Nevertheless, outdoor play tools have been shown to be insignificant for being associated with vigorous outdoor activity (Kelty et al., 2008, Spinks et al., 2006, Trost et al., 1999).

The type of dwelling children are raised in is important as it has implications for the availability and accessibility of outdoor play spaces and more importantly how parents evaluate their suitability for children’s play. Children who grow up in a house with a back or front yard compared to children in an apartment face different play environments in front of their door steps. While there is plenty of information available on the utilisation of gardens and driveways in suburban environments (Matthews and Field, 2001, Skar and Krogh, 2009, Valentine, 2004), only limited knowledge is available as to how children in the 21st century in high and medium density settings utilise these environments, which are often not designed with the need for children’s play spaces in mind. Researchers only recently began to include

\(^1\) These studies neglected that in many cities such as New York, Berlin, London or Singapore to name but a few children traditionally lived in high and medium density environments (Gaster, 1991, Kong, 2000, Ward, 1978, Zeiher, 2003).
and specifically focus on central city and vertical living arrangements more systematically in light of ‘obesogenic landscapes’ as families increasingly move to high-rise apartment complexes in the central cities in western countries (Carroll et al., 2011, Easthope and Tice, 2011, Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009). This trend is likely to continue with the impetus of new urbanism and sustainable living ideologies (Crane, 2000, Napier et al., 2011, Talen, 1999). A more sustainable and healthy lifestyle for adults may result from vertical living (e.g. based on active transport) (Badland et al., 2008, Ewing et al., 2003, Frank et al., 2006, Giles-Corti et al., 2010). Little is known, however about how the intensification of cities affects children’s play and place experiences and shapes their ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

Living in high-rise apartment complexes with children is often viewed inappropriate echoing Wallace (1952) and van Vliet (1983), who questioned the suitability of such living arrangements for families. Difficulties are attributed to providing safe supervision and play spaces for children. A study in a low-income area in Amsterdam discussed the fact that large families simply do not have the space to keep children constantly inside due to limited apartment size (Pinkster and Fortuijn, 2009). Consequently, some have to ‘hang out’ in environments characterised by low quality playgrounds (e.g. old or destroyed play equipment), vandalism and drugs. Likewise, a recent report about apartment living in central Auckland highlighted the insufficiency of existing indoor and outdoor play spaces for families with young children (AUT and Auckland City Council, 2008). Studies like these contribute to the general perception of unsuitability of apartment living for families with children. But the majority of studies have been conducted in public housing areas potentially overemphasising the negative aspects (Gifford, 2007). Deciding to move to an apartment and not being poor may offset the so widely reported aspects of psychological constraints (Holt et al., 2009, Lowry, 1990), social isolation, loneliness and limited social interactions (Mitchell, 1971, Randolph, 2006, Thornburg, 1975) as well as mental and behavioural problems (Holt et al., 2009, Pinkster and Fortuijn, 2009, Prezza et al., 2001).

More recently, researchers have called attention to children’s restricted independent mobility in vertical living environments. They emphasise the negative implications on children’s social and motor skills and reduced levels of vigorous activities (Jones et al., 2000, Randolph, 2006). In contrast, other studies disclose children’s in-depth knowledge of, and attachment to, their compact environment questioning the general negative view on apartment living and children’s independent mobility in these settings (Den Besten, 2011, Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009). For instance, Lim and Calabrese Barton (2010) used the theoretical construct of ‘insideness’ to demonstrate children’s affective attachment to and environmental competence within their low income neighbourhood in New York City. Similarly, Cahill (2000) reported on the discrepancy between students’ poor literacy and their sophisticated
understanding of ‘environmental protocols’. Den Besten (2011) exemplifies the diversity of children’s independent mobility in high-density environments in Paris as a complex function of parental and child negotiations, attitudes and experiences.

In times of approaching peak oil and intensification strategies it is necessary to extend the focus beyond public housing and include the ‘ordinary’ apartment dweller to understand the choices and constraints for children’s active outdoor play in compact settings better. With fading roaming licences in all urban, semi-urban and rural settings (Bringolf-Isler et al., 2010, Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009, Timperio et al., 2004) it is questionable whether more compact living environments are really the deterring factor. Rather, it is important to explore the complexities within different settings and socio-economic backgrounds constituting declining independent outdoor play as one aspect shaping ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

**Neighbourhoods in light of ‘obesogenic landscapes’**

According to Sallis and Glanz (2006), the way neighbourhood environments are designed can facilitate an active lifestyle. Studies have been mainly conducted in North America, Australia and Europe and report that built environmental features (e.g. sprawl) are connected to obesity in adults (Frank et al., 2005, Lake et al., 2010, Pearce and Witten, 2010) and children (Frank et al., 2007a, Sallis and Glanz, 2006). For instance, Gallimore and colleagues (2011) stated that children growing up in a new urbanist community, which consists of dense housing forms, land-use mix and well-connected accessible streets, were active for almost five minutes longer in the half hour before and after school than those living in traditional suburban settings (Stevens and Brown, 2011). Yet, the majority of suburban environments contain disconnected street networks based on the dominance of cul-de-sacs; also referred to as ‘lollipop’ design (Frank et al., 2003, Southworth and Owens, 1993). These typical neighbourhoods are labelled low-walkable environments, lacking diversity in destinations and connected street and pedestrian networks. They are mainly low density residential areas, which feed into high-speed arterial roads (Gallimore et al., 2011, Transportation Research Board, 2005). To assess the walkability of an area Leslie et al. (2007), developed a geographical information system (GIS)–based measurement tool

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22 Karsten (2005) and Den Besten (2011) focus on the implications of children’s declining autonomous experience of outdoor environments in urban environments. Karsten (2005) showed that three different play geographies for children developed. While children before the 1960s spent most of their time outdoors, contemporary children are found ‘indoors’ or on the ‘backseat’ of cars. While the declining outdoor time of the ‘backseat generation’ is compensated through organised activities, the ‘indoor generation’ has to abandon any outdoor experiences. Similarly, Den Besten (2011) shows the decline of children’s independent mobility, but focuses on parenting style. She views three styles: ‘mother-hen’, ‘progressively dismissive’ and ‘letting children enjoy their neighbourhood to the maximum’. Both studies indicate that more than the sheer participation in independent outdoor play is at stake and these outcomes are only the result of wider societal patterns.

23 Similarly, Nairn et al. (2006) showed that youth participation initiatives in local governments focus either on the ‘troublemakers’ or ‘high achievers’, thereby neglecting the views of the ‘ordinary’ child and grounding decisions on polarised perspectives. Hence, as the popularity of apartment living under sustainable living ideologies increases, the inclusion of diverse experiences and opinions is overdue.
combining four built environment variables: street connectivity, dwelling density, land use and retail floor area ratio. This tool has been designed with adults in mind and the majority of studies interested in children’s leisure activity have to date primarily examined specific neighbourhood characteristics rather than overall walkability in relation to children’s play (Binns et al., 2009, Giles-Corti et al., 2009, Veitch et al., 2007).

Only a handful of studies have explored the relationships between neighbourhood walkability and children’s play or leisure activities. Discrepancies are reported for children’s outdoor play practices in relation to environmental and social factors, but suggest an age-related component is at work (Ding et al., 2011, Giles-Corti et al., 2009). A Canadian study explored the relationships between children’s perceptions of play locations, age-related development differences and walkability of neighbourhoods concluding that low walkable areas and age moderated children’s knowledge of play spaces (Holt et al., 2008). While Frank et al. (2007a) found that only higher dwelling density in neighbourhoods predicted increased physical activity in US children aged 9-11 years, enhanced street connectivity and density fostered activity in 12-15 year olds. De Vries and colleagues (2007) showed that three factors positively influenced 6-12 year old children’s outdoor activities in the Netherlands: residential density (up to a maximum of six stories), street connectivity and manned pedestrian crossings. While children under 12 years in the San Francisco Bay area are more active on weekends in a typical sprawling suburb (Copperman and Bhat, 2007), a study comparing high and low walkable neighbourhoods in the Salt Lake Valley could not find any differences between settings in physical activity levels during weekends (Stevens and Brown, 2011).

Given the inconsistencies in findings, providing families an arena to explain their rationales may illuminate counter-productive outcomes of existing studies. Moreover, studies under the umbrella of children’s geographies seldom pay attention to the walkability of neighbourhoods in the same sense that physical activity studies do, and quantitative analyses tend to discount how play contexts may differ within the same walkability category or social correlates. As suggested earlier, parents still desire their children to grow up in suburban or semi-urban environments, which may influence the value given to, and children’s experiences of, outdoor play in these environments. Both research areas may inform each other on children’s use of public open spaces to shed further light on environmental features and the social meaning shaping children’s outdoor playing practices.

Besides the home and street, public open spaces are traditionally seen as the environments children retreat to for play (e.g. Chawla, 2001, Holloway and Valentine, 2000, Karsten, 2005, Ward, 1978). Consequently, physical activity researchers have increasingly turned their focus to the availability, accessibility and quality of neighbourhood destinations such as recreational environments (e.g. parks) to explore relationships between activity patterns and
environmental features (Ellaway et al., 2007, Hume et al., 2007, Potestio et al., 2009). Studies from Europe, Australia and North America have shown that the proximity of public open spaces to children’s homes influences their utilisation positively (Davison and Lawson, 2006, Ding et al., 2011). For example, living within an 800 meter radius of parks or sports centres is associated with higher weekly physical activity. Children not only engage with these environments, but are also more likely to actively commute to them (Epstein et al., 2006, Potwarka et al., 2008). Similarly, researchers showed that the diversity and numbers of possible destinations within children's neighbourhood are important for achieving healthy levels of activity (Carson et al., 2010, Corder et al., 2011, Page et al., 2009). Although there is conflicting evidence with regards to age and gender, findings suggest that recreational facilities within walking distance lead to increased active play (Davidson et al., 2010, Holt et al., 2009, Timperio et al., 2004).

Some researchers, however, indicated that distance to public open spaces may not be the deterring factor for utilisation (Tucker et al., 2007, Veitch et al., 2010). For example, Timperio et al. (2008) reported mixed findings on diverse environmental features (e.g. playgrounds, water features, lighting, shade), depending on gender and age. They showed that younger boys were more active on the closest playgrounds, but no relationship could be established for girls. The authors concluded that diverse environments are necessary within a neighbourhood to appeal to each child's taste and engage them in activities. Yet, the quality of spaces close to home may be more important for their utilisation as the findings about girls suggest. Quigg et al. (2012) found, however, only limited evidence that a playground intervention close to children’s homes increased their physical activity levels, whereas Tucker and colleagues (2007) revealed that parents’ decisions to bring children to a certain park are influenced by the quality of amenities offered. Less than half of their participants utilised the closest park for playing, but brought their children on average more than twice a week to their favourite park. Therefore, it is not surprising that auditing tools have been developed to assess children’s activity on for example playgrounds to determine which play equipment fosters higher activity levels (McKenzie et al., 2000, Moore and Cosco, 2010). Less attention has been paid to children’s evaluations of these environments (see Veitch et al., 2007, Willenberg et al., 2010: for exceptions). Yet, some children’s geographers reported that children wished for more challenging play equipment as it was designed with their safety in mind (Gill, 2007, McKendrick et al., 2000).

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24 These observational tools have been more recently complemented with objective measures such as accelerometers (Feda et al., in press, Rune and Trond Lege, 2010).

25 In children’s geographies playground settings feature prominently and diverse topics have been researched e.g. the history of playgrounds or the value of play and children’s experiences of utilising playgrounds. For a recent review see Woolley (2008).
A UK based study comparing urban and rural activity patterns outside school term time showed that children utilise suburban streets and rural grasslands for their informal play, an indicator of vigorous physical activity in these settings (Jones et al., 2009a). The authors suggest the importance of safe and supportive environments for children to develop habitual physical activity. They echo in this respect a consensus among studies conducted by children’s geographers discussing the importance of the immediate neighbourhood environment for younger and older children’s and adolescents’ independent, creative and imaginative ‘play’ or, in the words of physical activity researchers, ‘active, informal play’ (Chawla, 2001, Freeman and Quigg, 2009a, Malone, 2002). For instance, Moore (1986) revealed how parking lots are turned into soccer fields and how ordinary a neighbourhood feature as ordinary a boulder became a climbing piece. Similarly, more recent studies reported that rural and suburban children still turn their neighbourhood environments into an adventure playground, although these practices are declining due to fears around road safety and abduction (Karsten, 2005, Loebach and Gilliland, 2010, Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009). In addition, Cele (2006) revealed that urban children utilised objects in the built environment in many different ways; often not according to intentions of designers. Her participants climbed on poles, squeezed through bushes and discovered ‘secret doors’. Built environmental features are multi-functional. When a child engages with an object in a different fashion, it has a different meaning.

Despite these widespread accounts of children’s creative play, physical activity researchers have until recently paid more attention to structural settings such as fields or playgrounds (for recent exceptions see Almanza et al., 2012, Cooper et al., 2010, Mackett and Paskins, 2008). These accounts discount the notion that children play or are active beyond these prescribed settings. Not only institutionalised settings stimulate children’s play (Day and Wagner, 2010, Kytta, 2004): children utilise diverse environments and features in their pastime (Chawla, 2001, Holt, 2011, Hörschelmann and Van Blerk, 2012). Implying that children have the capabilities and freedoms to explore, test their boundaries and creatively engage with their environments, they should be able to turn any environment into an ‘adventure playground’.

To take children’s informal play from the playground to the neighbourhood and expand the narrow interpretations of children’s informal play in obesity studies, perceptual ecological psychology may offer an appropriate theoretical lens (Gibson, 1979, Greeno, 1994, Kytta, 2002). The theory of ‘affordances’ calls attention to the functional properties of places or objects (e.g. tree, bench), which structure or foster children’s interaction with the same. For example, many children perceive a tree as an object to climb (see also Chapter 3). Settings and objects stimulate and raise awareness to the possible actualisation of their
environmental properties (Heft, 1988). Environments are therefore more than the simple backdrops in which activities occur or do not occur. Such a relational understanding allows integrating children’s creativity and imagination for illuminating play practices; to move beyond the narrow view that a slide only affords sliding for example. The ‘affordance theory’ incorporates the view that children copy behaviour from older children or friends for example, and pays attention to the fact that children transform environments and objects for their play needs. Duff (2011: 149) calls these environments “enabling spaces” to highlight that any place can be an adventure playground. Integrating the affordance theory into the debate on ‘obesogenic landscapes’ offers a way to move away from the prescribed activities of the adult world which the majority of physical activity studies has focused on. Such an expansion draws attention to the fact that many play practices are place- and context specific (Lim and Calabrese Barton, 2010). Environmental properties are not simply (non)existent, but they are invariably (re)defined by the individual child who engages with their functionalities the way he or she perceives them (Heft, 1988, Lim and Calabrese Barton, 2010). Indeed, studies should not only include traditional, natural and built environmental features, but also the “constructed and composed” affordances arising out of “diverse social, affective and material resources” (Duff, 2011: 155). Not only common play equipment or settings are of interest for enhancing activity, but also everyday objects become the centre of attention when discussing these.

Including the view of ‘enabling spaces’ into the discussion on ‘obesogenic landscapes’ is one way to expand the so far limited view of choice and constraint in intensified urban settings; it allows for the inclusion of what Relph (1976) called ‘placeless spaces’, locations (and affordances) which would not spring straightaway into one’s mind. Moreover, combining the knowledge of physical activity researchers and children’s geographers with affordance theory allows us to move beyond a dominant focus on physical health by highlighting the importance that independent, imaginative and creative play has on children’s well-being (Churchman, 2003, Kytta, 2004, Moore, 2009). Nonetheless, I want to highlight that these ‘enabling spaces’ need to be viewed under the umbrella of the structure-agency debate. Norms and rules shape along with availability and accessibility of play locations, how children perceive, evaluate and transform these places for their play needs. More information is warranted to fully understand how children’s dispositions, capabilities and affinities towards a certain type of play, structure their pastimes in urban environments. This lens needs to be complemented by a deconstruction of societal views on childhood and child appropriate pastimes besides the impact of urban design. In the next section I review diverse norms and rules that structure children’s activities in an urban environment and urban design features that impact on their outdoor play. I highlight that there remain knowledge gaps in
the area of how certain environments, conditions and subjectivities can contribute to the shaping of ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

Transcending home and neighbourhood environments: playing between ‘domestication’, ‘institutionalisation’ and ‘insularisation’

Urban areas are increasingly more challenging to live in – especially for children. The urban life-style has (generally) changed to become more car oriented (Collins et al., 2009, Hinde and Dixon, 2005, Rissotto and Guiliani, 2006) with growing time pressure for parents and their offspring (Banwell et al., 2007, Karsten, 1998). Children’s freedom of movement is compromised. Studies in Europe, North America and Australia document a sharp decline in children’s independent mobility (Brown et al., 2008, Hillman et al., 1990, McMillan, 2005, Pooley et al., 2005) not only due to the loss of accessible destinations and traffic safety, but also based on abduction fears (Carver et al., 2008, Kelty et al., 2008, Timperio et al., 2004, Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). The higher the traffic volume is the less likely children travel or play autonomously. Their habitual activity levels and opportunities to become ‘streetwise’ are disappearing (Kristensen et al., 2008, Malone, 2007, Tranter and Pawson, 2001), but children’s activity patterns become spatially more complex warranting the inclusion of the wider urban environment to discuss the formation of ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

First attempts to move away from selected localities (i.e. school, playground, neighbourhoods) have recently been undertaken by researchers interested in active lifestyles. Such researchers have shifted their focus from neighbourhood or census level analysis units to individual time-space behaviours (Saarloos et al., 2009). This move allows evaluating environments beyond the limited scope of the previous units analysis and a considerations of complex mobilities within everyday life (Gong and Mackett, 2009, Jones et al., 2009a, Villanueva et al., 2012). For example, Rainham et al. (2010) exemplify how the integration of time geography and spatial ecology as an approach to operationalise the context of individual movements in space and time allows to change existing place based perspectives of health and well-being. However, while better information about people’s space-time behaviour and the relationship between environmental factors may be generated, these approaches are still not able to reveal how people experience these environments and activities. At best they are implied without further confirmation, but the complexities around (non) partaking in an activity in certain environments are omitted. While this recent shift can disclose both where and when activities are taking place as well as the environmental
influences beyond children’s immediate home environments or in limited settings, experiences within these locales are still overlooked.

Researchers from diverse disciplines have increasingly begun to recognise this lack of further interpretation of mobility patterns and in response have developed the ‘qualitative geographical information system’ (qualitative GIS) (Knigge and Cope, 2006, Kwan and Ding, 2008), ‘qualified GIS’ (Pain et al., 2006) or ‘SoftGIS’ approach (Kytta et al., 2004, Rantanen and Kahila, 2009). Some studies use this approach to analyse qualitative data in the contexts in which it was gathered. This GIS-based triangulation of subjective and objective perceptions provides more nuanced understandings and offers to refine questions needing consideration of, for example, commuting patterns or neighbourhood qualities from an unprecedented point of view (Cope and Elwood, 2009, Jones and Evans, 2011). Other approaches are participatory and web-based, in attempts to inform authorities about possible planning and strategic processes having the potential to improve people’s well-being informed by their local knowledge (Berglund and Nordin, 2007, Cromley and McLafferty, 2012, Dennis, 2006, Kytta, in press). However, the majority of these studies are based on self-reports concerning spatial behaviour. By way of example, Wridt (2010) integrated analogue participatory methods afterwards with a (qualitative) GIS. She mapped children’s perceptions of physical activity opportunities and their utilisation within a deprived urban neighbourhood to shed light on the placed complexities between activities and neighbourhoods. She concluded that children’s local knowledge should be cherished and integrated to improve community-level health and planning interventions fostering physical activity. Indeed, more traditional approaches have to date been evaluated as less successful in tackling this threat as they have neglected children’s views and experiences.

Children’s geographers are well placed to enrich this recent shift towards a space-time analysis of local activities by drawing on their knowledge working with children instead of on their behalf. They especially qualify for an ethical and reflective integration of qualitative data with GIS (Cope and Jung, 2009, Loebach and Gilliland, 2010). The implicit inclusion of space-time behaviours in relation to physical activities and ‘obesogenic landscapes’ has yet to follow; as such I mean the integration of, for example, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) that show children’s roaming patterns complemented with localised everyday experiences.

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26 The utilisation of geographic information system is widespread (see e.g. Appendix 1) to gather information about the contribution of environmental determinants on activity levels, with its own debates on accuracy and methodological improvements (Beijer et al., 2009, Bull et al., 2010, Higgs et al., in press, Leslie et al., 2007, Witten et al., 2011b). The recent shift builds on the existing experiences in utilising a geographical information system to combine environmental factors with placed activity through the utilisation of a Global Positioning System (Almanza et al., 2012, Krenn et al., 2011, Maddison et al., 2009).

27 A recent edited collection of ideas and discussions summarised under the heading of “spatial humanities” questions not only the epistemological implications of such undertakings, but also the possible gains for understanding placed behaviour when findings are used to enrich debates theoretically (Bodenhamer et al., 2010).
expressed by children themselves. Some researchers have included children’s voices in their research design of space-time behaviours (Mackett et al., 2007a, Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009, Oliver et al., 2011, Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009), but the potential for the intertwining of qualitative and spatial analysis tools to unpack the determinants shaping ‘obesogenic landscapes’ are still not fully acknowledged (see for an overview Appendix 1). Loebach and Gilliland (2010) provide the exception. They incorporated children’s views with their spatial behaviour during a child-led neighbourhood tour using GPS and photovoice, unpacking the complexities of children’s placed environmental experiences. Although children drew on their day to day experiences, the authors were restricted by a limited spatial and temporal view on children’s everyday experiences.

Most of studies in relation to children’s physical activity still favour parental knowledge to explore (non)participation in activities at certain localities. Often parents are interviewed or surveyed on behalf of their children assuming that they are sufficiently knowledgeable of their children’s experiences and activities (Pont et al., 2009, Timperio et al., 2006, Timperio et al., 2004, Veitch et al., 2010), thereby denying children their own agency (Christensen and O’Brien, 2003, Holt, 2004, Morrow, 2008). When children participate directly, they often seem to be considered as research objects and not full participants thereby running the risk of reducing child participants to a subservient role. Their participation is often limited to being equipped with an accelerometer or GPS unit28 (Almanza et al., 2012, Badland et al., 2011a, Duncan et al., 2008a, Roemmich et al., 2007). For example, Cooper and Page (2010: 87) stress that GPS equipment has been rarely used “in free-living children”. Similarly, James and Prout (1997: 13) criticised childhood studies from the 1980s in which the “child is portrayed, like the laboratory rat, as being at the mercy of external stimuli”. In other hands on research, children are often given a task which is then analysed by the researcher without any further consultation with the child participants. For example, Holt et al. (2008) asked children to draw their favourite places to be active, but no interview followed up why or what exactly children had drawn. Although Veitch et al. (2006, 2007) enriched understandings of where and why children play in low, mid, and high socio-economic areas in Melbourne both from the perspective of parents and children, they missed the opportunity to triangulate these experiences gathered through interviews (parents) and focus group discussions (children).

These studies discount the possibilities that an integration of space-time behaviour and experiences of both parents and children may offer for cohesive and enhanced understandings of wider societal structures shaping ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Therefore,

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28 For recent reviews on the increasing utilisation and findings gained through the utilisation of GPS devices see Maddison and Mhurchu (2009) or Krenn and colleagues (2011).
research using different methods under the umbrella of children's geographies and physical activity can mutually inform each other; children's geographers (with some exceptions) have generally less systematically approached environmental factors, but they are well placed to explore the 'everyday lived experiences' and to enrich the discussion on 'obesogenic landscapes' in relation to space-time patterns theoretically. They offer room for people to explain themselves and put these views into wider societal or historical contexts. Indeed, three interrelating processes commonly summarised in the children's geography literature as 'domestication', 'institutionalisation' and 'insularisation' maybe considered as a starting point to discuss structures shaping children's playing practices in and across urban areas (Hengst, 2007, Smith and Barker, 2000a, Zinnecker, 1990). Indeed, these structures may contribute to the shaping of 'obesogenic landscapes'. I begin on reflecting on the possible contributions such a view can have on unpacking 'obesogenic landscapes' by focusing on the retreat of children to the private, supervised domain.

Children spend more and more time in spaces designed and controlled by adults (Spencer and Blades, 2006). Previous generations recall the street and immediate neighbourhood environments as the locations where most of their play, ‘free’ of adult control, happened (Karsten, 2005, Skar and Krogh, 2009). More recently, children often have to retreat to spaces under adult surveillance which are designed for them, and are dispersed over the city. Locally formed neighbourhood based friendship networks in neighbourhoods diminish more and more (Mayall, 2008, Qvortrup, 2008, Smith and Barker, 2000b). The term ‘domestication’ highlights children’s limited roaming scope and that they are increasingly controlled within houses or other sheltered places (Elias, 1969, Zeiher, 2003, Zinnecker, 1990). Adults relocated children from their “experiential space” (street, neighbourhood) to "closed protected spaces" (Leverett, 2011: 10) reflecting and reproducing the dominant discourse of the innocent child needing protection from ‘the evil outside world’ (James et al., 1998, Scott et al., 1998, Valentine, 1996). Hence, children retreated from the public into the private domain; predominantly structured by adult perspectives and expectations leaving only limited scope for children to delve into imaginative, creative play and to construct their own identities cooperatively with peers (Malone, 2002, McKendrick et al., 2000, Skar and Krogh, 2009). However, this trend of institutionalisation may, firstly, offer one explanation for the increase of sedentary activities discussed earlier heeding wider societal developments shaping the ‘obesogenic landscape’. Secondly, it fostered the increase in organising and institutionalising childhood and more specifically play reflecting adult conceptualisations of ‘appropriate’ child pastimes (Leverett, 2011).

The organisation and institutionalisation of children’s leisure times under the umbrella of play can be viewed from two further perspectives. First, from a practical and more tangible
perspective, children increasingly participate in extra-curricular activities (Clements, 2004, Gaster, 1991, Gleeson and Sipe, 2006, Witten et al., 2009). The immediate neighbourhood does not often satisfy parental aspirations, so parents began to chauffeur their children to the most ‘appropriate’ institutions and clubs across urban space (see also below) (Freeman and Quigg, 2009a, Witten, 2005). One body of literature emerged in times of peak oil and discussed the environmental impacts (e.g. CO₂ emissions) these parenting practices cause (Freeman and Quigg, 2009b, Hjorthol and Fyhri, 2009, Tranter and Sharpe, 2008, Witten et al., 2011a). A second body explored the negative aspects for children’s healthy development (e.g. ‘environmental literacy’) (Holt et al., 2008, Tranter and Pawson, 2001). Other studies focused more on the ‘care’ setting. While children’s geographers researched diverse sites from commercial indoor spaces to playgrounds (Karsten, 2003, Smith and Barker, 2000b, Woolley, 2008), physical activity researchers concentrated for a long time on school breaks and sport clubs for arguably easier monitoring (e.g. hours spent, type and level of activity) (Allender et al., 2006, Brandl-Bredenbeck and Brettschneider, 2010, Harrison and Jones, 2012, Sallis et al., 2000). For example, French et al. (2001) emphasise the positive relationships between participation in sports and healthy body weight. Strong et al. (2005) recommended the cooperation between schools’ physical education, sport clubs and recreational facilities as well as after school programmes to ensure all children achieve the recommended 60 minutes of daily activity.

While the institutionalisation of children’s free time is widely addressed (Holt, 2011, Larson and Verma, 1999), seasonal or weather-dependent implications and especially the underlying rationales of participation in, and (non)enjoyment of, organised activities have neither been extensively explored in children’s geography literature nor in other disciplines. For example, Shernoff and Vandell (2007) surveyed the motivations of teenagers to participate in organised activities after school in autumn and spring, but left no room for respondents discussions of their experiences and complexities around motivations. Understanding children’s participation in and their evaluation of particular seasonal or all-year-round extra-curricular activities would, however, complement the picture of ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

Second, in more general terms the word ‘institutionalisation’ implies the external imposition of norms, structures and rules on childhood domains (Gill, 2007, Prout, 2000). Children’s use of time is prescribed through, in and during these extra-curricular activities leaving hardly any room for them to develop their own childhood culture beyond adult constructions; they have (more or less) to follow the rules and regulations imposed on them by grown-ups within these settings (Malone, 2007). Children do not necessarily oppose the participation in structured pastimes and the regulation of their free-time. Rather, ‘enticement’ also structures
children’s pastimes\textsuperscript{29}; the more fashionable an institutionalised activity (e.g. sport, art) is, the more likely children are to be attracted to it, no matter if it reflects their own or parental interests (Leverett, 2011, Zeiher, 2003). At the same time, the norm of institutionalised leisure time also rules parenting practices (Dowling, 2000); parents and their children not conforming to the norm (e.g. participation, chauffeuring) are often constructed as ‘outsiders’ when for instance children are left without ‘proper’ supervision (Mahoney et al., 2005, Pinkster and Fortuijn, 2009).

Additionally, Prout (2005) argues that by sending children to the ‘care’ of institutions offering extra-curricular activities, social inequalities are reproduced and further cemented. Not all parents can afford the fees of extra-curricular activities and being forced to partake in free activities may impact negatively on children’s identity (Sutton, 2009). In addition, activities, for example in the public sector grant governments easier regulation of children’s future. They can ‘control’ the ‘production’ of ‘economically, productive, healthy citizens of tomorrow’ (Leverett, 2011: 10) when for example programmes and activities endorse healthier lifestyles (Bell, 2011, Burrows, 2010). While commercial or more professional services and spaces follow market rules, they also underlie external obligations and regulations and can respond to and create specific parental desires such as advancing children’s numeracy or literacy. They cater also for the increasing demand to supervise children after school to appease parents’ minds in risk-averse societies (Beck, 1992, Scott et al., 1998). This provides parents with an opportunity to demonstrate ‘good parenting’ practices often without the need to be physically present (Hengst, 2007, Karsten, 2002, Zeiher, 2003).

However, I do not want to deny children their capabilities to resist, transform and utilise these institutionalised spaces for their own needs (Christensen et al., 2000, Gallagher, 2008, Zeiher, 2003). Rather, I want to draw attention to the fact that children are increasingly forced to thrive under adult supervision leaving only limited space for their creativity, imagination and ‘environmental literacy’ compared to less surveilled outdoor spaces of previous generations (Karsten, 2002, Malone, 2007). Considering these diverse norms, rules and structures leading to, shaping and reproducing the institutionalisation of children’s play, allows us to conceptualise and view ‘obesogenic landscapes’ as more than the sheer absence of activity or the doing of environmental factors. Rather, it allows us to entangle the complexities in and of children’s play practices viewing children’s activities in their environment as a product of both structure and agency.

\textsuperscript{29} One aspect, which I cannot discuss in more detail given the scope of this thesis is that consumption is normalised as a leisure practice in its own right shaping both childhoods and children’s play practices (Buckingham, 2011, Marshall, 2010).
While ‘domestication’ and ‘institutionalisation’ embrace children’s experiences and practices within supervised spaces, ‘insularisation’ focuses on children’s movement between these spaces. In a functionally differentiated urban environment, children’s mobilities are spatially fragmented as children spend most of their time in ‘islands’ such as houses, schools, after-school-care and leisure facilities scattered over the entire urban area (Zeiher, 2003). Parents chaperone their children between these islands, which is especially well-documented for the journey to and from school (Cloutier, 2010, Harrison et al., 2011, McMillan, 2007, Panter et al., 2010). In New Zealand the disbandment of school zones exacerbated this process. Zones were later reintroduced and complemented with a ballot system, so that children are now often transported to the best school, often outside their own neighbourhood (Lewis, 2004). Studies mainly focusing on suburban environments for example revealed the energy expenditure of, and preferred distances to, destinations for active transport as well as choices and constraints shaped by environmental and social determinants in low or high walkable areas (Mackett and Paskins, 2008, Ross, 2007, Timperio et al., 2006, Whitzman et al., 2010a). Some studies found correlations of affluence with declining active commuting to school (Brophy et al., 2011, Ewing et al., 2004, McMillan, 2007). But a New Zealand study reported that the majority of walking school buses (an intervention designed to walk children to and from school), are to be found in less deprived areas (Collins and Kearns, 2010, Collins and Kearns, 2005). Despite inconsistent findings, research points towards the influence of land-use mix, traffic volume, speed and street connectivity on families’ participation in active transport (Giles-Corti et al., 2011, Panter et al., 2010, Timperio et al., 2006).

Similar variations are reported by studies explicitly focusing on leisure travel, although these are sparse compared to ones on school travel (Steinbach et al., in press). Whether children walk, cycle, take public transport or are driven to afternoon activities depends on perceptions of the local neighbourhood in terms of personal and road safety (Carver et al., 2005, Lin and Yu, 2011, Timperio et al., 2004). Focusing on social and environmental correlates in London, Steinbach and colleagues (in press) found evidence that high traffic volumes, reduced speed and commercial destinations influenced children’s walking trips positively in the afternoons and during the weekends in summer, but only for non-Asian children. Smith et al. (2012) revealed that boys who commuted actively after school hours in Britain were also habitually more active. Afternoon activities involving car travel are also related to parental aspirations.

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30 Inconsistent findings in and between socio-economic groups, ethnicities and environmental factors and countries are partially attributed to the variation of definitions, differences in analysis units and geographic scales (Giles-Corti et al., 2009, Keilty et al., 2008, Mitra and Buliung, 2011).

31 The focus of reviewed studies ranged from interest in urban design features to specific environmental factors, for example the presence or absence of sidewalks, path maintenance and safe crossings and has been mainly conducted in North America, Australia and Europe (Ahilport et al., 2008, Keilty et al., 2008, Oliver and Schofield, 2010, Pikora et al., 2006).
Obesogenic landscapes

(Hjorthol and Fyhri, 2009, Johansson, 2006) and whether children live in urban or rural areas (Sjolie and Thuen, 2002). In previous generations education and play activities were localised, targeting the same outcomes as contemporary and more automobile-dominated practices do. Yet, they offered more diverse possibilities for children’s independent mobility32 (Hengst, 2007, Leverett, 2011).

These mainly car-oriented practices to reach diverse destinations create their own paradoxes beyond having implications for urban planning practices (Evans et al., 2012, Frank et al., 2006, Laird, 2001). The reduction of child pedestrians due to the increase of parental chauffeuring services reduces children’s independent mobilities further. Parents fear accidents and abduction; hence they limit children’s access and confine them often to indoor settings (Freeman and Quigg, 2009a, Hjorthol and Fyhri, 2009, Kears and Collins, 2006, Tranter and Pawson, 2001). This desire or curse is not only demanding on children and influences their playing practices, but also impacts upon parents and especially mothers. They have to manage the complex logistical schedules and arrange for fluid movement between insularised spaces to comply with the notions of ‘good parenting’ (Lareau and Weininger, 2008, Spilsbury, 2005). There are two key outcomes in this context. First, expectations on parents’ and children’s behaviour and their roles leave hardly any room for children to exert agency outside the home, although researchers and policy makers highlight children’s expertise progressively, for example in the political domain, fostered by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Freeman and Tranter, 2011). Second, a child’s life becomes increasingly detached from other local children and from the adult world; there are designated children’s and adult spaces with their own rules and regulations (Karsten, 2002, Leverett, 2011, Tranter and Sharpe, 2008).

The dominant symbolic and practical value of motorised transport for reaching these destinations is closely related to what Sheller and Urry (2000: 747) called the “new urban subjectivities” constrained by fragmentation and segregation of land use. The automobile facilitates the experiencing and evaluating of the world (and its drivers and passengers) (Gartman, 2004, Urry, 2004). It dominates the picture of cities and as such the “coming together of private citizens in public space is lost” (Sheller and Urry, 2000: 746). For example, some researchers have discussed children’s longing for independent, active transport, while highlighting their limited view and experience of the world as passive passengers. Often children’s ‘coming together’ on their journey to school for example is denied (Collins and

32 Interestingly, Finnish studies contrast the general trend of declining licences for urban children in western societies. Finnish children seem still to enjoy more independent mobility than their western counterparts in urban environments, although they are also transported to extra-curricular activities. Despite their participation in institutionalised activities, these children still play and enjoy the freedom to independently roam and explore their local urban environment (Fagerholm and Broberg, 2011, Kullman, 2010).
Kearns, 2001, Mitchell et al., 2007, Pooley et al., 2005). These trends can be viewed as a loss of independent mobility, but also as an outcome of the role of auto-mobility in modern societies. Too often studies attend only to the ‘nitty gritty’ of everyday life and neglect wider cultural, economic, political and historical processes for an improved understanding of trends such as the ‘insularisation’ of activities; these studies often omit the much-needed integrated account of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. In other words, they overlook social practices arising from the intersection or negotiation between structural processes and human agency.

In this regard, I view a Bourdieusian approach as especially helpful to illuminate this so often omitted ‘bigger picture’ of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Such an approach offers insights into these intersections and negotiations of social practices and structural determinants. Viewing these landscapes through a Bourdieusian lens under the umbrella of ‘field, capital and habitus’ arguably provides a systematic approach to the interplay of structures and practices in the conduct of everyday life (see also Chapter 3).

**Shaping ‘obesogenic landscapes’: experiencing seasonality and weather conditions**

While built environmental features are increasingly investigated as determinants of children’s participation in outdoor play, findings on natural environmental factors such as weather and seasonal aspects are still limited, especially in cities with moderate climate such as Auckland (Castonguay and Jutras, 2010, Sandercock et al., 2010, Silva et al., 2011, Tucker and Gilliland, 2007). This is interesting, as studies show that the more time children spend outdoors, the higher the level of their vigorous physical activity (Baranowski et al., 1993, Burdette et al., 2004, Cooper et al., 2010). Climatic and weather conditions are an important aspect of the outdoors, but in physical activity studies they are viewed as external factors (Panter et al., 2008); as an abstraction presented as a fuzzy moderator structuring outdoor activities from above, instead of being grounded in everyday experiences. Therefore, there is value in combining a recent move in cultural geography towards a subjective engagement with placed climatic practices (e.g. Brace and Geoghegan, 2011, Hitchings, 2010, Skinner et al., 2009) with the findings of physical activity studies.

Physical activity studies mainly conceptualise weather and climate as a barrier to outdoor activities or ignore this aspect entirely. These studies hardly address the complex subjectivities, among which climatic conditions are only one, but important influence, leading to the (non)participation in outdoor leisure practices and the shaping of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. While physical activity studies reveal where and when activities have been taking place, investigating placed climatic practices and their subjective rationales can illuminate structure-agency complexities that shape trends revealed by physical activity
studies. Taking on this view allows one to view climatic conditions, seasonality and weather as more than the sheer absence of activity at certain times and circumstances; rather I attempt to enrich the discussion of ‘obesogenic landscapes’ by expanding the view of climate and weather beyond being simply a barrier.

Activities in diverse climatic conditions, seasons and weather shape and are shaped by wider social structures and practices (Bourdieu, 1977, Hitchings, 2010). Therefore, it is important to be sensitive to the numerous cultural, economic or climatic contextual dynamics shaping (non)participation in activities at different times of the year or in different weather conditions. In the following paragraphs, I first review selected findings of physical activity studies and then move on to discuss the small number of studies on ‘placed’ climatics, emerging out of ‘new geographies of climatic accommodation’, a term coined by Hitchings (2010).

In physical activity studies, inclement weather is often perceived and stated as barrier, while in studies not particularly dealing with weather conditions it is neglected both as choice or constraint on participation in outdoor activities. In these studies this determinant on activity is non-existent, despite any outdoor activity being influenced to some extent by meteorological conditions. In the majority of studies, the season of data collection is commonly not mentioned (e.g. Burdette and Whitaker, 2004, Librett et al., 2007, McGinn et al., 2007, Pendola and Gen, 2007). Some studies, do however note the timing of data collection due to external obligations, but do not comment on how this choice affected the data collection (e.g. Mackett et al., 2007b). In another example, the authors highlight that the study took place “in March/April of 2002, which is autumn in Australia.” (Hume et al., 2005: 6). Despite this one sentence, the season in which the data was collected was never mentioned again in this article. No relationship between seasonal effect, weather conditions and physical activity was explored. In general, almost no attention has been paid to weather or seasonal effects on the activities of children, compared to the large number of studies interested in children’s outdoor activities (Børrestad et al., 2011, Humpel et al., 2004, Salmon et al., 2003, Shephard and Aoyagi, 2009). The same can be said of the children’s geographies literature introduced in the first chapter. Exceptions are studies focusing on children’s transport which do take seasonality into account (Ross, 2007, Walker et al., 2009).

Studies attending to seasonal and weather conditions have established that levels of physical activity are higher in spring and summer compared to autumn and winter (Castonguay and Jutras, 2010, Kristensen et al., 2008, Loucaides et al., 2004, Plasqui and Westerterp, 2004, Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009), but the majority of studies focus on adults or adolescents (Badland et al., 2011b, Bélanger et al., 2009, Dannenberg et al., 1989, Plasqui and Westerterp, 2004,
Togo et al., 2005, Uitenbroek, 1993). These Northern Hemisphere studies also show that people tend to be more active in July/August and less active in the winter months. Drawing on Haggarty et al. (1994), these findings can be linked to shorter days and unpleasant weather conditions in winter. Similarly, Burdette et al. (2004) showed that the time preschool children spend outdoors decreases during winter. Transferring these findings to a more general level: the decrease of children’s physical activity during winter might be – according to Tucker & Gilliland (2007)- correlated to the school curriculum with long school holidays during summer and therefore more free time to play outside. However, a study conducted in Texas showed that children were less active in summer which might be linked to oppressively high temperatures and humidity in that part of North America (Baranowski et al., 1993). Another study conducted by Broderson et al. (2005) came to the same conclusion: 11 and 12 year old boys were less active during the hotter months of the year. In contrast, Silva et al. (2011) found that boys aged 10-13 years were more active in the Portuguese summer, while girls had higher activity levels in winter relative to their male counter parts. Participants in other studies note that rainy days and cold temperatures are barriers to participation in physical activity (Currie and Develin, 2002, Tappe et al., 1989, Titze et al., 2008). For example, Broderson et al. (2005) showed that girls were less active on wetter days, while boys’ activity only declined on colder days. However, the authors did not offer an explanation for this phenomenon. In contrast, Gordon-Larsen et al. (2000) highlighted that there was no relationship revealed between seasons and self-reported physical activity among adolescences. Sirad et al. (2005) came to a similar conclusion, because they could not find a relationship between weather conditions and walking and cycling to school among elementary school students. However, seasonal effects might have been underestimated in these studies. Indeed, Gordon-Larsen et al. (2000) collected their data from April to December, which excludes the most extreme winter months in the northern hemisphere. Nonetheless, studies examining children’s seasonal commuting habits have revealed variations in active travel both in countries with moderate and extreme temperature variations (Børrestad et al., 2011, Fyhri and Hjorthol, Sirard et al., 2005). In conclusion, weather and climatic conditions are mostly viewed as barrier both in the warmer summer month and in the colder or rainier winter seasons. The majority of these studies have been conducted in semi-urban and rural environments and less attention has been paid to the degree of residential intensification or geographical location.

Too few studies have been conducted to show differences in diverse climatic zones within countries such as Canada, US and Australia. Moreover, in European countries where there is less variation in climatic zones within the country, variables such as rural-urban settings or coastal and alpine settings have less explicitly been explored (Sandercock et al., 2010,
These gaps in the existing literature call for a more comprehensive and systematic investigation of how physical activity, play and seasonal effects are related. This is especially so as it seems “that researchers located in countries [or places] with consistently warm and pleasant climates are not studying the influence of weather on physical activity because it is not a deterring factor” (Tucker and Gilliland, 2007: 919). But are the seasons in Auckland really not a deterrent or are their influence something everyone simply assumes? How do the two contrasting seasons of winter and summer in New Zealand affect the physical activity behaviour of children? The seasons might not be so much different in temperature as for example in the US or Europe, but the precipitation is higher in winter than in summer (see Chapter 6). Moreover, the high UV radiation in the summer might also be a barrier for outdoor play, through adult discouragement of sun exposure (Collins et al., 2006). Kiwis often see themselves as outdoor people, but are Aucklanders really all-year-round outdoor people? What shapes their practices of engagement in outdoor activities in summer and winter? To build the foundation for answering these questions, I turn now to reflect on the ‘new geographies of climatic accommodation’ (Hitchings, 2010) as little room has been offered in activity literature for participants to explain the complex nature of outdoor play in and between seasons.

Seasonality and weather conditions influence the experience of activities within diverse settings beyond the simple cause effect arrangement implied by many physical activity studies as discussed. However this connection has (until recently) been widely neglected. While the shaping of physical landscapes over time is well connected with climatic conditions in geomorphic literature (e.g. Smithson et al., 2008, Strahler and Strahler, 2005), climate and weather conditions are mostly absent when researchers discuss the contemporary experience of these landscapes. Indeed, studying climate effects (weather, seasonality, climate change) has been commonly divorced from wider cultural experiences (Brace and Geoghegan, 2011, Hulme, 2008, Jancovik and Barboza, 2009b). Indeed, Ingold (2008: 1802) claims that too much attention had been devoted to the “solid forms of the landscape” leading to a “virtual absence” of climatic and weather influences on the “philosophical debates about the nature and constitution of the environment”. Consequently, some researchers recently (re)turned to the inclusion of weather and climatic conditions on experiencing environments elucidating collective practices and routine forms of adaptation.

The term ‘kiwi’ is used as a self-reference of people from New Zealand.

Reasons for the widespread negligence of the everyday experiences of local climate in the developed world is firstly attributed to the aim to avoid any form of environmental determinism and its limited and negative political applications especially in the first half of the 20th century (Rayner, 2009, Skaggs, 2004). Nonetheless, especially discussions based on climatic determinism are still popular (see for example Diamond, 2005, Lovelock, 2006). Secondly, the “natural” world has been until recently studied in very particular aspects under the umbrella of cultural or social geography where “climatic feature such as weather may have been literally too nebulous to be contained within frameworks that centred on encounters with physically bounded entities” (Hitchings, 2010: 285, Ingold, 2008, McCormack, 2008). Thirdly, in times of limited funds and the demand for fast research outputs awaiting particular climatic conditions requires patience and commitment.
towards diverse climatic conditions within different settings. Under the umbrella of “new geographies of climatic accommodation” Hitchings (2010: 285f) calls for research on the “subjective experiences and personal management” of seasonality. Studies which embed themselves into this new research focus not only shed some light on the limited debate on climate change and adaptation strategies, but also enrich the discussion on the experienced physicality of everyday life (Cresswell, 2003, Demeritt, 2009, Head, 2010, Latham and McCormack, 2004).

McCormack (2008), for example, draws attention to atmospheric space in meteorological and affective terms with the aim of transcending the current ‘materialities’ of contemporary cultural geographical debates through ‘following’ a hydrogen-filled balloon expedition in the last century. In contrast, Jankovic and Barboza (2009b) compiled a collection of studies on the relationships between weather, local knowledge and everyday life. This collection of largely historical accounts drew attention to the diverse aspects of “living in” and “against” the weather opening up debates for engaging with aspects of weather in more nuanced ways (Jancovik and Barboza, 2009a: 18). The disciplines of climatology and meteorology have so far mostly neglected that people experience and feel the scientific entities commonly dealt with in these disciplines differently in their everyday life. For example, Lüdecke (2009) discusses how the foehn phenomenon in Munich has been socially constructed over time and still shapes local identities. Indeed, studies in this collection highlight the need to discuss the ‘lived’ identity of weather and climate endowed with diverse meanings and practices ranging from national characters to ones impacting on health and well-being in the widest sense. By way of example, Jancovik (2009) discursively unpacks the ‘seasonlessness’ implied by current advertising in the outdoor garment industry. He draws attention to the underlying assumption of these campaigns that by wearing the ‘right’ clothing the “customer becomes a weather-transcendent self”, which in turn changes the empathies towards the outdoors affecting perceptions of extreme weather conditions and also risk (Jancovik, 2009: 175). Outdoor activities are viewed (at least from the perspective of some social or economic groups) as safer, more comfortable and more importantly, independent of inclement weather conditions than in previous times.

Other studies pay more explicit attention to the normative and structuring aspects of seasonality and the inherent resulting practices, which can be widely summarised under the heading of climate and environmental change. A Canadian study, for instance, revealed how inclement weather constrains care-seeking behaviour (Skinner et al., 2009). On the one

35 One exception is the biometeorological approach. However, instead of the qualitative subjectivities, researchers mainly approach the subjective experience of, for example humidity and temperature variation, traditionally. They draw on the established methods and “scientifically” grounded approaches such as large scale surveys (e.g. Jendritzky et al., 1990, Nikolopoulou and Lykoudis, 2006, Tsellou et al., 2010).
hand, the authors focus on the neglect of climatic aspects in current care and caregiving policy among the research community and on the other hand they highlight the need to include these aspects of weather-related challenges and seasonal conditions related to care into the burgeoning debates on the health implications of environmental change. In a UK project, Hitchings (2010) studied how city workers in London experience seasons in times of climatically controlled indoor environments, questioning the sustainability and social well-being implications of current practices for future generations. Likewise, Day and Hitchings (2011) researched British older people’s practices and underpinning rationales for keeping warm during the winter months. They concluded that dynamics in social and cultural norms often led to unanticipated outcomes in relation to the stigmatisation of older people. Therefore the spaces older people inhabit should not simply be conceptualised as material structures, but rather the symbolic meanings of well-being and identity formation in relation to these resulting practices should also be considered.

Despite the diverse topics and approaches of these foregoing studies, this new turn in geography to engage with placed climatic practices remains in its infancy. These beginnings are helpful in theoretically rethinking climate, weather and everyday life in different seasons and enrich current debates. They contribute to a critical understanding of practices culturally shaped by these conditions. These ‘natural’ conditions (e.g. temperature, precipitation, humidity) structuring landscapes and their herein resulting cultural practices affect how diverse activities taking place within these settings are perceived and evaluated (Bourdieu, 1990c, Douglas, 1968, Ingold, 2007, Lorimer, 2006). Inspired by these studies, which emphasise the placed practices in relation to climatic conditions, I conceptualise localised outdoor play as one form of cultural practice in which seasonality and (inclement) weather shape the (non)participation and more importantly contribute to the (non)appreciation and enjoyment of spending time outdoors. As a result, these practices contribute to the formation of ‘obesogenic landscapes’, but also need to be embedded in wider socio-cultural structures and practices.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I reviewed the main debates and perspectives that broadly informed the ‘bigger picture’ for expanding the understanding of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. In a first step I mapped out the scholarly discussions in the field of physical activity and children’s geographies. I argued for a deeper intertwining of these disciplines as they, in combination, can improve understandings of the creation of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Physical activity researchers are well placed to reveal where and when activities are taking place; they are able to map out patterns of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. However, they are unable to unpack
the deeper meaning of activities taking place in these settings as well as societal influences (re)shaping these patterns. Consequently, I argued that a turn to the social sciences to find explanation for (in)activity under the umbrella of the structure-agency debate may be a useful approach. This allows analysing the structures in which activities are taking place, but leaves enough room to acknowledge that individuals engage with these structures in different ways depending not only on their socialising, but also on the norms and rules around prevailing (non)activity in these environments. In other words, children’s structured physical activity and free play are more than simply context-dependent behaviours rationally chosen by children and their parents.

Moving from the fact that a placed socio-theoretic approach is overdue to inform understandings of ‘obesogenic landscapes’, I identified two aspects of research which I attempt to address in more depth in the thesis. First, regarding adults, walkable and intensified neighbourhoods are deemed healthier if they foster active transport. But impacts of this more sustainable living ideology of new urbanism for children’s place and activity experiences are still seldom investigated. Therefore, one way to develop more knowledge about the influence that urban design has on children’s activity patterns and their experiences is to compare suburban environments, which are increasingly made more compact through in-fill housing, and children growing up in high-rise apartment complexes. Secondly, I argue for the inclusion of weather and climatic conditions as an important aspect shaping ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Adding collective practices and subjective experiences as well as personal management of diverse conditions and seasons may offer us a fuller picture of the determinants of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Children alter and transform their play landscapes to suit their personal needs, but this takes place in the context of prevailing cultural practices and societal rules. There is a need to understand more deeply how certain environments, conditions and subjectivities can foster or constrain children’s active play beyond the sheer absence of (non)activity.

In the next chapter I develop the theoretical and conceptual approach I draw on for systematically unpacking the structure-agency complexities within ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Bourdieusian thinking combined with the affordance theory informs my theoretical and conceptual approach to how seasonal perceptions, experiences and evaluations in, and of, certain settings structure ‘obesogenic landscapes’ in relation to families’ dispositions, affinities and tastes.
Chapter 3 A conceptual framework for understanding children’s seasonal outdoor play: Bourdieu and affordances

In this chapter I respond to the limitations introduced in the previous chapter by embedding this thesis within Bourdieu's theoretical approach, which I complement with affordance theory. Current approaches utilised to reveal the patterns of 'obesogenic environments' in the behavioural sciences are unable to explore the deeper meaning of (in)activity in children. Constrained by an environmental determinism, they largely neglect the societal influences, including the norms and rules, (re)shaping the patterns of (in)activity (play). In contrast, children's geographers aim to account for the 'nitty gritty' of everyday life and societal patterns. By mutually intertwining both research traditions, this thesis responds to the advice of Blacksher and Lovasi (2012: 177) to attend to "both the structural and agential dimensions of social reality [for a] place-focused" analysis of play to reveal families' 'obesogenic landscapes'. Indeed, I contend that a Bourdieusian approach is able to explore the structure-agency interplay and can provide a nuanced and place-based view on the complex social and environmental determinants shaping outdoor play in a (highly walkable) urban environment, when combined with the affordance theory. This Gibsonian approach allows us to move away from the notion that physical environments are a simple backdrop in which activities occur and focuses on how the functionalities of environments are (re)defined by the individual child.

A combined Gibsonian and Bourdieusian approach allows us to view the (non)actualisation of (seasonal) affordances as a complex amalgamation of perceptions, experiences and evaluations. These evaluations are based on families' dispositions, affinities and tastes in relation to the structuring structures of (social and physical) 'obesogenic landscapes'. In this chapter I introduce Bourdieu's theory of practice and then illustrate how this can be

The "structure of the space of positions which result from the whole history of the field, when perceived by agents conditioned in their dispositions by the demands of that structure, appears to them as a space of possibles capable of orienteering their expectations and their projects by its demands and even of determining them, negatively at least, by its constraints, so favouring actions that tend to contribute to the development of a more complex structure." (Bourdieu, 2000: 116)
combined with the affordance theory to account for the structural and agential dimensions of the social reality in children’s outdoor play. I begin by briefly situating his key concepts of field, capital and habitus, which build the foundation for discussing the ‘space and place’ aspect in his theory. In a last step I introduce affordance theory in more detail and argue that complementing both enrich each other.

Bourdieu’s key concepts: field, capital and habitus

Until the turn of the millennium, Bourdieu’s work has primarily influenced Anglo-American studies in the fields of anthropology, educational research or cultural studies while in other disciplines – among them geography – his theory has either been ignored, applied partially or only touched upon (Bridge, 2004, Popay et al., 2003, Setten, 2009). Since Harvey (1987, 1989), Gregory (1994) and Pile and Thrift (1995) began to engage with Bourdieu’s approach, geographers have become aware of his concepts and its potential contribution to an improved understanding of social reality in relation to its intrinsic spatiality. However, as Painter (2000: 246) highlights “Bourdieu is one of those social theorists whom geographers cite frequently, but rarely engage with in any depth.”

My aim in engaging with Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts in this research context is the potential they offer to provide a new perspective on children’s seasonal outdoor play. Bridge (2001), for example values the collection and analysis of data through a Bourdieusian perspective as it allows the researcher not only to critically reflect on the design of a study, but also on his/her positionality, of being reflexive in, and during, the theoretical analysis of empirical findings. Bourdieu calls this approach to positionality his ‘methodological principles’, which combine his research method with his theoretical concepts (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007, Fries, 2009). While I discuss his ‘methodological principles’ in Chapter 4 in more detail, I now turn my attention to the triad of field, capital and habitus.

Bourdieu introduced his key concepts in order to gain a deeper insight into how (class) practices are shaped by an interplay of structure and agency. He views these practices (actions) as a logical consequence of individuals’ or families’ endowment with capital (e.g. social, economic), their habitus (e.g. dispositions, taste) and the field (e.g. play) within which these practices are carried out. Although they mutually inform each other, I am going to introduce the concepts of field, capital and habitus (somehow artificially) separately in the
following sub-sections, keeping in mind that together they can inform an improved understanding of children’s outdoor play.  

**Bourdieu’s understanding of a ‘field’**

In order to understand social phenomena or interactions between individuals, Bourdieu argues that a purely subjective engagement with verbal accounts is insufficient, as is a single structural approach; rather, he proposes that to understand social life, a focus upon the social space, or field (the term he uses) in which interactions, transactions and events occur is necessary. Such a field has its own ‘cosmos’ determined by particular (arbitrarily defined) regulations and patterns of operation; its own sets of belief in ‘appropriate’ actions, which have been developed over time (Thomson, 2008).

Bourdieu often defines this concept of field with an analogy of a game in which the inhabited positions of agents in this social space reflect their knowledge of how to play ‘the rules’ of the game, or how to use their capital endowments to pursue their desires. Hence, each field, for example he refers to economic, scientific or religious fields, underlies particular forces and power relations to define the position an agent inhabits as above or below another agent in the same field. Hence, each field has its own logic of practice, its own “conflicts and competitions” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 17). Bourdieu elaborates:

> “I define the global social place as a field […] within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field”.  
> (Bourdieu, 1998: 32)

The structure of the field demands the nature of capital requirements in order to ‘play’ successfully and improve or maintain a position, but they are limited to this field. To maintain and improve a position within such a hierarchical field, agents need to be able to fulfil a ‘practical mastery’ of the ‘conflicts and competitions’ inherent in a field and their capital needs to fit with the requirements of a field (Bourdieu, 1989, 2000). Capitals structure a field, but can also be a product of, a specific field. They mirror the power structures within a field. Agents can signal and sustain their field specific position through their capital. However, within the boundaries of a field, agents have some freedom to creatively utilise diverse strategies for improving their position (Bourdieu et al., 1999, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007). The prize, the desired ‘profit’, for successfully playing the game is capital

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36 I abandon the seasonal view in this section and only turn to it where I see a need to distinguish between summer and winter. Seasonal aspects are simply a further component inscribed in families’ habitus and influence how they see the world. However, the following sections primarily intend to outline Bourdieu’s concepts.

37 Boundaries of fields can be blurred and are (re)negotiated by the agents within each field and when new ones join a field. It is a permanent social struggle of (re)defining positions (Thomson, 2008).
accumulation, but the process, the arriving on this stage, is viewed as social struggle. Bourdieu notes:

“These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situations in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possessions commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relations to other positions.” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 97)

Diverse agents compete for (limited) capital, but inhabit different positions within the field, which leads to the fact that ‘clusters’ of similar positions develop their own particularities to distinguish themselves from others (Bourdieu, 1984). Agents with ‘more’ power define the knowledge that is “valued, sanctioned and rewarded” (Crossley, 2008: 96). Hence, these fields are not static. They are the result of many contestations of position-taking and distinction, but the chance of success rises the more familiar one is with the rules played in a game in relation to one’s capital; such a race to success indicates “a historical dynamism and malleability that avoids the inflexible determinism of classical structuralism” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 18). Thus, the locating of agents within a social field depends not only on their contemporary habitus and capital, but also on the socio-historic context in which this positioning takes place and the circumstances under which the knowledge had been structured over time (Hillier and Rooksby, 2002b). Therefore, it is important to map a field not only through the capitals at stake, but also through past economic, cultural and physical structures. They build the arena under which current social struggles are contested. In other words, fields are the site and product of past, present and future ‘conflicts and competitions’ (Bourdieu, 1989).

Accordingly, I view the field of ‘play’ as a site and product of struggle. The historical embedding, for example of the changing value of play, is important to understand the contemporary structures shaping urban children’s seasonal outdoor play. I conceptualise further that in this present field of ‘play’, agents occupying different positions are endowed with diverse capital assets and pursue their own interests, but within the rules and norms which determine the access to outdoor play, which I view from two perspectives. First, in relation to the field as a whole, these norms and rules define how childhood, hence suitable child activities, are generally viewed. Second, locality and seasonal-specific sets of beliefs characterise children’s ‘appropriate’ outdoor play in the suburb and central city, thus I view these practices as a sub-field of specific patterns derived from its physical and social

38 Bourdieu (1984) shows in Distinction that what people do, think or how they feel in and about social situations reflects their position in a field in a similar manner as the furniture they own, how they design their leisure time and so forth structures their view on the worlds. The main aim is to distinguish oneself from others; to be placed in a better position. By way of example, rich people used to play tennis, while poorer people favoured soccer.
localisation. In combination, these rules and norms shape the field of children’s outdoor play and lead to a particular logic of practices in localities and across seasons.

**Symbolic capital: structuring the ‘field of play’**

Bourdieu’s use of the term capital is distinctive. He transcends the notion implied through economic theory and views capital in a broader sense. Thus, capital has to be seen beyond the sheer material assets and include embodied forms such as capabilities, knowledge and taste (Bourdieu, 1986, Hinde and Dixon, 2007). These ‘sets of symbolic capital’ determine agents’ positions within a field, but are unique and field specific. They can be transformed and exchanged within and across fields dependent on the ‘feel’ for its games, which is based on the positions of agents and for example reflected in the “concealed intergenerational processes that serve to reproduce socio-economic advantage, disadvantage and privilege” (Holt, 2008: 234). Capital endowment structures not only the power within a field, but also the interests and attitudes an agent possesses (habitus), which in turn affects how actors react when confronted with different social situations (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007). The actors with a comparable capital to the dominant patterns in a field are commonly placed better, convey their interest successfully and in turn reproduce inequalities (Bourdieu, 1984, Williams, 1995). Thus, Bourdieu’s capital is commonly understood from two perspectives. First, the capitals of some and not other groups are arbitrarily deemed more valuable conferring social advantage. Second, they can be understood in terms of “qualitative differences in forms and consciousness within different social groups” (Moore, 2008: 102). Nonetheless, an affiliation with a group does not automatically translate into habitus. Agents do not share and transfer symbolic capital homogeneously.

Symbolic capital has to be seen as a resource agents accrue during their life course. They use these resources in order to claim or maintain positions. However, such an accumulation does not happen according to specific rules or with ease; “sets of symbolic capital’ vary between agents and can consist, among many, of economic, cultural, or social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital matches capital in the traditional economic sense: material wealth. It reflects the most easily measurable capital, while other forms of capital have a more qualitative, open-ended flavour (Hinde and Dixon, 2007). For example, cultural capital is often seen as knowledge or skills acquired through education and represented through sanctioned qualifications. However, it also encompasses a general ‘sense’ for the social reality of a specific position, an affinity for particular practices which derive from the knowledge encountered in, tastes for, and appreciation of, cultural institutions such as museums, libraries, concerts. Thus, it consists of three components: the objectified (artwork), dispositions and attitudes (knowledge of ‘rules of the game’) reflected in the habitus and
embodied as taste or a cultivated gaze, which lets, for example the viewing of a painting in a gallery appear ‘natural’ and ‘effortless’ (Bourdieu, 1984, Moore, 2008). Likewise, social capital refers to resources which are possessed due to membership in a specific group, such as elite clubs, but in principle it applies to all social networks. Social capital is created through interaction. In Bourdieu’s words (1986: 248), social capital “provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various sense of the world”. For example, seeing, meeting and interacting with neighbours on a casual basis creates a sense of familiarity and trust, which builds the pre-condition for transferring and gaining other sources of symbolic capital (Carpiano, 2006, Weller and Bruegel, 2009). Thus, social capital needs to be seen in relation to the acquisition of other ‘sets of capital’ (Morrow, 1999).

Capital in the context of outdoor play needs to be understood not only in the endowment of economic capital which allows families to participate, for example, in recreational sports or provides them with the possibility to buy desired toys (Bourdieu, 1990d). It also needs to be conceptualised in terms of physical capital, or, with differing connotations, biomedical capital (Potvin, 2011) or body capital (Antoninetti and Garrett, 2012). I understand physical capital as a resource or capability to carry out certain play activities in relation to the physical composition of a body such as climbing a tree (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Depending on children’s capabilities, their position in the field differs and they have varying success in fulfilling their desired play. For example, not every child is able to negotiate a jungle gym in the intended way. Notions of physical capital, however, do not offer insights into children’s creativity to play with such equipment. For this reason, affordance theory becomes important, to which I turn below. Similarly, social capital, for example, in the form of friendship networks, or ‘in loco parentis’, is seen as a resource to encourage participation in outdoor play. While the common view is that children develop their networks through parental ones, I follow a more recent trend, which explores and emphasises the importance of children’s own social networks that they develop without parental guidance when independently playing outdoors (Weller and Bruegel, 2009, Wood, 2010). In my conceptualisation I follow Schaefer-McDaniel (2004) as she proposes a conceptual framing, which incorporates place-specific contexts, but viewed through the lens of children. She proposes to conceptualise social capital as a combination of interaction and sociability, trust and reciprocity and place attachment. I turn to this aspect in more detail in the last part of this chapter.

Habitus: transcending the individual actor

Habitus serves as the classificatory basis for individual and collective practice, while reproducing the structures (social and physical aspects) from which it is derived; it is the
“mediating link between objective social structures and individual actors” (Painter, 2000: 242), with which Bourdieu attempts to transcend the structure-agency dichotomy.

Habitus can be understood as a partially, unconsciously developed embodied disposition (e.g. norms, patterns of behaviour) through which the world is perceived, experienced, evaluated, felt, shaped and acted upon (Bourdieu, 2005, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007).

“[It is] a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations” (Bourdieu, 1990c: 53)

Habitus is bounded and constructed within the limits of personal experiences (past), socialisation process and the historical condition of its production (history); thus, habitus is not static and evolves and classifies itself as a thinking tool that classifies not only past, present and future, but also objective and subjective structures together (Bourdieu, 2000, Lizardo, 2004, Maton, 2008). Hence, Creswell (2002: 381) contends that “the habitus represents the internalisation of the social order, which in turn reproduces the social order”. Such a view explains patterns not only across a field, but also between parents and children.

These structures are inscribed in bodies and “schemata of perception, appreciation, and action” and move beyond the conscious sphere of everyday life (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 16); they ease the mastering of the complexities of the world as agents can draw unconsciously on the ‘right rationale’ for acting. As Bourdieu and Wacquant explain:

“the mental and bodily schemata that function as symbolic templates for the practical activities – conduct, thoughts, feelings, and judgements – of social agents. Social facts are objects which are also the object of knowledge within reality itself because human beings make meaningful the world which makes them” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 7)

Although the life trajectories of individuals are unique within groups of the same habitus, they resemble each other as determined by the wider processes in the field (Maton, 2008). To understand the underlying regularities a view of the practical logic of agents is warranted. The previously introduced ‘feel for the game’ is a feel for the regularities appropriate to the habitus, which embody this ‘social game’ and turn it into ‘second nature’ (a pre-reflexive action). It is an immanent law, which is learned by the actors through an internalisation of objective structures. It is how individuals embody their social class. Put another way, forms of dispositions that mark social distance and social position.

The habitus concept is useful for the analysis of outdoor play from three perspectives. First, through the habitus, we can see that social agents’ experiences are determined by wider

39 Habitus is not the fate that some people read into it. “Being the product of history, it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures. It is durable but not eternal.” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 133)
societal structures while agents also have the power, within the limits of their capital assets, to change these structures. This allows me to discuss how children both reproduce and transform their play environments for their own needs. Second, as the habitus is bounded within personal experiences and socialisation processes, I can take the historical conditions of its production, the parental habitus in relation to children’s outdoor play experiences, into account. I can also consider the influence that friends (socialisation processes) have in shaping children’s contemporary, placed, play experiences. Third, the habitus frames specific perceptions of the world, which are related to the ‘play classes’ to which families belong. Such a view enables me to focus on social groups and society in general instead of the individual. It takes the discussion back to the aspects introduced in the ‘field’ section (e.g. changing value of play, location specific norms, rules of play) and further, allows me to apply a Bourdieusian lens to the notion of ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

Habitus serves as a disposition to act in a specific way and provides a conceptual framework to explain the different styles of outdoor play, various perspectives, evaluation and experiences of outdoor play in relation to a social agent’s positioning in the field. It allows me to account for the complexity of individuals’ perspectives and put these in relation to the wider structures shaping these everyday experiences. I elaborate this under the ‘spaces of points of view’ later on. In the next section I account for Bourdieu’s approach to social and physical space and describe how the affordance theory can complement Bourdieu’s interdependent and co-constructed trio of field, capital and habitus. First though, I examine a prevailing critique of Bourdieu in his lack of specificity in his use of space. Some geographers (Creswell, 2002, Holt, 2008, Lossau and Lippuner, 2004, Painter, 2000) accuse Bourdieu of a ‘light touch’ in regard to his understanding of space and argue that his theories cannot be well applied by geographers with a deep, critical understanding of space. This is important to include as my use of Bourdieu is socially and spatially explicit. In the following section I argue for a re-consideration of how Bourdieu’s theories can work toward gaining deeper insights of space and place.

**A Bourdieusian lens on space and place**

From a geographical perspective, the often praised and at the same time demonised spatial turn in the social sciences (Agnew, 1995, Massey et al., 1999, Thrift, 2002) also entails discussions about whether Bourdieu’s work classifies as a theory of space and place. These discussions can, in my opinion, be grouped in three streams. The first stream

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40 This issue has often been associated with the fear of loss of geography’s monopoly, the core of the discipline: the engagement with space and place (Lossau and Lippuner, 2004, Massey et al., 1999, Scholz, 1998).

41 I acknowledge this is a simplification. I am aware of the different sub-streams within this classification, but this discussion goes beyond the scope of this thesis.
comprises researchers who are often associated with disciplines other than geography and
who see in Bourdieu’s work a theory of space, or at least, in Bourdieu someone who paved
the way for the later spatial turn in the social sciences, especially in sociology (Günzel and

In the second stream, I include all researchers for whom the spatial implication of Bourdieu’s
theory is implied, but a detailed reference to the natural or built environment lacks an in-
depth elaboration. For this group space is only a metaphor for the social position of actors in
a field and in relation to each other coinciding with my introduction on Bourdieu’s concepts.
The physical locations in which the struggles for position take place are, however, peripheral
(Adkins and Skeggs, 2002, Bennett, 2009, Grenfell, 2008a, Jenkins, 1992). Thus, they are
either not interested in, or concerned about, the spatial implications inherent in Bourdieu’s
work. I argue stream one and two have not taken the full potential Bourdieu’s theorising
offers into account for enhancing our understandings of people’s (placed) social realities.

Bourdieu engraves the everyday practices (cooking, farming, eating, sleeping) into space,
for example when he reflects on the Kabyl house. He exemplifies that these spatialised
practices (in relation to the layout of the house) within a Berber family symbolises the
embodied structures of a society (Bourdieu, 1990c). Social space is inscribed in physical
space (at least partially). Thus, space and place are important for the understanding of his
theory, although he only published a handful of direct references or discussions on this
aspect and not a fully developed monograph (Bourdieu, 1990b, 1991, 1996a, 1998, 1999b,
2000). In this regard he has been taken on by researchers which I place into the third stream.

The third stream involves researchers working in a geographical tradition who have been
critical of how Bourdieu defines and constructs the roles of space and place in his work.
These critics involve calls to extend Bourdieu’s spatial framework (Holt, 2008, Painter, 2000,
Weller and Bruegel, 2009) or warn of a spatial trap embedded in his spatial understanding
(Lossau and Lippuner, 2004). Painter (2000: 255), for example, points out that although
Bourdieu uses a “spatialised vocabulary” it is not implied that he understands space and
place in the multi-facetted and nuanced ways geographers do. So what does space and
place mean in a Bourdieusian language and more specifically what would a Bourdieusian
spatial lens for understanding the social realities of children’s outdoor play look like?

Bourdieu defines space and place as a relational entity and not container space in which
social relations happen based on their own rules (Barlösius, 2006, Cresswell, 2004). Space
and place encompass in his understanding not only the physical or built environment, but

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42 Bourdieu (1990c) discusses in *The logic of practice* the traditional house of a Berber family. He discloses how the layout of
the house responds to the positions people occupy within the family hierarchy and the chores they pursue.
also the social one. The latter comes into existence through the reciprocal positioning and juxtapositioning of individuals by excluding some and through distinction from others as outlined earlier (Bourdieu, 2000). However, the social space is always the starting point for Bourdieu’s spatial thinking (Schroer, 2006).

In Bourdieu’s eyes, physical space only mirrors (at least partially) the social space as he reveals that the latter “tends to be translated, with more or less distortion, into physical space” (Bourdieu, 2000: 134). Thus, social patterns engrave themselves into the physical space, for example socio-economic inequalities in the form of residential segregation. In turn, however, such an understanding may cement the distinctive role of the physical space in producing social inequalities as he reveals in *Weight of the World* (Bourdieu, 1999b: 134). This distinction between social and socio-physical space provides opportunities when utilising a Bourdieusian spatial lens in the context of seasonal outdoor play.

Barlösius (2006), for example, emphasises three advantages in analysing the social world through a Bourdieusian spatial lens. First, using a “spatialised vocabulary” (Painter, 2000: 255) by defining a physical location or social position “relative to other sites (above, below, between, etc.) and by distance” (Bourdieu, 1999b: 124) makes use commonplace spatial thinking. Bourdieu simply states that “idea of difference, or a gap, is at the basis of the very notion of space” (Bourdieu, 1998: 6). People qualify and classify social and physical relationships and conditions in spatial terms, because both are experienced and evaluated in such a manner in the conduct of everyday life. Such a close relationship between physical and social characterisations evolves from an understanding that the physical and social world are experienced through and with our senses (Bourdieu, 1998, 1999b, 2000).

Transferring such an approach to the context of play spaces allows an evaluation in a relative sense. Children classify the quality of playgrounds in relation to a number of playgrounds they have visited. They have their favourite one, which they physically visit. However, when they compare this favourite playground to others it rates hierarchically above others. Similarly, the physical play location is also always the arena for a social space. Different social agents play together. They distinguish themselves from each other by distinctive features of their play equipment. For example, their relative perceptive view may indicate that the one with the latest bike is put in a higher (social) position in the playground than the one who rides a bike passed on from older siblings. In turn, this positioning affects how they sense their place in the ‘field’ of a playground. This aspect leads me to the second advantage: a combined analysis of the social and physical world.

This combined analysis relates back to Bourdieu’s understanding, which I briefly touched upon earlier, that the divisions and distinctions of the social space “are really and
symbolically expressed in physical space appropriated as reified social space” (Bourdieu, 2000: 134). Such an understanding implies that the physical space is constructed in the same terms as the social space. It simply translates the positions occupied in social space into the physical space. By way of example, Gilliland et al. (2011) highlight that higher quality playgrounds tend to be located in higher income areas.

The third point Barlösius (2006) offers for the analysis of the social in spatial terms is that such an approach allows a relational analysis, which is also the core of Bourdieu’s thinking. He simply summarises it as “the real is relational” (Bourdieu, 1998: 3). This means that positions occupied in the social world can only be understood as a reciprocal process, a relational one, driven by distinction as introduced earlier. However, the field in which these struggles for existence appear, is viewed both as a site and process of struggle. Bourdieu proposes that a relational approach is able to associate the hidden context contributing to contemporary patterns in a field (Bourdieu et al., 1999, Schroer, 2006). Often reasons for current patterns (e.g. play patterns) can only be found non-locally through un-masking the structures determining them. By drawing on Massey (2005) Bourdieu’s approach can be further enriched in this regard. She highlights that not only the physical and social space need to be seen in relation to each other, but that the entire experiencing of space is a result of human relationships and interactions. To understand the occurrence of local patterns such as street violence in French banlieus (Bourdieu et al., 1999) or diminishing outdoor play for children in apartments in Auckland it is therefore necessary to discuss current circumstances as an outcome of human relationships and interactions locally, but their historical genesis. For understanding the structures and events leading to these contemporary patterns a socio-historic approach is warranted that takes into account the local and non-local human relationships and structures over time (Bourdieu, 1985, 1998, Crossley, 2008, Fries, 2009).

The diminishing time children spend outdoors is used to illustrate how my interpretation of Bourdieu is applied. I argue that this cannot be simply put down to a reduction in the local availability of children’s play spaces. Rather, diminishing outdoor time for children should be understood in the context of wider social discourses such as the cultural construction of a high quality childhood and changing nature of urban life. Part of this construction is, for example, the time allocated to formal learning versus play and related to the later are political

43 I am aware of the complexities such an understanding implies, especially lethargy of the physical space to a changing social space. Thus, for example the urban design of a city, which is derived over a long time, cannot easily be changed. The old lollipop neighbourhoods are built and face difficulties in adjusting their design to the new urbanist ideologies and it takes time to build new neighbourhoods based on these premises. In a similar way has to be the approach viewed that such an understanding mainly takes the built environment into account and neglects natural environments.

44 Although not specifically referring to Bourdieu’s relational approach, Cummins et al. (2007) argue, along the same lines, that a substantialist thinking in neighbourhood health research masks the mutually and reinforcing relationship between people and place and therefore the false dualism of context and composition should be avoided.
Bourdieu and affordances

decisions that shape the intensification of urban areas or contribute to urban sprawl. As these examples illustrate local outdoor play is shaped by diverse struggles which are an outcome of political, cultural or historical decisions. Such a conceptualisation links back to the argument I pursued in the literature review. To understand 'obesogenic landscapes' a place-based approach that accounts for the structure-agent interplay is warranted. Children in their localities are determined not only by the structures physically present or absent, but also by the institutionalisation of childhood or outdoor play. However, they have, depending on their dispositions and capital, the possibility to shape and transform their play spaces (within the boundaries of the wider socio-historic or cultural structures).

These three aspects outline the advantages of a spatialised vocabulary, and Bourdieu's ideas associated with them, for presenting a simultaneous discussion of physical and social space. Locational, societal and historical aspects are all inscribed in families’ seasonal logic of practice of outdoor play. Hence, the space they inhabit, their localisation, but also their space of points of view (habitus) are all important to consider when unpacking seasonal outdoor play practices in Auckland. I discuss the influences of the physical location and families' points of view on outdoor playing practices in more detail in the following section. In conceptualising the social and physical spaces, I have been mainly inspired by (and thus my presentation is based on) Barlösius (2006), Fogle (2011), Sakdapolrak (2010) as well as Hillier’s and Roosky’s (2002a) edited collection.45

The inhabited or appropriated space

Bourdieu (1999b: 123) defines the appropriated physical space as absolute and relational. Absolute as the “point of physical space where an agent or thing is situated”, a localisation, and relational as a position, “a rank, in an order” entailing the symbolic meaning of a location.46 For example, Auckland’s suburb Parnell is seen as a suburb for wealthy people compared to Beach Haven, which has a stigma of drug dealing and gangs. The meaning of this differentiation comes only into play through the reciprocal relationship between both locations; their positioning against each other, which is also reflected in the societal positions of the agents inhabiting these physical locations. In a society any space (social and physical) expresses social distances and hierarchies. The inhabited physical space is the distorted social space and serves as an arena for its symbolisation in a physical site (Schroer, 2005, 45

Most researchers analyse a third space: the space of social positions (Bourdieu, 1984, 1985). In this study I account for this space under the inhabited space as this one can only be understood in relation to the social space. Given the sample size of my study I am not able to account for a positioning of families into social space with the rigour of a Bourdieusian sense.

Reed-Danahay (2005) calls attention to the difficulties in translating Bourdieu's ideas on space and place to English. The translator of Weight of the World decides to use the term “site” for “lieu”, which she, however, sees closer related to “place”. I therefore, decided to use both space and place at the same time and make distinctions where I deem them necessary to align with a geographical approach to a Bourdieusian spatial lens.
In Bourdieu's eyes a social distinction always entails a spatial distinction literally and symbolically, absolute and relational (Barlösius, 2006, Fogle, 2011). Social and physical space are two reciprocal entities and social agents aggregate a position in physical and social space (Bourdieu, 2000).

I also conceptualise the neighbourhoods in which participants reside in this twofold manner. On one hand, neighbourhoods represent a tangible physical space, a location in the geographical sense with all built and natural features constituting an area such as parks, playground, high or low density housing or street patterns. On the other hand, neighbourhoods connote different socio-cultural practices. Neighbourhood can be understood as a social space in which people from different cultures and different social positions come together to carry out their daily life. They have a position-specific perception of their neighbourhood determining the way they evaluate and bring meaning to the physical and social aspects of their neighbourhood.

The capital social agents possess allows them to dominate space by occupying, or as Bourdieu calls it, appropriating public and private goods within that space materially or symbolically (Bourdieu, 1999b). The possession of desired and defining capital, put in Bourdieu’s (1999b: 127) words the “richness in capital”, allows the distinction from undesirable persons and goods while accomplishing proximity to desirable persons and goods. Such proximity reduces in turn necessary expenses (e.g. time) by making use of the benefits of proximity when utilising these desired persons and goods (Bourdieu, 1991). Consequently, these sites of reified social space foster spatial profits: ‘profits of localisation’, ‘profits of position or of rank’ and ‘profits of occupation’, which in turn represent the struggles at stake (Sakdapolrak, 2010, Schroer, 2006).

‘Profits of localisation’ are gained through income yielded by the proximity of rare and desirable agents and goods (e.g. access to particular schools, sporting institutions or high quality play spaces) and through ‘profits of position or of ‘rank’ (such as a prestigious address) indicating direct access to a desired play space such as a beach or playground. The latter depicts a unique case as it represents symbolic profits of distinction, whereas ‘profits of occupation or congestion’ are captured in the possession of a physical space (extensive gardens to play in or a small balcony in a central city apartment). Profits of congestion are a cynical way of describing the social reality of those deprived of the necessary capital as “greater or lesser ostentation in the consumption of space [is] one of the forms par excellence for displaying power” (Bourdieu, 1999b: 124). These displayed powers, manifested in profits of occupation, are managed and classified as “rise or decline, entry (inclusion) or exit (exclusion)” (Bourdieu, 1999b: 12) bringing social agents together or
distancing them in relation to the most valued dispositions. Thus, living in a low-income area may affect residents not only on the physical sense (sticking with the most undesirable persons or goods), but also in the symbolic sense (negative reputation of an area) impacting on how residents see and are seen by social agents less deprived of capital (Bourdieu, 1999b). Bourdieu (1999b: 129) explains the “stigmatised area symbolically degrades its inhabitants, who in return, symbolically degrade it”. Indeed, the ‘other’ became a negative externality (Skelton and Valentine, 1998, Smith et al., 2010). This may have a direct impact on their capital assets.

The fashionable neighbourhood provides an arena for strengthening capitals in the sense of a club effect (excluding the ones without desired attributes) through a mutual agreement that all inhabitants partake in the capital “accumulated by the inhabitants as a whole” (Bourdieu, 1999b: 129). In contrast, the stigmatised neighbourhood is, unlike the active exclusion of undesirable people in fashionable neighbourhoods, characterised by the inclusion of all undesirable people (who only hold in common their excommunication) who do not have the necessary assets to compete in the social game successfully contributing to a ‘ghettoisation’ of this area (Bourdieu, 1991).

Thinking about spatial profits in relation to outdoor play allows me to take into account the unique geographical conditions (e.g. existence or absence of natural settings, formal play spaces, land-use mix etc.), the localisation, but also neighbourhoods’ reputations (e.g. an appropriate place for raising children). It further allows the discussion of how parents and children perceive and evaluate their experiences within these spaces, how they feel about their available play spaces and their neighbourhood in general. Physical (e.g. built environmental factors) and social processes (field, capital, habitus) contribute to the evaluation of these spaces, because agents perceive and evaluate the same play environment differently, based on their dispositions, and also dependent on what is available. Thus, it allows me to analyse the physical and social space simultaneously without artificial distinctions. It also allows me to bridge the aggregated physical space with the subjective space of points of view.

The space of points of view

The habitus creates the space of points of view. Consequently, the reality of the social world is perceived, experienced and evaluated by each social agent in different ways that

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47 These complex sets of profits are in the following parts not followed up in their depth. Rather, I view them under the umbrella of ‘profits of localisation’ to refer to the locality aspect immanent in their definitions.

48 Bourdieu also refers to this conceptualisation as the space of lifestyle or the space of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984, 1998, 1999c).
are related to their social position as introduced earlier (Barlösius, 2006, Bourdieu, 2000, Fogle, 2011). Bourdieu’s (1999c) aim in deriving the space of points of view is to understand and provide an arena for the complex and multi-layered dimensions of the same social realities, which are different and sometimes irreconcilable between groups and individuals. Bourdieu is interested in the multiple perspectives of individuals and between individuals and offers them an opportunity to ‘explain themselves’ (Bourdieu, 1999c). By focusing on the space of points of view I can in this study account for the multi-layered perspectives of participants and reveal why the same activity or same public open space is evaluated differently within and across neighbourhoods and seasonality. However, in this regard I as the researcher need to be capable of mentally putting myself in their place without taking their place (Bourdieu, 1996b). Such position taking makes play opportunities and constraints in their neighbourhood visible, but accounts for multi-layered dimensions of the same social realities voiced by families themselves. In doing so, I follow Bourdieu’s social constructionist position and his call for reflexivity about the data gathered (see also Chapter 4).

An analysis of the points of view is therefore also an analysis in social agent’s own words and classifications. By bringing parents and children’s own points of view in perspective allows me to describe, discuss and understand their seeing of the world in relation to their social position; in relation to their own understanding of themselves and the world. It also allows me to analyse their points of view as the outcome of a specific socio-historic and localised perspective on an individual level. Parental dispositions become inscribed in children’s dispositions, yet are adjusted to the contemporary circumstances of their place-based childhood. Through the space of points of view, I as a researcher can render each parent’s or child’s logic of practice of outdoor play in summer and winter. However, these points of view need to be analysed within specific spatial and temporal contexts to be able to understand the evaluation of the inhabited space and its ‘profits of localisation’.

Such a combination allows a nuanced and placed view on the structure-agency interplay of children’s outdoor playing practices and takes in addition the socio-historic perspectives into account. Nonetheless, the introduced (social and physical) spaces are kept on a very general, theoretical level and are not developed with children and their needs in mind. For their operationalisation, for a more precise analysis of children’s activities in different physical spaces and to move beyond, play settings adults deem as appropriate, I propose to combine the affordance theory with Bourdieu’s conceptual triad of field, capital and habitus (see also Chapter 2).
Complementing the Bourdieusian lens with ‘affordances’

In a next step I introduce the concept of affordances, which was first presented by Gibson (1979). The advantage of combining the concept of affordances and Bourdieu’s social theory is twofold. First, the concept of affordances allows a more precise analysis of children’s activities in different physical spaces. I contend that it conceptualises the potential physical play objects inscribed in environments (playground, tree) in a more systematic and structured fashion than a Bourdieusian concept alone would suggests. I therefore apply the concept of affordances as a method for analysis of Bourdieu’s inhabited space. The affordance theory is able to structure the approach to play spaces on an individual level more systematically. Second, seeing affordances with a Bourdieusian lens allows exploring the socio-cultural and emotional aspects embedded in the appreciation (perception) of environments in relation to a profound social theory of action. In this way, Bourdieu’s theory helps to structure the so far vague approach to the non-environmental (social) aspects of affordances by viewing affordances through the space of points of view. Bourdieu and Gibson have in common that they pursue a combined analysis of the physical and social world. For both theorists the meaning of an environment comes to the fore through a relational approach.

Introducing and extending the concept of affordances

The concept of ‘affordance’ is a central construct in environmental research interested in the relationship between children and their environments and based on Gibson’s book, The ecological approach to visual perception (Gibson, 1979). Through this approach Gibson aimed to overcome the artificial dichotomy between an actor and the environment (Heft, 1989, 2010, Kytta, 2002), in a similar way to Bourdieu’s idea of how physical and social environments are intertwined (point of view, inhabited space). While for Bourdieu the social space is inscribed in physical space, affordances only come to the fore during an activity (or non-activity) of an individual in, with and against the environment; affordances need to be considered simultaneously with the physical environment and the social actor embracing both the features of the environment and an actor’s capabilities and perceptions (Chawla and Heft, 2002, Clark and Uzzell, 2006, Greeno, 1994, Heft, 1988). As Gibson (1979) notes:

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I am aware that Gibson already argued in earlier writings for a relational approach to understand ‘perception’, but his latest book is the most elaborate and comprehensive one on perceptual ecological psychology (Gibson, 1950, 1966, Greeno, 1994, Jones, 2003).
In other words affordances are an infinite range of functions that environmental objects may offer a social actor and are action related (Fjortoft, 2004, Kytta, 2004, Michaels, 2003). These functions encompass the opportunities and challenges a child perceives while playing in a certain setting (Gibson, 1979, Heft, 1988, Kytta, 2004). Objects, for example may afford throwing, sitting on, hiding behind, hanging from or falling down, whereas surfaces may afford running, climbing, balancing or tripping. Heft was the first to develop a taxonomy of affordances, which has been refined by various authors (Castonguay and Jutras, 2010, Heft, 1988, Kytta, 2003, Ward Thompson et al., 2010). Applying the affordance theory allows me to move beyond the environments usually associated with children’s play and be more open-minded; to be less deterministic as a Bourdieusian lens alone suggests (Holt, 2008, Jenkins, 1992). It allows the integration of a child-centred view on diverse play environments.

How, and to what extent, an action is carried out depends, however, on what the individual child perceives in the environment and how she or he evaluates its possibilities for action; at the same time the environment needs to offer something which the social actor can detect as a possibility or threat for action; perceiving is then conceptualised as a “perception-action process” (Heft, 2010: 15). Affordances consequently vary and depend, on one hand on the features of the environment, and on the other hand, on the capabilities and desires of a child such as needs, intentions and bodily characteristics (age, gender, abilities etc.) (Heft, 1989, Heft and NetLibrary Inc., 2001, Warren, 1984). In this regard, the concept of affordances provides an opportunity to take into account the bodily composition of individuals, an aspect which is less prominent in Bourdieu’s work although mirrored in the habitus of an individual actor and its capital endowment (Bourdieu, 1978, 1990d, 2000).

Potvin (2011), for example, extends Bourdieu’s original set of capitals and calls the bodily capabilities ‘biomedical capital’. She argues that even the genes someone inherits influence an individual’s potential for action. Extending Bourdieu’s theoretical framework in such a way allows me to take into account how children’s own capabilities (e.g. being fit enough to run, being capable in throwing a ball) shape their play practices and experiences. It structures

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50 A prominent theme in perceptual ecological psychology is how actions are nested and sequential structures of affordances. Researchers in this tradition discuss the structures of action on different levels for instance they separate the action of playing baseball into swinging, hitting throwing and so forth in this aspect the structure of affordance depends on the structure of action (Fitch and Turvey, 1978, Michaels, 2003, Oudejans et al., 1996, Stoffregen, 2003).
how they evaluate, appreciate and appropriate environments affording potential for activity (or non-activity) (see Chapter 10 and Chapter 11).

**Potential and actualised affordances**

Heft (1989) extends Gibsons’ approach by introducing the distinction between *potential* affordances and *actualised* affordances. Heft (1989: 25) conceptualises all possible negative and positive affordances of an environment, an infinite resource, as the domain of “potential functional properties of the environment”, which exist independently of an individual and terms them potential affordances. In contrast, actualised affordances only encompass the affordances an individual really perceives, attends, uses or transforms (Kytta, 2003, 2004). In this way, Heft cleverly overcomes the problem that affordances exist in the environment, although no one consumes them at a given moment and that perception of affordances may vary among individuals. However, affordances are readily available to be perceived and can be attended to as action-referential properties at any time (Chemero, 2003a, Michaels, 2003). Affordances are neither imposed on environments by individuals (they are simply dispositional properties inherent in environmental features), nor do they exist without a context (e.g. affordances come to the fore in intentional activities by an individual as a property of an environment). In subdividing affordances into potential and actualised affordances Heft provides further a conceptual tool for describing and discussing environmental features in general by paying attention to the qualities of an environment and taking the socio-cultural aspect of affordances into account.

I conceptualise potential affordances in this study as affordances available to a set of social actors (e.g. children the age of eight). In these terms potential affordances consists of shared potential affordances, but I also include individual potential affordances that depend on an agent’s capabilities and capital endowments. Potential affordances are infinite as they vary according to groups, settings and situations (Kytta, 2003). Out of the pool of potential affordances each social actor realises (actualises) a small number of affordances. As the term ‘actualise’ already hints actualised affordances are related to an activity or refusal to carry out an activity (e.g. perception of danger). Similar to Costall (1995), Kytta (2003), Loveland (1991) and Reed (1996) I argue that the actualisation of affordances depends not only on the individual’s capabilities, but also the socio-cultural practices that shape which

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51 Some researchers see affordances as properties of the animal-environment system. In this way, they argue animal specific properties and environmental specific properties can exists which do not inhere in the emerging animal-environment system (Chemero, 2003b, Stoffregen, 2003). My interest is in the meanings embedded in an affordance rather than the properties of the environment or individual separately and in this way I follow Chemero (2003a) and see affordances as features of a whole situation. Therefore, I do not need to engage myself with the problems of when an affordances is perceived e.g. when the ball is hit or when the ball flew a few millimetres.
affordances are perceived as potential affordances and which are then actualised\textsuperscript{52}. I see a value in adding Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and capital into this aspect of affordances. Norms, rules and physical environments can be considered as forming the logic of practice in relation to the actualisation of affordances and children’s capital. Thus I can, for example, conceptualise actualised affordances in relation to the physical location and the socio-historical, cultural and economic backgrounds children are growing up in (e.g. possibility to afford toys, organised trips, parental play experiences shaping their children’s experiences and how this impacts on the perception of affordances). This allows me to analyse families’ beliefs in outdoor activities and their detection of local affordances in relation to their space of points of view.

**Affordances and the neighbourhood environment**

Following Heft’s distinction between potential and actualised affordances, I conceptualise potential affordances as part of the tangible neighbourhood environment as discussed above. I argue that potential affordances need to be seen in relation to the quality of neighbourhood environments. Perceptual ecological researchers have so far been more engaged with outdoor play or recreational settings and varying degrees of urbanisation rather than the formation of potential affordances (Castonguay and Jutras, 2010, Kytta, 2002, Lim and Calabrese Barton, 2010, Rune and Trond Løge, 2010, Spencer and Woolley, 2000, Ward Thompson et al., 2010).

Kytta (2006), for example evaluated environments in relation to children’s independent mobility and the actualisation of affordances. She introduced four qualitatively different types of environments: the ‘cell’, ‘glasshouse’, ‘wasteland’ and ‘bullerby’\textsuperscript{53}. However, her approach is not interested in an in-depth discussion on how potential affordances are formed and influenced by the wider neighbourhood context or which structures formed these neighbourhoods as implied in a Bourdieusian approach. Neither does her approach encompass perceptional differences within neighbourhood settings on the availability of potential affordances. Rather, she focused primarily on how opportunities for the actualisation of affordances can be discussed in light of child-friendly environments and how recommendations for future planning processes can be drawn.

\textsuperscript{52} Similar to Barker’s (1951a, 1951b) behaviour settings rules and regulations form the ‘appropriate’ behaviour. Heft (2001) argues that Barker and Gibson’s approaches complement each other.

\textsuperscript{53} Kytta borrowed this term from a Swedish children’s book writer (Astrid Lindgren) and it can literally mean ‘noisy village’. Metaphorically she uses the term to highlight how children can partake in the everyday life of adults providing children with meaningful tasks in society. It is viewed as a child-friendly environment without the need to design special child settings for them.
By combining Bourdieu’s approach with the affordance concept, the formation of potential affordances can be theorised as part of physical space and its appropriation. In this way, potential affordances can be contextualised within the wider power structures of political, economic and health fields (see also Chapter 5, Chapter 7, Chapter 10, and Chapter 11). By way of example, potential affordances are seen as a result of urban planning (e.g. existence non-existence of parks), which in turn are embedded in the wider economic and political contexts. The design of neighbourhoods (e.g. walkability) accounts for the physical space, the availability and quality of traditional play destinations, the physical ‘profits of localisation’. However, by combining Bourdieu’s ‘profits of localisation’ with a child-centred view on affordances I can extend these traditional ‘profits’ with the potential affordances children value. Nonetheless, these evaluations need to be seen in relation to children’s points of view, which I outline in the next section in order to explain why children within the same neighbourhood environment evaluate potential affordances differently. This necessitates a consideration of emotions. I outlined earlier that the experiences of space are embedded in human relations and interactions (Massey, 2005). These interactions involve and foster diverse feelings, thoughts and emotions in children as they experience different spaces and activities. Numerous researchers aligned with emotional geographies have indicated the centrality of emotions for everyday life, which (re)shape the experience of social and physical spaces (Davidson and Bondi, 2004, Davidson et al., 2005, Ergler et al., 2011, Myers, 2009). Thus, I turn in the following my attention to Kytta’s (2003: 71) call for and discussion of an “emotionalisation of affordances”.

**An emotionalisation of affordances**

The continued actualisation of affordances is closely related to the emotions experienced during an activity or based on the memory of an activity. This may entail positive or negative emotional experiences that influence the perception of affordances.\(^{54}\) I term this effect the emotional aspect of the perception of affordances. Within their processes of socialisation (depending on their habitus and capital endowment), children learn to perceive certain affordances as positive or negative. For example the slide is usually experienced as a positive affordance: excitement. Nonetheless, this may vary according to children’s own experiences or socialisation, for example, an overprotective mother can negatively alter children’s experience of this affordance. Moreover, positive and negative experiences to an affordance may also change with age. An activity associated with excitement may be deemed to be boring later on. Similarly, a dark alleyway may be perceived by a child to be

\(^{54}\) I also include in this aspects that children are able to transfer emotional experiences from one affordance to one which they have not perceived before and does not resemble previous experiences.
scary and this perception affords that the child takes a detour to avoid this place, but accompanied by friends they confidently pass through. These examples reveal that emotions are dynamic and can vary by time and between agents.

Emotions depend on the context of the situation and environment in which the actualisation of affordances takes place as well as the composition of the social actor (socialisation, physical capabilities). A place with limited functional affordances can nonetheless provoke positive emotional affordances. For example, in a central city a sidewalk may not entail many diverse functional affordances (on first sight), but children may still count it as their favourite place; they meet friends and invent games. Conversely, a place full of different functional affordances may not necessarily arouse rich, positive emotional affordances. For example, children only utilising the intended affordances of a playground (sliding on the slide, swinging on the swings) may get bored quickly. Further, affordances, depending on the context, may be more functional than emotional and vice versa (Castonguay and Jutras, 2010, Chawla and Heft, 2002, Kaplan et al., 1998, Kyutta, 2003). Drawing on Kyutta’s (2003) example, I exemplify this aspect using ‘fire’. During a camp stay a child might see in a campfire an affordance to sing songs, while on a tramp lighting a fire at the end of the day might afford cooking a nutritious meal. In these examples the functional aspects were in the foreground, while lighting a fire in the evening and getting together as a family, watching the flames may have an emotional affordance of community and a feeling of belonging or restoration. So the emotional affordances children seek when playing outside may entail excitement, for example when they swing high, or they are more after the therapeutic aspects of spending time in a natural setting. The latter is a prominent theme in perceptual ecological psychology in relation to natural environments (Hansmann et al., 2007, Kaplan, 2001, Korpela and Hartig, 1996). Some researchers even suggest that the emotional affordance of restoration in relation to natural environments may be found in the functional affordance of natural or built environments (e.g. climbing a tree or jungle gym); activity itself may afford restoration in the same way as natural features afford restoration for adults (Chawla, 1992, 2002, Hart, 1979, Korpela and Hartig, 1996, Korpela et al., 2001).

Such a view allows us to conceptualise children’s evaluation of physical spaces in relation to the negative and positive experiences they encounter in these spaces, but also during the actualisation of affordances in the widest sense. I contend that for experiencing more positive emotions, children and their parents are motivated to return to a positively detected affordance. Children, as I conceptualise this aspect, see in actualising a (sedentary, vigorous) activity a reward: the gaining of a positive experience. Hence, they avoid the actualisation of some affordances to circumvent negative emotions. I see this aspect closely related to the ‘profits of localisation’, the proximity to desired agents and goods.
These profits may find expression in the reporting of excitement in relation to ‘happy places’ in contrast to ‘scary places’ or ‘places without a specific value attached’ when children talk about their neighbourhoods. Consequently, affordances may carry their own emotional content. If children find and perceive many affordances as positive in their environment then they may find their environment (e.g. neighbourhood, playground) an interesting place in which they can experience adventures, learn their boundaries, enlarge their horizon and competencies (Malone, 2002, 2007). As their experience and creativity grows they are likely to find more and more affordances in their environment to explore either alone or with friends. They form a positive relationship with their social and physical environment (see also the social side of affordances). Thus, the ‘profits of localisation’ they value are diverse. Similarly, children who lack the experience of positive affordances may find their environment hostile or alienating55 and retreat to a few places which are associated with positive affordances (e.g. the home or a shop). The ‘profits of localisation’ they value may be small in number.

In brief, by integrating an emotional aspect of my approach to the affordance theory, I follow Kytta’s (2003: 71) call for an “emotionalisation of affordances”. However, I contend that such an emotionalisation needs to be seen in relation to a Bourdieusian approach. How children experience an affordance is closely related to their dispositions and the wider societal norms and rules as suggested in Bourdieu’s key concepts. Children’s experience of actualising affordances is influenced by a complex structure-agency interplay that is shaped by societal, localised and families’ norms and rules and the physical space this actualisation is taking place.

The social side of affordances

Despite the fact that Kytta (2003, 2004) is more interested in the actualisation of affordances than the formation of potential affordances (it’s a given variable in her framework), she goes beyond the common conceptualisation that affordances can be solely discussed within ‘the private reality of the individual’. She follows Costall’s and Reed’s claim that all actualised and potential affordances have a social dimension (Costall, 1995, Costall and Still, 1989, Reed, 1996). Gibson is rather vague on the discussion on this aspect of affordances, but for him affordances interlock cultural, social and material dimension and can only be discussed in their wholeness as the individual and the environment form one entity.

A prominent example is Gibson’s discussion of affordances in relation to a mailbox. Only a person who grew up in a certain sociocultural field in which letter writing is known will detect

55 In this regard, the literature on children’s exclusion of public open space is also helpful for conceptualising the (non)actualisation of affordances in certain settings (Gleeson and Sipe, 2006, Valentine, 2004).
the mailbox as an affordance to post a letter, where to find a mailbox and be aware of the wider complex social system of which the postal service is part of. In this way the socio-cultural aspects of affordances are related to the actualisation of affordances (Gibson, 1979). Similar to Bourdieu’s argument that social actors needs to be aware of the ‘rules of the game’ in a certain field, I argue that affordances can only be perceived and actualised when a social actor is able to master the rules associated with certain affordances and when the affordance fits in his disposition. According to the social actor’s knowledge of these rules in the field of affordances, its capital endowments and the practical sense how to ‘behave’ in this field, he or she is able to perceive, utilise and transform affordances.

Affordances, as I have discussed them so far, have a primarily physical, tangible (functional in psychological terms) aspect, but by highlighting that affordances and their actualisation need to be seen in relation to a person’s capital endowment and habitus, which embeds them into their wider socialisation, I argue that even these functional aspects need to be seen from a social point of view. Affordances are also structured. I draw here on Bourdieu’s claim that the social space is mirrored in physical space. Hence, the affordances children detect and actualise in their physical environment are a mirror of their position in the social space. I am interested in the practices and rules that form the (non)actualisation of affordances.

Approaching affordances from a more holistic aspect allows me to extend the simply physical (environmental) understanding of affordances. It allows me to conceptualise that people themselves can be affordances for play (e.g. children’s friends (see also Clark and Uzzell (2006) and Schaefer-McDaniel (2004)). Playing with friends in a certain context enriches the ‘number’ of potential affordances; they may detect more cooperatively. Moreover, friends can themselves be affordances for play, but children can also detect new affordances together. In so doing, they can be enabled or constrained by their symbolic capital endowment and habitus. In this way, I can integrate ‘affordances for sociality’ twofold (Gaver, 1996, Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004). First, persons themselves can act as affordances and second environmental affordances which promote or hinder social activities (e.g. games, interaction, transformation of affordances) can further be analysed (Clark and Uzzell, 2002, 2006, Gaver, 1996, Kytta, 2003).

Bourdieu’s research clearly shows that different classes appreciate and evaluate situations differently. Therefore, I argue by following the tradition of the social studies of childhood (Holloway and Valentine, 2000, James et al., 1998) that not a singular experience of children’s outdoor play exists, but that by including a Bourdieusian lens I am able to account for the plurality of childhoods not only in terms of gender of cultural differences (e.g. northern
and southern hemisphere, developed and developing countries), but also differences within a country, city and even neighbourhoods. Integrating socio-cultural aspects with a Bourdiesusian lens goes beyond simply detecting the shared awareness of affordances in a specific user group, but provides an avenue for explaining why the evaluation of affordances may differ.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed the main conceptual influences of this thesis. In the first part of the chapter I introduced Bourdieu’s triad of field, capital and habitus. This built the foundation for the discussion of Bourdieu’s spatial lens; the interconnectedness between social and physical space. The second part of the chapter served two purposes. First, I introduced the affordance theory initiated by Gibson and subsequently argued that integrating the concept of affordances with Bourdieu’s understandings allows a more nuanced view on physical space. It allows the accommodation of traditional play spaces and a child-centred view on the potential settings in which play can occur. Second, I contended that the detection of potential affordances and their actualisation is enhanced when combined with a Bourdiesusian lens. The detection and actualisation can be seen as an outcome of families’ position in the ‘field of play’, their beliefs and values. It embeds affordances into the wider socio-historic context. The detection and actualisation of affordances is then constructed within the limits of personal experience, socialisation processes and the historical condition that produced them.

In particular, by combining the social aspects of affordances, the emotionalisation of affordances and the affordances of neighbourhood environments, I can include an evaluation of these environments from the point of view of families and extend it beyond traditional environments (e.g. social capital, the bus stop as play affordance). Thus, it allows me to gain a more nuanced understanding of the diverse localisation profits (proximity to desired agents and goods) children and parents appreciate in their neighbourhood under the umbrella of potential affordances for children’s play. In this way, I can unpack how personal dispositions shape the detection and evaluation of potential affordances. Combining a Bourdiesusian and Gibsonian approach allows me to discuss the wider socio-historic context that shaped the existing potential affordances in a neighbourhood and mirror these existing affordances against the points of view of families. For example, such a conceptualisation can reveal the knowledge of potential affordances in a neighbourhood and how parents and children evaluate these affordances in relation to their dispositions. Hence, it allows me to consider that families in the same neighbourhood evaluate the quality of potential affordances differently and deliver a potential explanation. It further accounts for how the
knowledge and appreciation of potential affordances influences the appropriation of physical space. Simply said, does the neighbourhood parents decide to live in correspond with their desire to encourage outdoor play?

In the next chapter I turn my attention to the research method. I introduce how I incorporated Bourdieu’s ‘methodological principles’ in this research project that allow to be reflexive about my own positionality and the positionality of the disciplinary approaches I utilise in this study. I further introduce the research method ‘near and distant participatory ethnography’ to indicate how I attempt to reveal the structure-agency interplay in children’s outdoor playing practices.
Chapter 4 ‘Methodological principles’: an Bourdieusian approach to unpack outdoor play

A Bourdieusian approach requires certain “methodological principles” (Grenfell, 2008b: 219) in which, as Bourdieu highlights in the introductory quote, the theoretical and empirical are intertwined. Indeed, when applying a Bourdieusian lens the theoretical, methodological and empirical approach cannot be viewed separately, rather, the approach demands engagement with and reflexivity on all three components simultaneously as they inform each other. In Grenfell’s (2008b: 219) eyes, Bourdieu’s theory of practice is consequently a “theory of research practice”. His conceptual triad, which I discussed in Chapter 3, can therefore only be inscribed with meaning when applied to practical research following his ‘methodological principles’. I introduce these principles briefly below and then in more detail in the first half of this chapter.

Bourdieu himself encourages his readers to extend his work theoretically, practically and methodologically by designing and applying it to new research questions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: xiii-xiv). In order to draw on the breadth of Bourdieu’s ‘method’ for the analysis of the structure-agency interplay in seasonal outdoor play, I integrate (to some extent) his ‘methodological principles’ (e.g. Bourdieu, 1990c, Bourdieu, 1992a, 2003), namely:

1. The construction of the research object
2. A three-level approach to studying the field and the object of research:
   a. Analyse the position of the research field vis-a-vis the field of power
   b. Map the objective structure of relations between agents or institutions in the field
   c. Investigate the habitus of agents
3. Participant objectivation

Despite the critique on his approach of being static and not accounting for societal changes (Calhoun et al., 1993, Jenkins, 1992), his work is not static and accounts for social change through the concept of capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989).

These principles are not applied in a linear way; rather they are thinking tools guiding their operationalisation in practice and are interlinked themselves (Grenfell, 2008b).
To realise the advantages of a Bourdieusian way of thinking to its full “potential” (Grenfell, 2008b: 219), I mainly follow the examples set by Fries (2009) and Grenfell (2008b).

A mixed-method research design that enables individual perspectives (‘thick descriptions’) to be stated and sees seasonal play affordances in relation to the ‘field of play’ seems appropriate if we want to reveal the structure-agency interplay and fill gaps revealed in Chapter 2 (e.g. Bourdieu et al., 1999, Hemming, 2008, Katz, 2004). Similarly, indicators identified as important by the physical activity and children’s geography literature include socio-economic status (in Bourdieu’s terminology class), age, gender and place can be with Bourdieu’s ‘methodological principles’ taken into account, as well as power imbalances in the ‘field of play’.

These imbalances are intrinsic and revealed in the field (the construction of play affordances) in question and between me as the researcher and the parents and children in this research. Paramount to eliciting the structural and agency bound aspects of outdoor play is, in my eyes, a research design that accounts for the subjective and objective perspective, but leaves space for children’s collaboration (Ergler, 2011a). I propose to extend what others termed to work with children instead of on their behalf (Barker and Weller, 2003b, Skelton, 2009, Valentine, 1999). Although I aimed to reduce power imbalances caused by my presence to a minimum by offering children an arena to contribute on their own terms to the understanding of their play patterns, it is impossible, as others have shown, to remove these inequalities entirely (e.g. Driskell, 2001, Hemming, 2008, Holt, 2004). However, power also works the other way around (Bourdieu, 1996b). Gallagher (2008), Ansell (2001a), Christensen (2004b) and Holt (2004), report on work in which children exercised their power over the research encounter by resisting participation in some tasks, for example. A mixed-method research design which moves ‘beyond passive participation’ (Ergler, 2011a) seems then appropriate. Children can shape the research process on their own terms and suggestions for amendments or resistance are taken seriously.

After having briefly outlined some lines of thought which influenced the way I approached the design of this research project, I begin this chapter by outlining how Bourdieu’s ‘methodological principles’ enable me to overcome the assumption of an epistemological divide between positivism and subjectivism (constructivism). I further outline how his principles guided my engagement with the empery theoretically and methodologically. I partly revisit theoretical aspects introduced in Chapter 3 here, but view them as part of the three ‘methodological principles’, interweaving these theoretical accounts with the

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58 Even though a Bourdieusian approach overcomes the epistemological divide (Fries, 2009), I understand by mixed-method research a research design which requires both qualitative and quantitative methods. In this way I place my work in line with Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), Johnson et al. (2007) or McKendrick (2009) for example.
methodological and empirical approach more explicitly than outlined in Chapter 3. I then
describe the multi-sited, mixed-method research design employed which intertwines
participatory, place sensitive perspectives with structural barriers and enablers. While the
first part of this chapter serves as arena to reveal how Bourdieu’s ‘methodological principles’
shaped this research project, the second part deals more explicitly with the research method.

Applying Bourdieu’s ‘methodological principles’: transcending the ‘existing’ paradigm divide

“I could sum up in one phrase the gist of the analysis I am putting forth today: on the one
hand, the objective structures that the sociologist constructs, in the objectivist moment, by
setting aside the subjective representations of the agents, form the basis for these
representations and constitute the structural constraints that bear upon interactions; but
on the other hand, these representations must also be taken into consideration
particularly if one wants to account for the daily struggles, individual and collective, which
purport to transform or to preserve these structures.” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 125)

As outlined in Chapter 3 and summarised in the introductory quote to this sub-section,
Bourdieu aims to understand how objective structures (e.g. norms, institutions) influence
agents’ social actions (practice) and in turn how these practices shape objective structures.
Bourdieu describes his approach as a “constructivist structuralism or structuralist
constructivism” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 122). Thus, outdoor play affordances in this study are
bound to the reading of the dialectic interplay of objective and subjective structures by
revealing their social construction, which begins immediately with the construction of the
research object itself.

The construction of the research object

Constructionist approaches which claim that social phenomena and their meanings are
continually constructed and re-constructed through social interaction (Bryman, 2008,
Silverman, 2011) draw attention to participants’ own understandings and perceptions. These
perspectives are read as embedded in context of the social setting in which this knowledge
is constructed (Waitt, 2010). Bourdieu, however, takes constructionism a step further and
questions the construction of the research object (in this case urban children’s seasonal
He points to the importance of thinking about “the structures of thought of the thinker”
(Bourdieu, 1992b: 40f). In other words, the research object is pre-constructed before the
research is even designed. It is often based on the research system in which the researcher
is embedded (see also three-level approach). This argument makes the first methodological
principle, the construction of the research object, very important.
To overcome this dilemma of pre-construction the researcher needs to approach the research object (understanding the play opportunities in urban areas), “with a redoubled epistemological vigilance” (Bourdieu, 1992b: 42). This exhortation implies that I as the researcher need to try to put aside preconceptions to be able to reconstruct the research objective. This ‘redoubled vigilance’ necessitates the discussion of the academic constitutions in which it evolved (see three-level approach). This call, however, goes beyond the “narcissistic reflexivity” (Wacquant, 2008: 273) of the positionality of the researcher herself (see also participant objectification). More importantly, Bourdieu’s first principle calls us to think about the research object ‘outside the square’: I am encouraged to approach children’s seasonal experiences of outdoor play in an unexpected way by thinking relationally.

In my approach this means, as argued in Chapter 3, drawing attention to how experiences, interactions and relationships in relation to Bourdieu’s triad of field, capital and habitus shape play practices and conceptions by placing the research encounter and generation of data within the wider socio-historic context of power, inequalities and place. Thinking relationally is central for reconstructing the research object; for making the everyday strange and seeing the event in relation to the socially positioned definitions and other definitions in the fields they evolved (Fries, 2009, Grenfell, 2008b). In addition to the ontological approaches I refer to then, these contexts construct my own understanding of the research object. Embodying such a Bourdieusian methodology (‘redoubled epistemological vigilance’) requires breaking with conventional thinking in a discipline and the methods used.

Bourdieu himself refuses to attach his work to any theoretical school or discipline. He draws on a wide range of empirical resources, calling for an epistemological break (Inglis et al., 2000). Bourdieu is able to overcome the epistemological and ontological divide, because he stresses that the divide both theoretically and methodologically is an artificial construction itself: “they have a social foundation, but they have no scientific foundation” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 34). Consequently, Bourdieu does not settle with one methodological paradigm. He applies all methods he sees as valuable support for exploring a research object as he views the divide as a construction itself (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007). The toolkit

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59 In Bourdieu’s words “How a certain object is conceptualised depends on the research capital one possesses and possession of this research capital places me within the hierarchical structure of my discipline” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 42).

60 “We must try, in every case, to mobilise all the techniques that are relevant and practically usable, given the definition of the object and the practical conditions of data collection” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 227).
Bourdieu proposes to reveal the structure-agency interplay is termed by Wacquant “methodological polytheism” (Wacquant, 2008: 266). Seeing the divide itself as a construction enables him to draw on qualitative and quantitative methods to answer his research questions (Fries, 2009, Sommer Harrits, 2011). He is, as Inglis et al. (2000: 110) put it, freed “from narrow epistemological constraint”. Similarly, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 10) see the divide in qualitative and quantitative terms in the same way; it narrows “the approaches and collaboration of inquiry”. Applying Bourdieu’s ‘methodological principles’ within my research allows me to capture the dialogical interplay of objective social structures (e.g. barriers, norms of play) with subjective agency (e.g. how play is perceived and evaluated in relation to a social position) and not to be limited in the choice of empirical resources. It allows me to expand and design my own Bourdieusian approach. For my Bourdieusian analysis I employed what I term near and distant ethnographic tools (semi-structured interviews, elicited drawings, GPS tracking, travel diaries, neighbourhood walks) with survey data to reveal ‘social struggles’ within the ‘field of play’.

In this section I established that the construction of the research object is predetermined by the researcher and her discipline, but by drawing on Bourdieu’s ‘methodological principles’ it is possible to think outside the square conceptually and methodologically. I now turn my reflection to the second principle. The aim of this section is to highlight how the chosen methods meet the ‘demands’ of the field and the object of research.

**A three-level approach to studying the field and the object of research**

The chosen methods in this project aim to reveal “three necessary and internally connected moments” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 104), which are also known as the second principle introduced earlier in this chapter:

“First, one must analyse the position of the field vis-a-vis the field of power . . . Second, one must map the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by agents or institutions […]. And, third, one must analyse the habitus of agents”. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 104)

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61 In *Distinction*, for example, Bourdieu combines the results gained by in-depth interviews, ethnographic observation and large scale survey data to uncover the part played by dispositions in stabilising the ruling class’ domination (Bourdieu, 1984). The survey data have been checked against census data and additional surveys carried out by various French institutions such as the INSEE’s (*Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economique*) survey on leisure activities. Consequently, Bourdieu not only tried to overcome the theoretical divide, but also the epistemological divide when he applied both quantitative and qualitative methods at that time.

62 In *An invitation to reflexive sociology* Wacquant highlights that “Bourdieu’s work is not free of contradictions, gaps, tensions, puzzlements, and unresolved questions,” and concludes that “an invitation to think with Bourdieu is of necessity an invitation to think beyond Bourdieu, and against him whenever required” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: xiiif).
The purpose of the first aspect to studying the field and the object of research is to locate the field or social context implied in the research object in relation to the field of power (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007, Fries, 2009, Grenfell, 2008b). Basically, this first characteristic is related to the construction of the research object and deconstructs common labels and assumptions associated with the research object. These inherent values and labels are the outcome of a negotiation process between the field under study and the field of power (Fries, 2009). The aim is then to reveal how a research object might be approached from a different stance to overcome the pre-assumptions structuring common approaches to the same. To avoid pre-constructed bias, it is important to understand the contestations within a field which led to privileging an arbitrary rationality over others and to identify field-specific or social contexts associated with this field. For example, using outdoor play as an object of study requires examining the cultural field, political field and public health field in relation to the field of power to explore the socially constructed truth. Thus, the aim is to critically deconstruct languages, classification schemes and methods researchers commonly use to explore play. This also requires “locating the researcher, the research and the field of study in relation to the field of power” (Fries, 2009: 340). This has been partially done in Chapter 1 and 2 and I return to this again in the third principle (participant objectivation) later in this chapter. It becomes clear here that the principles Bourdieu proposes are not separate entities, but mutually interlinked and reinforced.

The second aspect of the three level approach considers what Grenfell (2008b: 222) terms “the structural topography of the field”. To reveal this topography it is necessary to map the objective social relations within a field (see Chapter 3). In other words, this structural topography requires the researcher to explore the distribution of capital in a field that determines the position of an individual or collective conditioned by interests and dispositions (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990c, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007). Capital defines and differentiates the legitimate practices in a field; what is or is not doable or thinkable in a field (e.g. what are ‘appropriate’ pastimes for children, see Chapter 3). I therefore seek to understand how the interplay of objective aspects of physical places and social locations (income, gender, ethnicity, education) coin the structural conditions that legitimise seasonal play practices. Consequently, I conducted a survey of parents which covers such “readily quantified” ‘background’ information of participating families (Fries, 2009: 343). However, these variables are a social construct themselves (Bourdieu, 1990a) and foster a third aspect of inquiry; the investigation of the habitus of families.

This third aspect covers the subjective moment in Bourdieu’s work. It aims to describe the habitus; to reveal how the habitus shapes people’s perception and evaluation of the world framed by symbolic capital endowments and a field-specific position. Through the
development of a near and distant ethnographic approach (discussed in more detail later) I aimed to pay tribute to this aspect of Bourdieu’s theory. Hence, I draw on qualitative methods to reveal how a habitus specific evaluation and perception of play influences seasonal play patterns and to unpack the subjective processes influencing outdoor play (see chapter 3).

In brief, in my attempt to account for these ‘three approaches to study the field (play) and the object of research (seasonal play patterns)’, I chose qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the localised and multi-layered perspectives of families in the central city and Beach Haven. I selected these methods to illuminate families’ habitus and symbolic capital endowments, necessitating the (non)detection of seasonal affordances, and paired these theoretical thinking tools with wider structures (e.g. historical processes, place specific norms) shaping seasonal play practices. Throughout, I kept in the mind the first and last principles: the construction of the research object and participant objectivation. Hence, I reflected back and forth on the interlinked principles, which also warrants reflexivity of the positionality of the researcher and the research discipline. In the next part, I turn my attention to two possible biases under the umbrella of participant objectivation that influenced this research project. Indeed, the findings presented in later chapters need to be read with these biases in mind.

**Participant objectivation**

A Bourdieusian approach requires re-approaching the subject of study constantly and critically and reflecting on the researchers own interest and motivations. This aspect is inscribed in the context that structured my academic course, my choosing of this topic, and how I perceive, evaluate and understand placed outdoor play, but also how research conventions and scholarly tastes structured this project (Bourdieu, 2003). Bourdieu calls this methodological process of ‘turning back’ ‘participant objectivation’ (Bourdieu, 1992b, 1996b, Bourdieu et al., 1999, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007). He identified at least two possible biases on which each researcher should reflect when designing a project, during the course of a project and while compiling the findings (Fries, 2009).

The first bias, positionality of the researcher, is also the most obvious and therefore least dangerous (Bourdieu, 2003). Aspects of my positionality include my gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background and family status and these aspects differ from participating families (see also Prologue). For example, being not a parent restricts an extended understanding of the parental experience of raising children, but it also allows me to critically discuss their subjective barriers (e.g. stranger-danger) as I am not caught up in the same fears. Similarly,
being a female researcher who grew up in a small German town and spent many hours outside in summer and winter only partially matches my young participants’ experiences. This may restrict my ability to understand some of the underlying implications of play practices in New Zealand. However, my experience as a youth group and summer camp leader places me at ease in connecting with children and parents. My socialisation, which creates my habitus, positions me therefore with varying degrees of insight while I design, collect, read, code, and filter the data derived through near and distant multi-sited participatory ethnography. Therefore, I do not claim that the findings presented hold universal truth. Rather, they present my partial and situated understanding of the research encounter through the socialisation of a particular cultural field: being a female international student researching New Zealand’s children’s seasonal outdoor play.

The second bias deals with research conventions underlying a discipline in a particular research environment (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007). This bias is closely related to the already discussed construction of the research object. Indeed, the same principles of reflecting on the construction of the research object need to be applied to de-constructing the knowledge produced in a research field. This warrants a de-construction of who created the knowledge and what their possible biases are (Grenfell, 2008b). For example, the concept of scientific rigour (for 'readily quantified' information) guides physical activity studies and structures the disciplinary approach to understanding children’s play (see also Chapter 2). It impacts on the methods employed and how researchers conceptualise outdoor activities. Likewise, the role ‘obesogenic environment’ researchers allocate to participants emerged from their research field’s particular socio-cultural and historical context. In contrast, children geographers are guided by the humanistic turn of the 1970s which emphasised subjectivity, experiences and meaning of play places (see Chapter 1). In this context, the participant is seen as an expert on their own lives and participatory methods are therefore considered more suitable (Ergler, 2011a, Morrow, 2008). In this project, as outlined in the literature review and introduction, I attempt to combine both approaches to unpack outdoor play practices to reduce the effects of a research approach’s specific biases.

These biases under the umbrella of participant objectivation dictate which truth researchers believe in when designing, reading and commenting on research projects. Hence, a
Bourdiesian approach can act as a buffer to these biases. One of the advantages of such a lens to the research field and object of study is the elicitation of the construction of the research design, analysis and report on findings. In turn, it also incorporates both the researcher’s and participants’ habitus and symbolic capital to illuminate their perspectives on the research object in question.

Applying Bourdieu’s ‘methodological principles’ (at least to some extent) allows me to draw on the full potential a Bourdiesian lens offers. That is, to decode the biases associated with participant objectivation and to overcome the structure-agency debate and explore the intertwined nature of structures and practices in relation to outdoor play. By following Bourdieu’s polytheism (his terminology for mixed method), I can overcome the epistemological divide mobilising a plurality of methods to understand children’s seasonal outdoor play, catering for both the subjective perspectives and objective structures. It is to the latter, Bourdieu’s polytheism (in this study simply named mixed-method research), to which I now turn my reflection in an attempt to embed my study in a more rigorous ontology.

**Bourdieu, mixed-method research and children**

Without going deeper into the debate whether to call my chosen approach multi-method, mixed-method (Creswell et al., 2003, Hesse-Biber, 2010, McKendrick, 2009) or methodological polytheism (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007, Wacquant, 2008), I choose to use the term **mixed-method**. This emphasises that both quantitative and qualitative methods help me -through a Bourdiesian lens- gain understanding of, and insights into, affordances children in Beach Haven and the central city (non)actualise in summer and winter (Plano Clark and Creswell, 2008, Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

It is reasonably well established that (at least for answering social science questions) a combination of methods is more suitable than a single method (Clifford and Valentine, 2003, Hay, 2010, Law, 2004, Limb and Dwyer, 2001). However, researchers tend not to participate in epistemological debates on mixing methods as such (McKendrick, 2009). For example, the ones who apply more than one method in researching children’s experiences report instead on methodological issues such as shifting power relations with young participants (Barker and Smith, 2001, Gallagher, 2008, Matthews, 2001b) or how the location in which

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64 Multi-method or multiple method research is often, but not exclusively, used to describe research applying more than one quantitative or qualitative method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; McKendrick, 2009; Morse, 2003).

65 Johnson et al. (2007, p. 123) provide an excellent discussion on how researchers in the field of mixed-methods define this discipline while proposing an umbrella definition: “Mixed-methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.”
the research is conducted impacts on findings (Anderson and Jones, 2009, Cope, 2008, Wood, 2010). One reason for the absence of a methodological debate may be ascribed to a growing pluralism both in epistemology and typology of mixed-method research, as the increase of handbooks, readers and the launch of the Journal of Mixed-method Research suggests (Greene, 2007, Plano Clark and Creswell, 2008, Plowright, 2011, Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Indeed, the majority of the published research in these new forums seems more concerned with the typology of methods used (e.g. dominance of either qualitative or quantitative methods, sequence of either quantitative or qualitative methods) than with the implications arising from the differences in justification and practice of the same (Bryman, 2006, Denscombe, 2008, Sommer Harrits, 2011). They often have a pragmatic approach to their justification and research process (see for example Christensen et al., 2011, Mackett et al., 2007b, Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009). Hence, drawing on Bourdieu’s three principles outlined earlier offers a way of going beyond simple pragmatism in justifying a mixed-method approach and to overcome the ‘paradigm wars’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003); it allows viewing the approach to the research object and field as framed by an epistemological understanding.

A strength of this “third methodological movement” (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003: 5), “the third research paradigm” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 15) or methodological polytheism⁶⁶ is the ability to reveal a more complete and comprehensive understanding of structures and practices shaping outdoor playing patterns (Christensen et al., 2011, Walker et al., 2009, Woolley, 2009). Despite their individual merits, neither qualitative nor quantitative methods explore in my opinion this dialogic relationship adequately (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007). Qualitative methods can reveal the ‘nitty-gritty’ realities, complexities and power relations in a field and allow an analysis of how the habitus influences the logic of outdoor play (Bourdieu et al., 1999, Dwyer and Limb, 2001, Hay, 2010), while quantitative methods usually document reliable, quantifiable and generalising patterns⁶⁷ (Bourdieu, 1984, Keylock and Dorling, 2004, Poon, 2005). Integrating both approaches to explore the construction of structures and practices on outdoor play is, along with the amalgamation of inclusive participatory methods, an underlying commitment in this study.

So far in this chapter, I have introduced the ‘bigger picture’ on my chosen methodological approach and discussed the mixed-method aspects on which I draw to reveal the structure-agency interplay in children’s outdoor play. From here, I turn my attention to a theoretical

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⁶⁶ Methodological polytheism cannot be classified with either of the schools as ‘multiple methods’ and ‘mixed methods’ are both suitable for gaining in-depth insights in a research question. All methods that seem helpful in answering a research question should be chosen (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2007; Wacquant, 2008).

⁶⁷ Bourdieu (1990a) reveals for example in his essay opinion polls in which ways data are, consciously and unconsciously, manipulated when designing a large-scale survey: often people do not fit in the categories proposed, which sheds an interesting light on the survey questions: who does not feel represented and therefore ticks ‘I don’t know’.
discussion on the chosen research method before I move on to the next chapter in which I discuss the research process itself.

**Near and distant multi-sited participatory ethnography: moving beyond passive participation**

To answer my research question I developed a research method, which I call *near and distant multi-sited participatory ethnography*. I see the benefit of this method in the agglomeration and transformation of various approaches which are already established. Each component of the name of this method refers to a different concept, which I briefly introduce in the following sections to reveal what I understand to be the method's merits.

I chose to call my approach *near and distant* ethnography to distinguish between methods conducted in a traditional and novel ethnographic way. Under the umbrella of *near* I summarise all methods which are conventionally (although not in a purist and orthodox way (Crang and Cook, 2007)) used in ethnographic research and often conducted by the *new* social studies of childhood (James, 2007, James et al., 1998, James and Prout, 1990). Literally, this term implies closeness to the ethnographic tradition both in using established methods (e.g. observation, elicited drawings and semi-structured interviews) and seeing children as experts on their own lives (Christensen, 2000, Holt, 2004, Punch, 2002). This understanding fosters doing research *with* children and parents and is generally followed by a plea for child-centred methods (Aitken and Herman, 2009, Christensen, 2000, Punch, 2001). Through these methods children can express their expertise in creative and meaningful ways rather than having a method imposed on them (Barker and Weller, 2003a, Cele, 2005, Driskell, 2001, Holloway and Valentine, 2000, Valentine, 1999) as is the case with what I term distant ethnography.

Distant ethnography embraces methods which look from an outside perspective on the families' lives and inscribe no meaning to data immediately. The outside perspective comes to play in two ways. First, parental reports about their children’s habits have a two-layer distance; these reports on children’s activities are filtered through parental lenses (distance), which in turn are then filtered by my attempts to make sense of these reports (Hodgetts et al., 2010). Second, observing and following more than one person seems difficult when seeking to understand children’s play patterns based on time commitment (researcher and participants) and practicality (Christensen et al., 2011, Dyment et al., 2009, Hart, 1979, Moore, 1986). Therefore, I decided to follow children's movement from a distance, necessitating me not being physically present during the observation period as a

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68 I am aware that even in a traditional ethnographic approach the researcher is often an outside researcher, but I see the necessity here to create such an artificial distinction.
GPS device records (observes in the widest sense) children’s’ movements. This calls for further elaboration on the multi-sited research approach as children from two places participated in this study.

Multi-sited ethnography has been in vogue since Marcus (1995, 1998) postulated that in a global world some complex social phenomena cannot be studied in a single site, which is seen as one strength of ethnographic research per se (Candea, 2007). Multi-sited ethnographers leave the typical field study site and follow “people, connections, associations, and relationships across space” accounting also for its critique (Falzon, 2009a: 1). Wacquant (2004), for example, who claims that Bourdieu should be seen as the precursor of conducting multi-sited ethnography, critiques first and second generation multi-sited ethnography (Anderson and Jones, 2009, Atkinson, 2001, Falzon, 2009b, James, 2007). Indeed, he (2004: 369), suggested that the approach “can invite the hasty collage of vignettes based on travel diaries more than field diaries, [and] rushed reporting instead of systematic first-hand observation”. In contrast, Bourdieu conducted, in Wacquant’s opinion, in-depth studies in the study sites he chose and avoided pre-mature conclusions based on the in-depth relationships he built with the ‘research object’ and the people telling him about it.

Although I do not conduct ethnographic research in the conventional way, I count my work as a contribution to developing (Bourdieu’s) multi-sited ethnography. I was able to build long-term relationships and trust based on regular family visits facilitated by the distribution and collection of GPS equipment and drawing papers as well as conducting child and parental interviews (Ergler, 2011a). These interviews often did not take place at the same time due to parents’ or children’s schedules and this allows for a deeper engagement with families69. These visits not only led to ‘thick descriptions’, but also allowed an assemblage of impressions, casual talks, rephrasing and restating of families’ thoughts over time (Hall, 2009, Hodgetts et al., 2007b). In turn, these encounters allowed me to obtain deeper involvements and insights into their lives beyond what they said about themselves (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, Bourdieu et al., 1999, Hodgetts et al., 2007a, Hodgetts et al., 2010).

In a Bourdieusian approach the research object does not dictate the selection of the study site as seems to be the case in first and second generation multi-sited ethnographical research (e.g. following the life-cycle of an apple). Rather, it is the researcher who selects a second study site based on a thorough analysis of the research object and the methods applied. This selection requires a reflexive approach as introduced in Bourdieu’s  

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69 Bourdieu also emphasises the importance of in-depth encounters for an improved understanding of the research object (Bourdieu, 1996b).
methodological principles to account for possible biases. In Wacquant’s (2004: 397) words, the second study site is selected “as a requirement of method and a resource for self-monitoring and epistemological safeguard”, which I did. By choosing more than one study site, I wanted to account for this possible effect of ‘participant objectivation’ (e.g. my own positionality in relation to the creation of the research object) and pay attention to context to be able to discuss in which way place experiences may trigger play dispositions. In my opinion this approach fosters being sensitive to play cultures and place (Anderson and Jones, 2009, Mannion, 2007, Wood, 2010). My selection of Auckland’s central city and Beach Haven is therefore based on these and the following grounds.

My aim was to find two study areas which are socio-economically similar. As children have not been the focus in vertical living studies (with a few exceptions e.g.Carroll et al., 2008, Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009), I decided to include the central city of Auckland as one study site. Beach Haven complements the central city in terms of socio-economic stratification (see Chapter 6). As outlined earlier, this PhD project is part of the URBAN study and Beach Haven is one of the areas studied in this HRC funded project (Badland et al., 2009). Both study areas are also categorised as highly walkable based on the walkability index developed by Leslie et al. (2007). I assume, as suggested in the literature review, that walkable areas offer more opportunities for children to be active per se.

I turn now to a discussion of why I additionally call my approach beyond passive participation. For children’s geographers the term child-centred methods often implies a participatory research practice (Barker and Weller, 2003a, Koca et al., 2009, Mitchell et al., 2007, Pain, 2004), which is defined as “a diverse set of techniques bound together by a common concern for actively involving research subjects in the construction of data” (Gallagher, 2008: 138). Central to this approach is a belief in creating data collaboratively and through negotiations (e.g. in an empowering fashion). This belief underlies the premise of equity (Cahill, 2004, Pain, 2004). Consequently, a participatory approach is seen to be able to reveal genuine (authentic) child knowledge through accepting their expertise and providing an arena in which a voice is given to children (Christensen, 2000, Freeman and Vass, 2010, Punch, 2002).

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70 I embrace under the term collaboration a wide field. Collaboration means, for example, collaborating with children in the design of a research project (Cahill, 2004; Kellef, 2004), through a method (e.g. photo-elicitation) (Lee & Abbott, 2009; Mitchell, et al., 2007) or in the analysis of collected data (Porter et al., 2010).

71 I understand “creating data” not only in terms of valuing children’s own knowledge and revealing place based complexities and priorities to gain a more authentic picture of young people’s lives (Cahill, 2004, Gallagher, 2008, Grover, 2004, Kesby, 2000, O’Kane, 2000, Wood, 2010), but also in terms of participatory decision making or participatory planning as the growing body of literature around integrating children in local or regional planning project reveals and which is requested by the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (Berglund and Nordin, 2007, Chowla, 1998, Hill et al., 2004, Il tus and Hart, 1993, Whidt, 2010).
I find that the term ‘giving voice’ is in itself contradictory. In a collaborative and non-hierarchical approach, which participatory research claims to be, giving voice falls back into the old power relations in which one party has more power; hence, the powerful one needs to provide an arena for the silenced voice to speak. “[M]ultiple shifting relations of power” (Gallagher, 2008: 143), such as between participants and in locations (e.g. conducting interviews at university), mark instead as outlined earlier research relationships. I prefer, therefore, the term ‘filtered voice’. Through the analysis of child and parental data I move beyond their descriptions and develop my own understandings (through a Bourdieusian lens) about the seasonal play experiences and patterns they reveal. Nonetheless, it also allows being aware of and accounting for various landscapes of power in research locations (e.g. meeting at home, at University) and during the research encounter (Hodgetts et al., 2007a, Hodgetts et al., 2010).

By adding the aspect of moving beyond passive participation, I want to highlight that my field work demanded more of me than simply applying participatory research in a different context. ‘Beyond passive participation’ evolved as a logical consequence of participatory practice. However, I argue that ethnographic practices have been a pre-condition to get to this step. Mutual trust and deep encounters needed to be developed over a long period of time before children felt comfortable (empowered) to get involved in my research project on an additional level: to become de facto researchers themselves (Ergler, 2011a).

I see the phrase ‘beyond passive participation’ as implying that ownership over the research encounter is shared, and allows for an outcome where children might partially take over the research process. They design or encourage the development of new aspects of research (Cahill, 2004, Gallagher, 2008, Porter et al., 2010). I see in ‘beyond passive participation’ a framework which can bring additional insights to a geographically and ethnographically flavoured participatory project by cooperatively working on an already established research theme (e.g. a child led follow up meeting). Indeed, ‘beyond passive participation’ refers to a form of empowerment; it unpacks children’s knowledge and understanding through collective discussions and interactions (working as a group), which in a second step I deconstruct with a reflexive Bourdieusian lens. This aspect is in line with my understanding of providing a filtered voice in the presentation of findings, but it allows me to analyse children’s experiences in a different light. While I can analyse the data from a different, more in-depth, perspective, children also gain from their experience collaborating in this research project. I see this approach as including potential benefits that might evolve from this collaboration. These benefits are centred on children’s well-being now and in their future lives (although not quantifiable). The positive experience of actively participating in the research process may contribute to children being equipped with higher self-esteem due to their experiences
of being taken seriously during this process; of drawing on their experiences, of seeing them as valid experts on their own life, instead of only responding to adult prescribed activities.

Conclusion

In this chapter I aligned my study to Bourdieu's 'methodological principles'. I revealed that applying a Bourdieusian lens does not stop after the theoretical chapter, but requires consideration when discussing the methodological approach, which in turn also influences the empirical part of a study. Although each theory requires following a certain methodological paradigm, I showed that drawing on Bourdieu's relational approach allows seeing the alignment to a specific school of thought in a different light. It calls for an 'epistemological break'. I discussed that through his relational thinking Bourdieu is able to overcome the (assumed) epistemological divide. A researcher drawing on his theory is less constrained in the choice of methods, but still able to consider epistemological and ontological issues. This is a task often neglected when combining qualitative and quantitative methods, but I accounted for this widely practiced omission by discussing my study in light of Bourdieu's 'methodological principles'. I argued that the theoretical, methodological and empirical aspects of my research project need to be interconnected by highlighting the need to combine each component simultaneously, reflexively and throughout this research project. Moreover, I introduced near and distant multi-sited participatory ethnography (beyond passive participation) as an ontological approach to incorporate Bourdieu's 'methodological principles' into researching children's seasonal outdoor play. In this way I followed Bourdieu's call to make use of all methods valuable for exploring the research object at hand; I designed my own Bourdieusian 'methodological toolkit to reveal the structure-agency interplay. By extending his initial set of methods I not only provided a new spin on his thoughts, but was able to consider possible biases of participant objectivation in the research field I study.

Through the introduction of the near and distant multi-sited participatory ethnographic approach in the second part of the chapter, which I embedded in the wider discussion of mixed-method research (methodological polytheism in Bourdieu's terminology), I drew attention to a more practical side of my approach: the research method itself. I turn now to the discussion on how I practically applied this research method by putting my attention to the research process itself.
Chapter 5  The research practice: procedural principles

While the previous chapters made the ‘intentions’ and ‘methodological principles’ of this thesis ‘explicit’, this chapter provides an account of the ‘procedural principles’ that I applied (see introductory quote). In using the term ‘procedural principles’ I follow Bourdieu’s ‘imperative’ to describe the methods used and how I have ‘put them in practice’ for exploring the structure-agency interplay in children’s outdoor play. As discussed in the previous chapter, this process implies being reflexive not only during the design of a research project, but also during the data collection and its analysis, as well as when presenting the findings. Each component of a research project is intertwined and requires engagement and reflexivity throughout a project. By providing a transparency of research practice, the reader is “able to reproduce in the reading of the texts the work of both construction and understanding that produced them” (Bourdieu, 1999d: 607). In other words, where intentions and practices are outlined, readers can put the findings into perspective; they can deconstruct the truth presented as they are aware of the point of view that shaped it.

A first response to Bourdieu’s demand of transparency is provided in Table 5-1. This table is an overview of the procedures undertaken in the course of this study in relation to Bourdieu’s key concepts. With this table I aim to reveal how my chosen methods fit into, and can make sense of, Bourdieu’s triad of field, capital and habitus to view seasonal outdoor play. I begin this chapter by revealing which practices I employed for recruiting families. I then present the methods I chose in more detail and demonstrate how I applied these methods in the field. Data collection included near (semi-structured interviews, elicited drawings, neighbourhood walks) and distant (GPS tracking, survey, travel diary) ethnographic research techniques. The remainder of the chapter deals with analysis of collected data. Here, I follow Bourdieu’s request to make ‘explicit’ and ‘codify’ the procedures actually carried out (Bourdieu, 1999d).
Recruiting families

The recruiting of participants differed between both study areas due to the difficulties I encountered during this phase. In Beach Haven, I was assisted by the local school in finding families after I spent some time with children on its premises before the study commenced. One of my supervisors drew on her local networks and arranged for me to visit Beach Haven primary school. The aim of these encounters was to familiarise myself with the procedures in New Zealand primary schools and to learn the everyday language of children (Cele, 2006, Holt, 2004). While these visits took place after the winter holidays in 2009 (August/September 2009), recruiting for my project only started after the next summer holidays (February 2010).

The teacher I was previously in contact with agreed to hand out the participant information sheets to children. They took the information about this project home and could then consider participation in discussion with their parents and guardians\textsuperscript{72}. Although I asked for all children aged 8-10 years to be invited, the teacher passed invitation packages only to children who were in their last year of primary school. The information packages children took home included a brief summary of the research project along with participant information sheets for parents and children and a free return envelope for families interested (see Appendix 2, Appendix 3). Responses were slow and sparse with some returning their statement of interest to the school and some mailing it directly to me.

\textsuperscript{72} In the remainder of this thesis I only refer to parents; none of the participants were under guardianship.
### Table 5-1: Overview of the study design in respect to Bourdieu’s triad of field, capital and habitus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Aim (to reveal...)</th>
<th>Research Method</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Empirical Question</th>
<th>Findings Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Field            | Neighbourhood walk and literature review    | • the social and physical environment in Beach Haven and Auckland central shaping play patterns  
• place base knowledge and getting familiar with the study area | Distant ethnography | Society on neighbour- hood level | • Describe the historical phenomena that have shaped parents view on ‘appropriate’ seasonal outdoor play  
• Describe contemporary and localised (place) phenomena that shape the social and physical aspects of outdoor play | 6, 7, 9 |
| Habitus, capital | GPS                                         | • children’s seasonal roaming patterns  
• to reveal possible probing questions during the interview stage when children are shown their GPS tracks | Distant ethnography | Child            | • Describe contemporary play patterns of children growing up in an intensifying urban environment | 9 |
| Habitus, capital | Parental survey                             | • socio-economic background information  
• families’ seasonal activity patterns  
• children’s independent mobility licences and rules  
• parental family contexts as children | Distant ethnography | Parents           | • Describe families social locations in the field of seasonal outdoor play | 8, 10, 11 |
| Habitus          | Travel diary                                | • one aspect of the hidden context in GPS tracks                                  | Near ethnography     | Child            | • Complement the GPS tracks and describe children’s independent mobility           | 9 |
| Habitus, capital | Elicited drawings                           | • what children like/dislike about their neighbourhood playing outdoors  
• possible probing questions during the interview stage | Near ethnography     | Child            | • Describe children’s view on ‘appropriate’ seasonal outdoor play  
• Describe children’s symbolic capital  
• Describe enabling and constraining elements children experience when playing outdoors | 9, 10, 11 |
| Habitus, capital | Focus group discussion/ semi structured interviews | • parental beliefs on ‘appropriate’ seasonal outdoor play  
• the detection of potential affordances  
• to reveal enabling and constraining features of outdoor play | Near ethnography     | Parents           | • Describe parents view on ‘appropriate’ seasonal outdoor play  
• Describe the forms of symbolic capital parents value in the ‘field of play’ | 8, 9, 10, 11 |
| Habitus, capital | Semi-structured interviews                  | • children’s evaluations and perceptions of their seasonal outdoor playing patterns  
• children’s actualising of affordances  
• to reveal enabling and constraining features of outdoor play | Near ethnography     | Child            | • Describe children’s view on ‘appropriate’ seasonal outdoor play  
• Describe children’s symbolic capital  
• Describe enabling and constraining elements children experience during playing outdoors | 9, 10, 11 |
| Habitus, capital | The follow up study                         | • children’s knowledge and understanding of placed outdoor play through collective discussions and interactions  
• embodied play patterns | Beyond passive participation | Child            | • Describe children’s symbolic capital  
• Describe enabling and constraining elements children experience during playing outdoors  
• Describe embodied play patterns | 9, 10, 11 |
Finding families in the central city proved to be even more difficult. As the primary school which caters for most of the central city children declined to distribute information about the research project, I needed to find different ways of recruitment which commenced from August 2009 to February 2010. I applied a number of strategies for recruitment including putting up posters on traffic lights around the central city and contacting (sometimes assisted by my supervisors) various organisations (e.g. kindergartens, playgroups, libraries, for a full list see Appendix 4, Appendix 5) to ask for assistance in distributing information about my project via their mailing list. I also sought permission to put up a poster about the project (see Appendix 6, Appendix 7). From time to time I was allowed to present my research personally to their target group. I also contacted and visited apartment managers. They often allowed me to publicise my project through posters and flyers or they passed the information package on to families. Others allowed me to spend time in their lobby, where I waited for families to arrive back home. Although I invested more than two months into these recruitment methods (July/August 2009), none of them were fruitful. I was only able to recruit one girl via an emailing list and one boy while I was waiting in an apartment lobby.

During the summer school holidays I started a second recruitment attempt and visited school holiday and afternoon school programmes in and around the central city. Staff allowed me to approach and advertise my project to families during drop off and pick up time. The downside of this approach was that I needed to bother many people who did not fit any of the required categories: living in a central city apartment and being 8-10 years old. Once I found interested (and suitable) candidates, I introduced my project further and handed out the information package. I provided parents and children with similar written information as in Beach Haven. Families left their name and phone number and I contacted them a few days later, leaving them enough time to thoroughly decide on their participation. A friend who speaks Korean assisted me with the phone calls in case parents needed further clarification in their own language. This proved valuable as three such families decided on the participation. All parents and children, as outlined earlier, were given the opportunity to ask questions; they made an informed choice about their participation and time commitment to this study. All parents and children, as outlined earlier, were given the opportunity to ask questions; they made an informed choice about their participation and time commitment to this study. I also informed families that I would keep their participation confidential and ensure their privacy as far as possible by using pseudonyms, storing of hard-copy data in a locked cabinet and using a password protected computer. I also mentioned that this project was approved by the Human Participants Ethics Committee of the University of Auckland.

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73 I systematically approached building managers by visiting each apartment complex personally advertising my project to them. I asked for their assistance in recruitment. In March, I received a list of buildings managers indicating the apartment complex and manager’s name from one manager who was exceptionally enthusiastic about my project. From then on I called managers beforehand, explained my project and confirmed that children in the desired age range lived in the complex before I paid it a visit.

74 By way of example, one child dropped out when I visited the family for the distribution of equipment and re-explaining the different components of the study.
In addition to gaining consent from parents and assent from children (see Appendix 8, Appendix 9), I needed to receive consent from school principals and children’s teachers (see Appendix 10, Appendix 11, Appendix 12, Appendix 13). The ethics committee requested this procedure to ensure that schools were aware of children bringing a GPS unit to class. Fortunately, all schools provided consent for participation. Nonetheless, this requirement added another element of uncertainty as willing children would have to have ceased their participation if schools had declined to participate. This aspect is one example of the various underlying landscapes of power within this research project (see Chapter 4).

Placing families

The various and differing recruitment attempts resulted in 11 families from Beach Haven and 9 from the central city agreeing to participate in the summer part of the study. 11 girls (7 in Beach Haven, 4 in the central city) and 9 boys (4 in Beach Haven, and 5 in the central city) contributed to this study along with their parents (see Table 5-2). For the winter phase one family in each area terminated their participation and two boys left the study. Although these participating families reflect the socio-economic and ethnic stratification of their neighbourhoods, ethnic affiliation or economic status was neither a criterion for inclusion nor was it of relevance during the analysis phase of this research project.

Beach Haven is ethnically diverse as I outline in Chapter 6. Ethnic backgrounds of children ranged from African (1), to NZ European (2), and Pacific People (4). Four parents identified their children as ethnic mixes (4) for which details are provided in Table 5-3. Children were mainly growing up in lower socio-economic one-family households; 10 families can be considered as traditional nuclear families (9 are married and one considered themselves as de facto married) and one child was being raised by a single mother. In contrast, nuclear and sole parent families are a minority in the central city (Statistics New Zealand, 2011). Four core families and four families headed by a sole parent participated (two single mothers and two single fathers). Children had an Asian (5), NZ European (1), Latin-American (1), Maori (1) and mixed ethnic (1) background as outlined in Table 5-3.

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75 It is not unusual that more girls participate in research projects (and feel a higher commitment) as, for example, the edited book by van Blerk and Kesby (2009) suggests.

76 Parents are in a long-term partnership and have been raising all their three children together. Long-term partnerships in New Zealand have equal rights to married couples.
Table 5-2: Overview of parents and children involved in different parts of the research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th></th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of child participants</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Haven child participants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central city child participants</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of parental participants</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with children</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicited drawings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS tracking</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel diary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey**</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with parent(s)***</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up meeting I (Beyond passive participation)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up meeting II (Beyond passive participation)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Although both parents often contributed to the interview they are counted here as one entity
** The interview with a father of a pair of siblings is only counted once for the girl instead of the boy
*** I counted the one focus group discussion in the central city for the family of the boy instead of the girl

The research practice: introducing the methods

Data collection occurred in three phases between February and March and May and September of 2010. The follow-up meeting took place in December 2010. It drew upon four major sources of information. Figure 5-1 provides an overview of the components of this project keeping the season in which each component commenced in mind. Table 5-2 details the participation of children and parents. The methods employed reflect the mixed-method approach and the research method of near and distant participatory ethnography introduced in the last chapter. I begin by outlining the neighbourhood observation I undertook, followed by methods directed to parents and close with components children were asked to fulfil. The chapter concludes with consideration of the follow up study.
Table 5-3: Overview of families in this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Child (sex/age) and Parent(s) (age)</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Additional Household member</th>
<th>Income (NZ$)</th>
<th>Cars/ Bicycles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>McBeth (f/8)</td>
<td>Mother (30s) Postgraduate</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td>20-40k</td>
<td>0/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father (30s) Bachelor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tim (m/11)</td>
<td>Father (50s) Small Business</td>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>2 teenagers</td>
<td>20-40k</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Haven</td>
<td>Father (50s) Management Certificate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kim (m/11)</td>
<td>Mother (30s) Asian</td>
<td>1 adult</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>1/na</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father (30s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taesong (m/8)</td>
<td>Mother (30s) Asian</td>
<td>1 adult, 1 child</td>
<td>20-40k</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father (30s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edward (m/8)</td>
<td>Father (50s) Unknown</td>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td>1 adult, 1 child</td>
<td>20-40k</td>
<td>1/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father (30s)</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>1 adult, 1 child,</td>
<td>20-40k</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father (50s)</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td></td>
<td>20-40k</td>
<td>1/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Juana (f/8)</td>
<td>Father (30s) Bachelor</td>
<td>Latin American</td>
<td>1 child</td>
<td>40-60k</td>
<td>1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (30s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hannah (f/9)</td>
<td>Mother (40s) European-African</td>
<td>European</td>
<td>60-80k</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father (40s)</td>
<td>American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josh (m/10)</td>
<td>Mother (30s) Secondary</td>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>1 adult, 3 children</td>
<td>&gt;100k</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Haven</td>
<td>Father (30s)</td>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td>1 adult, 3 children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dexter (m/10)</td>
<td>Mother (40s) Unknown</td>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>1 teenager</td>
<td>80-100k</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father (40s)</td>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td>1 teenager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael (10)</td>
<td>Father (30s) 6th form certificate</td>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td>1 child,1 teenager</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (30s)</td>
<td>1 child,1 teenager</td>
<td>na</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keven (m/ 10)</td>
<td>Mother (40s) Unknown</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td>1 adults, 1 child, 2 teenagers</td>
<td>60-80k</td>
<td>3/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Haven</td>
<td>Mother (30s)</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td>1 adult, 1 child, 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Isabelle (f/10)</td>
<td>Mother (30s) Secondary</td>
<td>European Islander</td>
<td>60-80k</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mather (30s)</td>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td>1 adult, 3 children,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosie (f/10)</td>
<td>Mother (30s) Unknown</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father (30s)</td>
<td>Maori-European</td>
<td>1 adults, 3 children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Haven</td>
<td>Mother (30s)</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>1 adults, 3 children</td>
<td>60-80k</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cyane (f/10)</td>
<td>Mother (na) Bachelor</td>
<td>Pacific Island-Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 adult, 2 teenager</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valerie (f/10)</td>
<td>Mother (30s) Business Certificate</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td>3 children, 2 teenagers</td>
<td>20-40k</td>
<td>2/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Haven</td>
<td>2 teenagers</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td>3 children, 2 teenagers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maree (f/10)</td>
<td>Mother (40s) Diploma</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td>1 child, 3 teenagers</td>
<td>60-80k</td>
<td>2/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father (40s)</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td>1 child, 3 teenagers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nicole (f/10)</td>
<td>Mother (50s) Primary School</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>1 adult,2 children, 2 teenagers</td>
<td>20-40k</td>
<td>2/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Haven</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>1 adult,2 children, 2 teenagers,</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rebekka (f/10)</td>
<td>Mother (20s) 5th form</td>
<td>Pacific Island</td>
<td>1 adults, 5 children</td>
<td>20-40k</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children were given the opportunity to select their own pseudonym, which is a common practice with children's geographers, and resulted in interesting and meaningful names (Barker and Weller, 2003a, Gallagher, 2008, Heath et al., 2009, Valentine, 1999).
Research practice: procedural principles

Researcher’s method: neighbourhood walks

With the neighbourhood walks I aimed to familiarise myself with the area, local terminology and other forms of place-based knowledge. 77 I observed the social context in which play patterns are staged in order to experience and learn, but also to be able to deconstruct these practices at a later time. I visited both neighbourhoods at different times of the day, week and season in order to recognise those events, people and places which might be discussed in interviews or drawn on the maps. The aim was to observe practices carried out in, around and because of these places. I kept a detailed diary of these observations but I did not analyse my notes in any structured way as they built the basis for my reflections (e.g. interviews). These notes helped me to form my own understanding of neighbourhoods and their different landscapes of play. I mirrored my own play experiences from Germany with the affordances children seemed to detect in these intensifying environments (one form of Bourdieu’s reflexivity). This approach proved to be useful during interviews in which my aim was to separate the deeply personal experiences of places and practices with the knowledge gained by families’ experiences and practices of the same place78.

77 I chose the area I visited according to the definition of neighbourhood I provided in Chapter 1. Routes followed administrative boundaries and well-know landmarks (e.g. parks, shops), but also included spontaneous turns. They reflect my own exploring of the two neighbourhoods.

78 Similar approaches have been carried out by Cele (2006) in Stockholm, who was also interested in children’s place experiences and Hinde (2007), who researched the automobility capital of Melbourne residents.
Procedural principles of methods conducted with parents

The components of the study that parents were asked to participate in consisted of one distant and one near ethnographic aspect. Below I begin by describing the parental survey and the distant approach before turning to the near approach and the semi-structured interview.

**Parental pen and paper survey**

Many studies use self-reported measures to explore the relationships between activity and different environments (Black and Macinko, 2008). For example, Ewing et al. (2003), Hume et al. (2009) and Bringolf-Isler et al. (2010) use self-reported activity measures to determine the connection between urban sprawl and obesity, safety and urban form as well as socio-cultural factors and the environmental features. Strengths of self-reported measures are seen in their time and cost effectiveness as well as in the low burden on participants (e.g. no wearing of accelerometers or pedometers for determining activity levels). However some researchers contend that these studies are limited by over-reliance on self-report (Duncan and Mummery, 2007, Sallis et al., 2000, Shephard, 2003, Stopher and Greaves, 2007). My aim in using a parental survey was to complement children's GPS logs with the self-reported data and obtain a deeper understanding on how families position themselves in the ‘field of play’ based on their beliefs, experiences and habits without putting an additional burden on children.

To fit my Bourdieusian lens, I amended (for use in summer and winter) a survey from the URBAN study (Badland et al., 2009) and Vertical living kids (Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009) (see Appendix 14 and Appendix 15). Through the survey I gained child, parent and household demographics in combination with self-reported activity habits of family members. Parents also reported on their families’ physical activity habits when they were young. In addition, I collected information on neighbourhood perceptions (e.g. safety), play equipment availability (e.g. bikes, game consoles), transport options (e.g. car ownership), children's independent mobility and parental rules around independent mobility. Parents also revealed licences they enjoyed as children. All parents returned the survey except one mother who allowed her son to participate but who withdrew herself (35 in total). This information provided from the parental perspective offers a background on the families, but does not reveal the ‘nitty-gritty’ of everyday life, which I attempted to explore through parental and child interviews.
Parental interview

My aim in interviewing parents was to gain deeper insights into their understandings and experiences of social struggles of play (e.g. complexities around licences, desires and aspirations linked to play). In addition, I was interested in how parental understandings are both mirrored in and differ from children’s responses in their environment (Christensen, 2004a, Neuwelt, 2006, Timperio et al., 2004).

I undertook two focus groups discussions. I held one of these at the university campus. Despite providing a babysitter service on site to ease parental burden only two families attended. The second one, which was held in a family home in Beach Haven, was only attended by the host family. As a result of this poor engagement it seemed at this time more practical to interview parents separately in their homes given their busy schedules and the time commitment required for organising focus group meetings. This situation, however, meant that I needed to transcribe 33 interviews instead of my anticipated 8-10. The positive outcome was that I visited families more often and obtained deeper perspective on their family lives.

I initially summarised the purpose of the interview and briefly sketched my research interest in their neighbourhood experiences on seasonal outdoor play. The interview process was semi-structured and included a ranking exercise on constraining and enabling neighbourhood features. Interviews were audiotaped and ranged from 20-90 minutes, covering wide ranging topics (see Appendix 16). Parents were asked about their own definitions of neighbourhood and what their neighbourhood means to them. Further, themes related to choice and constraints for their children to be physically active in the neighbourhood were covered besides their own play experiences as children. I asked parents about their understanding of an ideal neighbourhood for outdoor play and their recommendations to improve their neighbourhoods. At the end of each interview I invited parents to write down and rank five positive and negative aspects of their neighbourhood for children to be active in both summer and winter. My aim was to reflect on the importance of already-mentioned topics and reveal additional themes of significance. In general, parents found the ranking in winter more difficult than in summer and finding positive aspects of neighbourhood in that season seemed especially hard. One couple residing in the central city decided that they did not have any positive experience on outdoor activities in their neighbourhood and simply focused on the negative ones.

79 I was unable to interview three families in summer. One mother withdrew her collaboration and two families (one in each neighbourhood) were only interviewed in winter, but these interviews covered both seasons and followed the same protocol as all interviews.
**Procedural principles of methods conducted with children**

The methods conducted with children were the most important part of this research project. I begin this sub-section by briefly discussing the selection of the GPS loggers used in this study before moving on to discuss the data collection of GPS tracks, travel diaries, elicited drawings and interviews with children.

**Preparations: decisions on GPS logger and a pilot study**

When I started this project, asking children to wear a GPS logger was a rather new phenomenon and different GPS loggers had been used in research. For example, a study in Dunedin, New Zealand utilised the Globalsat DG-100 (Quigg et al., 2010), whereas Mackett et al. (Mackett et al., 2007a) used the Garmin Fortrex 201 in the UK. The diversity of GPS loggers on the market the variety which had been and used in scholarly projects put me in a difficult position to decide on the most suitable device. The variance in quality and price also made it difficult given my tight budget. The choosing of the BT-1000X was guided by two aspects. First, after talking to researchers who employed GPS loggers in their projects, I considered three commercially available GPS loggers as potential candidates for this study and tested them for their suitability (Ergler et al., 2010). These tests and the later selection were guided by the premise of finding a logger which required little or no maintenance for children and was lightweight but robust and unobtrusive. In general, the ideal would be that the children were oblivious to wearing one at all and that the logger had a long battery life, monitored their movement (time and date stamped) precisely and had enough capacity to store children’s roaming patterns. Second, I asked three children to test the loggers and tell me about their preferences. While the Forerunner 305 sparked children’s interest in the beginning due to the possibility of seeing tracks, they were less fond of this logger after the 4-day pilot study. They preferred the easy-to-handle equipment without any fancy buttons or screen. With this in mind, and encouraged by my own tests, I decided to utilise the BT-1000X for this study. This decision has been supported as the correct one by the release of

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80 I tested the ‘Garmin Forerunner 305’, ‘Trackstick’ and ‘BT-1000X’ for my diverse demands including battery life with different settings, data storage capacities with different settings, accuracy in urban tunnels, open sky or the effect of trees. I also tested how hot starts vary over the course of one day (Ergler et al., 2010).

81 From the beginning on I was interested to find a unit which could be handled by children themselves to fully acknowledge their expertise and reduce burden on parents.

82 The best option would be only an on and off button and no screen as the GPS should not deter children from their usual behaviour and movements. Although it should further be easy to see if a satellite position is acquired or not, less gadgets could mean less fun for them on first sight.

83 However, in the eyes of children the Forerunner has the advantage as one girl disclosed that “It is really cool to see how fast we go. The other one is really boring: you can’t see what’s going on.” Another boy told me that “the watch was ok, but disturbing especially during class time. You know it flipped over and I had to bring it back into position. The other one [BT-1000X] is really cool. You wear it around your belt and then forget about it.” Another comment inspired me to the already mentioned tests of hot starts “I made a game to see which one is quicker and often the small one on the belt won, but sometimes the watch was quicker.”
Research practice: procedural principles

recently published validations (Rodriguez et al., 2005, Vazquez-Prokopec et al., 2009, Wu et al., 2010).

The night before each child started their part in the project, I charged all the needed GPS loggers and double checked the compliance of the GPS setting and cleared the log. Then I prepared the information packages for each family. The information package included the consent and assent forms, the instruction for the drawing and paper as well as pencils, the travel diaries for four days, a reminder to wear the data logger on two school days and two weekend days and a brief manual for the GPS (see Appendix 17, Appendix 18).

When I met the children, I explained again what I was asking them to do and handed them the equipment involved in each part of the study. I was assured that they knew what I was asking them to do while letting them explain the task to me. For example, I showed them the GPS logger (Figure 5-2) and explained how it will be worn and used. Each child tried to switch it on and off as well as plugging it into the power outlet. The aim was to equip them with the necessary capabilities to handle this part of the data collection independently, although the majority of times one parent was with us and listened to my explanations. After this introduction the study families often invited me for a coffee and showed me around their house. In general, it was a very relaxed and exciting atmosphere. Sometimes parents filled out the survey straight away and I was able to get to know children better during that time. I primarily visited families at their house to ensure that there was no additional time commitment for them involved. One parent asked me to meet her at a public library because she would be surrounded by friends who ‘speak better English’.

Figure 5-2: The GPS logger used in this study with equipment handed to children
Left: case in which the BT-1000X is carried on a belt; Middle: BT-1000X; Right: charger

84 One child in the central city dropped out while I was explaining the study to him again.
GPS: observing through distant ethnography

As children have not been the focus in vertical living studies (with a few exceptions e.g. Carroll et al., 2008, Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009), I aimed to reveal how children living in a suburb and in high rise apartment complexes are spending time without directly observing them or following them around. This would have been too difficult because of time constraints and practicalities. I asked children to wear a GPS logger for four consecutive days, which included two weekdays and two weekend days. I collected data in summer and winter to explore different activity patterns in different seasons. The GPS technology measures location, distance travelled and speed based upon the last signal received from the available satellites. Some researchers indicate that GPS data per se counts as an objective measure to determine where, when and how long someone spends time in a specific place (Badland et al., 2011a, Jones et al., 2009a). For example, Mackett et al. (2007b) demonstrated explicitly that trips which are covered by GPS data are missing from diaries, which is also the case in this project. However, due to technical problems or decisions on when not to wear the GPS logger this observation tool is not as such a full observation of children’s roaming patterns (see also Christensen et al., 2011). It failed to indicate which potential affordances children actualised (technical inaccuracy). A GPS logger cannot reveal how someone feels in or about a place or play activity and with whom time has been spent.

To guarantee data quality and solve possible problems, I contacted families either on the first or second night of wearing the GPS logger. This ensured that the quality of logs I received was high. All children had at least 3 days of track logs in summer and winter. After completion of the distant ethnographic data collection, it did not usually take long to pick up all the equipment and this allowed me to spend time with families again. We arranged a time and day for the interviews and I went back to the office to download the data. I saved it in different formats (e.g. .csv-file, kml-file), and emailed the participants their maps in a Google kmz-file as well as a pdf-file extracted from the GIS. The data was cleaned through deleting all points outside the elevation range in Auckland and by visual analysis. I also took children’s statements of their spatial movements during wear-time into account; they confirmed the accuracy of the GPS tracks and places not visited could be removed.

I also asked if the child was still enjoying wearing the GPS. “Yes she is” one mother texted back or another father told me that his son “put it on this morning and is having it on since. Really no big deal”. Another mother, who wasn’t at home when I distributed the GPS was concerned that they did something wrong and called me up. Nonetheless, she said that her son loved to wear the GPS and is looking forward to the maps.

From time to time the GPS logger showed a perfectly fine track, but parents and children did emphasise that they did not spend time there; hence I removed these parts from analysis. This example shows how important it is to confirm with the carrier of the GPS its accuracy instead over-relying on this distant observation tool. This approach further indicates that I took children and their families seriously and viewed them as the experts on their life.
Travel diary

Children received a travel diary for each day they were wearing the GPS logger (see Appendix 17). They were asked to keep track of their movements (time, with whom and by which mode of transport to which destination) and what they did during that time. They were also asked to provide their waking and bed time and when they turned the GPS on and off. In an additional section they could provide comments (e.g. commenting their day in general) or problems they encountered with the GPS logger. Children were completely free as to how they approached this task. They decided themselves whether they wanted to fill in diaries immediately after they changed locations or in the evening.

Completing travel diaries as part of this study was the task children resisted the most. I attribute this to their complex design. I aimed to make it fun for children by including ticking boxes for mode of transport, accompaniment and possible events at destinations, but in retrospect I would have designed it differently as it was poorly received by children. Some filled in the diary in a very detailed manner, some were sporadic and others did not return diaries at all. Although I received 31 diaries\(^{87}\) in summer and winter quality varied and many trips seem to be missed when comparing the diaries with the GPS tracks.

I did not impose filling in diaries as a requirement of continued participation in the study, nor did I check or confirm their trips when I picked up the materials after four days. Rather I felt that given I wanted to take children’s collaboration seriously, I also needed to provide them with the freedom to decide which tasks they wanted to follow through on instead of pushing them to fulfil tasks to my aspired satisfaction\(^{88}\). In this project the travel diaries were seen as a tool which complemented the GPS logs and revealed (at least partially) children’s independent mobility, but the main aspect was to give something to children which could act as a reminder for them. Indeed, I had hoped that the diaries would remind them of where and with whom they had spent time when I met with them to discuss their placed experienced of outdoor play affordances prompted by their GPS tracks and drawn neighbourhood maps.

Elicited drawings

Each season I asked children to draw a map of all the places they like and dislike to be active in. The aim was to explore if the drawings revealed places frequently visited or if

\(^{87}\) I counted here whether children participated in the task travel diary or not. Some children filled out 4 for each season, while others only one or two for each season.

\(^{88}\) Other researchers report on similar incidents in which children resisted the ‘silly tasks’ the adult researcher was requiring by exercising their control and power in the research process such as simply not filling in diaries (Ansell, 2001b, Christensen, 2004b, Gallagher, 2008, Hill, 2008).
important memories had been inscribed in this activity. Comparing these maps in a later stage with the GPS tracks and the semi-structured interviews disclosed whether everyday places and activities or ‘events’ deemed to be more important for children. The motivations behind asking children to draw were twofold. First, in line with participatory approaches I wanted to integrate a research component which has frequently been reported as being enjoyable for children (Driskell, 2001, Holt et al., 2008, Matthews, 1985) and allowed them to think about this topic in their own time (Cele, 2005, Morrow, 2001). Second, the maps children drew were used as a prompt for children’s experiences in places they have drawn (Darbyshire et al., 2005, Young and Barrett, 2001). I provided children with white A3 drawing paper and pencils, but I did not instruct them on how to carry out the task and children responded to this task differently 89. By doing so, I did not want to provide children with examples or impose a certain drawing and mapping style on them.

**Semi-structured interviews with children**

The most important part of the data collection process was the interview conducted with each child. It provided an arena in which they could be the experts (van Blerk and Kesby, 2009, Walker et al., 2009); they could talk about their experiences, feelings, concerns and suggestions for an attractive outdoor play environment from their point of view. The GPS maps, which show track-logs of each child participant separately representing their mobility patterns, were analysed cooperatively during the interview along with the elicited drawings and their travel diaries. They guided the discussion around outdoor play experiences, actualisation of affordances and children’s feelings in these places during different seasons. The interviews lasted between 30-180 minutes 90. Interviews usually started with the elicited drawings as prompts. This provided children with the freedom to choose which theme they would like to begin with. Interviews covered various topics: places children like and dislike to actualise affordances, their place attachment, understanding of neighbourhoods, the different activities as they participate in and their experiences across seasons (see Appendix 19). This part of the data collection process was vital as children could explain what the places on their drawings meant to them, whereas the GPS maps provided the basis for play and place specific discussions. They were also used to confirm outliers or the correctness of maps. For example, these discussions revealed

89 I exemplify how differently children responded to this task with two examples. Each child submitted a drawing of places they like and don’t like to play at in summer, whereas in winter one child from the suburb decided not to draw a map due to his dyslexia and his mum apologised after the interview. One central city girl added a map during the interview in addition to her drawing. She felt that her drawing did not represent her spatial understanding well enough. Her initial drawing included no spatial references. In total she handed in 3 drawings as she used the front and back side of the paper I provided her with.

90 Interviews which took more than an hour were mainly conducted with children from migrant backgrounds. Some needed the time to find right words for expressing themselves to their own satisfaction. Moreover, I also played games or did crafty things with some children during the interview, which lengthened the interview, but provided a different view into their lives.
when a GPS logger was forgotten at home. However, flexibility guided the interview as children could discuss anything that they felt was important to them in the content of playing and being active outside. Although I had a list of questions prepared, participants were in control of the interview as they could switch topics or end the interview at any time. They could also decide if they wanted the interviews to be audio-taped or not, but all consented to the recording of their verbal accounts. I aimed for a 'big friend approach' (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988), in which I dressed casually in jeans and t-shirt and I attempted to offer a conversational style in which not only I asked questions, but also encouraged the children to ask questions of me (see e.g. Christensen, 2004b).

**Beyond passive participation: children in the driver’s seat of a ‘follow up study’**

While finishing the initial data collection, suburban and central city children showed an interest in sharing their experiences to see how their own data differed from that of others (see also Ergler, 2011a). Children took the initiative to speak up and ask for an additional component in the research design they did not feel fully satisfied with (see Figure 5-3). This reflected my openness to suggestion and I was pleased that I had clearly cultivated a research environment in which they felt engaged in the project beyond the normal means of participation. Indeed, they felt empowered to speak up rather than being passive participants.

The idea to integrate children directly in the research process arose. I wanted to create something more interactive, creative and fun in cooperation with the children. However,
because of time constraints I was only able to invite them twice (once in Beach Haven and once in the central city). Thus, I integrated enough flexibility into the methods to give space for the children’s own interests in the wider research project and to have their questions answered. For example, I asked them to share all the questions they wanted answered from the follow up meeting in the beginning of the first meeting (see for more detail Ergler, 2011a).

In both study areas children were asked to take the non-local children on a child-guided neighbourhood tour in which they would show the visitors ‘good or annoying things to do’ in their neighbourhood. The novelty in this approach is that the child does not show the researcher the neighbourhood, but rather she or he shows it to someone the same age. Children were in charge of the guided walk and the ‘adult’ researchers (the author and 4 field assistants) only attended the walk for safety and ethical considerations as well as to observe the 10 child researchers. Children could capture the walk with a GPS logger, digital camera and voice recorder, but they were given the power to decide how and to what extent.

One Saturday morning was dedicated to the drawings and another to the GPS logs, which were both explored through different games under the guise of an ‘Amazing race’. Children received a new clue after everyone finished the previous task. Clues, for example, involved noting down first impressions of the drawings or to count the different affordances they saw in each neighbourhood and season (by putting maize kernels into a plastic bag). ‘Results’ were then discussed in a group, which children documented on a big piece of paper (see Figure 5-4). For the travel logs I printed four large posters which covered the GPS routes of

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91 The results of this observation are presented in the following findings chapters as it often revealed children’s embodied play practices.

92 The TV Show ‘Amazing Race’ is a popular game show in which the candidates travel around the world and at each destination they need to fulfil tasks e.g. fill up a water tank before they receive their next clue.

93 In this way we could easily visually compare the seasonal differences between locations and within locations.
all children in summer and winter by area. On the posters there was enough space for children to ‘scribble’ their first impressions about the travel logs or note down the visual differences they found between the city and the suburb (see Figure 5-5).

Adding a child-led approach to the existing research design avoids ‘adultist’ assumptions and worldviews during the analysis stage. Therefore, analysis and interpretation was not led by the adult researcher in this stage of the research, but rather was driven by the children themselves, their questions and actualisation of affordances during the walks. Misrepresentations of their experiences and important topics were thus minimised. The approach allowed children to decide on, and highlight to each other, which aspects of ‘playing’ in their neighbourhood are important rather than simply answering the questions of an adult researcher on an additional level.

The analysis stage

I have accounted in the previous sections for the data collection phase of the research. The aim of applying such a diversity of methods, which are also wide-ranging in terms of the traditions from which they come from (see Chapters 1, 2 and 4), was to overcome the biases outlined in Chapter 4 and to cover families’ practices and experiences in and from the physical and social contexts they are produced. I now turn to providing some ‘understanding’ of how I attempted to make sense of the data produced (Bourdieu, 1996b). Working with so many different methods to answer my research questions, it was important to find ways to approach this rich and complex data in appropriate and meaningful ways (Woolley, 2009). I worked on the presumption that using a Bourdieusian lens to view this mixed-method data would allow an unpacking of the structure-agency complexities hidden in these diverse data ‘sets’ and move beyond the sheer description and categorisation of individuals. I sought to systematically understand participants’ worldviews guided by Bourdieu’s triad of field, capital and habitus.

To arrive at an integrated set of findings, I applied two stages of analysis. In the first instance, I undertook each method separately and tried to find ways of reducing and organising data in easy and accessible ways. Each method required a different analytical technique, which I explain below. In the second stage, I triangulated the findings of each method. I used the data derived from each method to explore the research questions introduced in Chapter 1. However, the particular framing of these questions needs to be viewed as the result of the second analysis stage. Although I had loosely formulated questions at the outset of the study that concerned children’s seasonal play patterns, they became clearer through the triangulation of data. The research questions subsequently fell into ‘neat groups’ that made...
sense in relation to Bourdieu’s triad and the reviewed literature on children’s outdoor activities. Consequently, there was what Wolley (2009: 22) calls a “dialogue between ideas and evidence” throughout this stage of the project.

In the following section I account for how I interpreted the findings in light of my reading of Bourdieu’s theory (see Chapter 3). I begin by introducing the first phase of analysis separated by analysis method (e.g. coding, descriptive statistics) and later provide an account of how I triangulated these diverse data sets.

**Analysis stage I: Considering the data separately**

In this section, I begin with a description of the thematic building of a coding scheme which I then applied to the semi-structured interviews that lie at the heart of the finding chapters. The next part deals with the diverse visual data sets (e.g. GPS logs, elicited drawings), which I also analysed in a similar way as the interviews through building thematic coding schemes. Last, I present a brief account how I analysed the parental survey data and children’s travel diaries through using descriptive statistics.

**Near ethnography: analysing the semi-structured interviews**

It is often recommended that researchers transcribe their own interviews to maximise familiarisation (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984, Bird, 2005, Braun and Clarke, 2006, Crang, 2001). Although I did not transcribe all interviews myself, I accounted for this disadvantage by listening to and correcting the interviews after I received the transcripts from a contracted transcriber\(^{94}\). After this review process I felt familiar with all interviews. I had already recorded ongoing observations on possible analytical themes and had more than 50 hours of interview material, which in turn produced more than 1000 pages of transcripts, not including the neighbourhood walks\(^{95}\). The transcriber converted about two thirds of this material from verbal into written format, while I transcribed the rest myself (see Appendix 23). I emailed completed transcripts to all the parents who had requested one for checking on whether I

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\(^{94}\) I decided to employ a professional transcription service in India to transcribe the interviews and handle the workload. For quality assurance I listened to all interviews done by the transcriber and changed the wording accordingly. In the beginning the transcripts took a long time to go through as the New Zealand accent is so different to an Indian one and place names, streets and little things like a corner shop (dairy) could often not be picked up by the transcriber. I ended up asking her to transcribe my participants who had a migrant background as they tend to speak slower or more clearly. Taking such precautions improved the quality of transcripts.

\(^{95}\) The neighbourhood walks were only partially transcribed by myself and a student for her honours thesis. We both looked for specific revealing or contradicting aspects in relation to our overall research question. In my case, I was already so deep into the triangulation that I only transcribed the parts I deemed important for getting more insights into Bourdieu’s triad. At the end of my transcription of 73 interviews, I was prepared to be flexible within the transcription process of the follow up study as listening is also an interpretative task itself (Bird, 2005). Nonetheless I asked myself questions while I transcribed and reflected on what I heard and discussed it informally with the honours student and my partner who both acted as field assistants. Choosing not to transcribe the entire walks or discussions on the tapes during the games was therefore done without compromising the data validity. However, these excerpts were analysed as thoroughly as the semi-structured interviews.
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captured their intended meaning. The next step was to engage with the data ‘sets’ more systematically through building coding themes, following the example of Braun and Clarke (2006) and others (Jackson, 2001, Morse and Richards, 2002, Rubin and Rubin, 1995).

By coding the data I intended to ensure rigour and build up an interpretation through a series of stages and, above all, avoid drawing premature conclusions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I analysed the interview data in four stages. In a first step, I applied an inductive approach. With this first stage of analysis I attempted to overcome any pre-conceived themes and, as far as possible, avoid imposing my thoughts influenced by a Bourdiesian reading of the data. Rather, the data from participants should tell me their stories. This aspect is widely associated with grounded theory and seeks to find common themes without theoretical presuppositions by engaging participants’ situated knowledge (Baxter et al., 1999, Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Yeung, 1997). In practice this means that I cautiously read all printed transcripts. I began reading each set of transcripts individually (e.g. city children summer, Beach Haven parents winter) keeping notes of potential themes (see Figure 5-6) that could identify a possible subsequent analysis in nVivo 9.2. coding software. The idea of reading the interviews according to place and season and developing separate themes for each group of interviewees was threefold. First, reading the interview transcripts in printed form allowed a different reading than that confronting me on a computer screen. The printed page meant I could familiarise myself with the data further. Second, by building separate themes for each locality, season and interview group the themes relevant to one group did not dictate those emerging for other groups. Rather, the process allowed me to approach the data ‘outside the square’ and with fewer preconceptions. Third, comparing the emergent themes for each group allowed me to decide on themes and subthemes before I engaged with the nVivo software, while at the same time accounting for the diversity of issues that were evident in the data offered by parents and children in each locality and season. After having established these initial and broad ideas, I viewed them through a (reflexive and inclusive) Bourdiesian lens involving his key ideas of field, capital of habitus (a reading of the data that is explored further in the second step of analysis – see below). In the second step, in which I used nVivo coding software, I explored the initial themes developed in the first analysis stage in more depth in three ways. First, I used the pre-determined themes from the first round of ‘coding’ explained above to code sections of text electronically into ‘nodes’ and ‘sub-nodes’. This time I coded all interview transcripts irrespective of location, season or interviewee. Second, during the coding of these pre-defined themes, I also explored in which ways Bourdieu’s triad may be helpful in further organising and explaining

96 All who provided feedback had only minor changes or none. For example one mother indicated “Sorry for getting back to you so late, there was a lot to read and look over. Although everything looks okay.” And another mother emailed “just changed a few things I knew were different - little things.”
the data. Third, I followed up insights and reflections that I highlighted during the first step of the coding process (see above) and based these on observational notes I made during visits to the two neighbourhoods. Using nVivo software was a useful tool to organise the large amount of data systematically and logically (see Figure 5-7).

Third, to analyse all the coded text I read the different nodes electronically several times in this second step and in the course of this process new nodes evolved (e.g. seasonal capital) and I was able to make finer distinctions within each node (e.g. seasonal capital – health) or nodes were merged or redefined. Once I arrived at a final coding frame, I used diverse (matrix) query functions to re-organise data and explore single nodes further (e.g. parent, child, locality, season). In this step I studied the text closely attempting to draw out and synthesise the commonalities of participants’ experiences and points of view as well as their variations or contradictions according to locality, seasonality, parent and child. I used this process for all sub-nodes to derive at a descriptive working interpretive document (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Fourth, once I had thematically analysed parent and child interview transcripts from each season by locality, I undertook a further analysis focussing on commonalities and differences. I first compared subset separately (e.g. children summer, parents winter). Then I compared summer and winter for parents and children in each locality before I compared parental and child accounts across locality and season. In this stage I also drew on the notes I made throughout the analysis process noting consistencies and differences with the preliminary findings of completed pieces of analysis. In this way, I iteratively evolved an explanatory schema that was informed by a Bourdieusian lens. This allowed me to account for the complexities and contradictions that arose during this analytical phase through viewing the findings in relation to Bourdieu’s triad. The following chapters present the thematic analysis of participants’ talk through illustrative excerpts inserted into the text to maintain a connection between talk, interpretation and conceptual framework. Quotes presented are verbatim and I made no adjustments to grammar. Child participants could choose their own pseudonyms and details are masked were necessary.

The verbatim data gathered in the follow up meeting was only partially transcribed. I listened to them after I analysed the semi-structured interviews and selected key quotes that were common, complementary and contrasting to those identified in the parental and child interview data set. The findings in the subsequent chapters are primarily those that arose from the semi-structured interviews, although there is an occasional quote from the child-led neighbourhood walk in cases where they enriched the analysis or provided a complementary insight. I annotated these quotes accordingly. Further, the observational notes from field
assistants were used to inform the analysis on children’s habitus. Being in a different environment put children’s learned logics of practice to test and easily revealed their feel for the ‘rules of the game’.

Figure 5-6: Snapshot of paper-based coding approach for city and suburban children’s play practices in winter
As nVivo changed the setup of their software recently no distinction between ‘free’ and ‘tree’ nodes needed to be made. The ‘name’ (e.g. ‘Individual play capital’) indicates the theme, while ‘source’ reveals the number of participants coded into this ‘theme’ (e.g. 29). ‘References’ state the number of times this ‘theme’ has been coded (e.g. 39). Nonetheless, this new version also allows sub-themes and I frequently made use of this due to the pre-determined codes developed in the first step of analysis. I coded child and parental transcripts in the same codes.

**Analysis of visual data:**

**viewing near and distant ethnography through the same lens**

For analysis of the visual data (GPS logs, elicited drawings, photographs) in this thesis I also applied a theme building approach to coding similar to the one developed for the semi-structured interviews. In the following section I present first how I analysed the GPS logs and then describe how I analysed the elicited drawings and photographs.

Although GPS logs are not typically analysed visually as is the case with photographs, I could nonetheless draw on the experiences of researchers conducting visual analysis to reveal hidden meanings embedded in the GPS logs. I could discuss what is presented and why and what kind of social struggles are leading to this visual image (Cook and Hess, 2007, Mitchell, 2006, Rose, 2007). However, as I outlined earlier the maps produced were mainly used as prompts and to provide a first insight into children’s seasonal roaming patterns;
hence I analysed these spatial patterns qualitatively and noted emerging themes as already introduced above.

To be able to carry out this analysis, I integrated the GPS data into ArcMap10 to create a map. I produced one ‘point shape’ file for each child in summer and winter and then combined these so that neighbourhood roaming patterns could be visually assessed according to the day and the speed at which children travelled. I first viewed children’s spatial movement independently before combining information from all children from each neighbourhood. I complemented this process with integrating children’s movements in the second neighbourhood and replicated this part of the mapping with winter data before combining both data sets to compare seasonal changes in roaming patterns. My aim in such an approach was to detect any changes in the children’s movement by neighbourhood and season without imposing presuppositions. Hence, I noted whether children left their neighbourhood on a regular basis, the places they frequently visited and changes I could visually detect between seasons. This approach was paper-based. I then compared these notes derived from each season and neighbourhood to detect differences and similarities, but also to verify my first impression on the seasonal differences assessed across the data set. After the follow up study I used these tracks to compare the places visited during the child-led neighbourhoods. At this stage I could complement patterns, reveal contradictions and test ambiguities derived from the summer and winter tracks. When I zoomed into the neighbourhood level to present this visual data, children’s homes are relocated to ensure their privacy. I approached the analysis of elicited drawings and photographs taken along the walk in a similar way.

I coded the drawings and photographs taken on the neighbourhood walk thematically. Each aspect of the drawn image was coded in the beginning according to what it represented (e.g. game console, playground, shop), where it was located (in or outside neighbourhood) and which activity it indicated (e.g. jumping, watching a movie) (Hart, 1979, Mitchell, 2006, Ross, 2002). Also for the elicited drawings I noted how children evaluated these features (happy/sad) and whether a child applied any spatial references (yes/no). Difficulties arose as some children did not indicate whether I should associate an aspect as a positive or negative neighbourhood feature 97. I decided to view them as a ‘happy place’ in this analysis stage. I later confirmed the correctness of this assessment through complementing the drawings with information from the semi-structured interviews. I reduced thematic categories I suggested on paper-based notes of common play sites and activities further (e.g. into ‘water based activity’, ‘home-indoors’). I then used these categories to compare which features were

97 Although children disclosed this information during the interview I first wanted to look for emerging themes without being influenced by the interpretation of the producer of this image to stay in line with my approach of ‘filtered voice’.
present and absent in children’s seasonal drawings and elicited photographs (see also Hodgetts et al., 2007a); first within and then across neighbourhoods (and seasons). The aim was to view which (seasonal) play affordances were important for children.

In contrast, the lists produced by parents at the end of each interview were copied in an Excel spread-sheet and then exported into a tagcloud producing software (www.tagxedo.com) to reveal differences and similarities between seasons and locations. I decided to forego the possibility of ranking the items within these lists compiled by parents and instead generalise this data independent of importance as the number of participants was too small to find any significant differences and all five points were the most important features parents regarded as enabling and constraining for outdoor play. The tagcloud software produced larger words for the ones mentioned more often separated by locality and season.

Near and distant ethnography analysed through descriptive statistics

While I explored the parental survey data through a statistical analysis software package (IBM SPSS Statistics 19), the travel diary was simply explored with descriptive statistics such as frequency counts. No in-depth analysis was carried out for two reasons. First, this small data set only allowed limited options for exploring statistical significance. Second, I used these two data sets as background information to be mirrored against the qualitatively analysed findings, which were derived in regards to Bourdieu’s approach.

Analysis stage II: coming to terms with near and distant ethnography through triangulation

My last task was to combine the quantitative and qualitative analyses that have been carried out separately. The aim was to understand the key determinants of children’s seasonal outdoor play and their structure agency-complexity through a ‘montage’ of all the analyses undertaken previously. Through this approach I sought to reveal findings which may have not been gained through any single analysis; to make the contradictions apparent and to view similarities.

Qualitative researchers often use the analogy of a ‘bricolage’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) or ‘crystallisation’ (Hemming, 2008) to describe the ‘vignettes’ they produce through their explanations and understanding of a research object. Their interpretative practices involve diverse ‘montages’ of ‘puzzle pieces’ to combine the data in a useful and sensitive way creating the ‘big pictures’ presented in each of the findings chapters (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, Longhurst, 2003). However, despite the wide use of more than one method there are few rules about bringing different components rigorously together; and even fewer for when
qualitative and quantitative forms are combined (Flick, 2003, Hesse-Biber, 2010, Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Researchers need to draw on good examples, such as Wolley (2009) who reported on the measures she undertook to reveal the structure-agency complexity in a mixed method research project. Nonetheless, each researcher needs to ultimately decide on what aspects to include, what to leave out and how to combine diverse components. Although they focus on qualitative studies, Daly et al. (2007) offer guidance on this matter. They emphasise the necessity to ground an approach in a sound theoretical and empirical framework. I transpose their claim and apply this aspect to the mixed-method study at hand.

I conducted the triangulation of data in a similar way to Bourdieu’s theory on relational approaches. I observed each research question and method in relation to the overall study objective: to unpack the structure-agency complexity in children’s seasonal outdoor play. This was possible as I followed Bourdieu’s ‘methodological principles’ throughout the diverse phases of this project. Hence, I chose the methods to address each aspect of the same substantive issue (Woolley, 2009). I linked the methods during all stages and in this way, it was possible to integrate the data during the analyses, the interpretation of findings and this final presentation to provide a nuanced account of children’s seasonal play practices.

The data collection, analysis and triangulation have to be seen as ‘puzzle pieces’ complementing each other. Only by following each step thoroughly and combining the different aspects completes the puzzle and results in the ‘fuller picture’ being clearly seen. I questioned, explored, tested and re-tested diverse combinations of data, but always maintained a Bourdieusian lens. I integrated the ‘methodological principles’ introduced in the previous chapter into the triangulation of data, especially by viewing the combined data under the ‘three level approach to the field and research object’ (see Table 5-1). However, conventional analyses for each method were the pre-condition to arrive at the possibility of triangulating the data.

In practice I achieved triangulation in several ways (see Figure 5-8). Firstly, I chose two localities to compare children’s play practices. This enabled an understanding of the commonalities and the distinctions between places and participants. Secondly, the seasonal component also allowed an understanding of similarities and differences between study sites and participating families, thus revealing their logic of practice. Both aspects provided insights into how social and environmental features shape outdoor play. Likewise, by choosing two highly walkable areas that were included in the URBAN study, the participants’

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98 This aspect is in line with Bourdieu (1984) who combined in Distinction qualitative and quantitative measures. Against his usual thoroughness, however, he mainly neglected to explain how he combined both data sets aside from explaining that the qualitative data informed his construction of the large scale survey.
talk could be weighted against the ‘objective measures’ deemed as important by public health researchers (see Chapters 2 and 6). In combination with the historical account of the field of play that is recommended by Bourdieu for understanding contemporary struggles (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 7), I developed an analytical framework consisting of three variables (seasonality, locality and history\(^99\)) which is reflected in the four research sub-questions introduced in Chapter 1. By deciding on these three variables I could bring the initial results together and impose an order on subsequent analysis, exploring the same set of relationships between variables while taking Bourdieu’s triad into account. In other words, I brought the initial results of analysis together and analysed them in tandem (Woolley, 2009). I used the analysis of the semi-structured interviews as a starting point for deciding on the themes I explored further (e.g. ‘profits of localisation’, ‘logic of practice’). For example, I explored children’s seasonal use of parks by opening the working interpretive document of ‘parks’ and comparing it to the information gathered from elicited drawings and the parental survey. When I began reporting on the findings I had these diverse sets of information open side by side and checked them against each other. The purpose of this task was to organise the initial analysis into more manageable units, while facilitating the linking of these tasks under a Bourdieusian lens (see Figure 5-8). While I mainly draw on the verbatim accounts of families in the following chapters, I also combine diverse data sets to present them visually. For example, I combined children’s GPS logs with their drawings, photos taken on the neighbourhood walk and their quotes (see Chapter 11). These placed experiences of children are the outcome of triangulation of the diverse methods informed by a Bourdieusian lens.

\(^{99}\) History in this context embraces two aspects. First, the historical struggles of the ‘field of play’ and second parental play experiences.
Conclusion

In this chapter I have accounted for Bourdieu’s call to make ‘explicit’ and ‘codify’ the procedures carried out to gather and analyse data. In this way I exemplified Bourdieu’s call for transparency beyond participant objectivation discussed earlier. As a first step I provided an overview of what aspect of Bourdieu’s triad each method reveals. This was the answer to the ‘methodological principles’ introduced in the last chapter, but also provided insights into the triangulation of the diverse and nuanced information gathered through a variety of methods.

This chapter accounted for an aspect of ‘understanding’ as I detailed the recruitment, collection and analysis components of this study and provided an overview of participants. However, I argued that each part needs to be seen in the context of the study as a whole; the theoretical, methodological and empirical parts are intertwined. Only in relation can they complete the ‘puzzle’; each component or ‘puzzle piece’ needs to be seen in relation to the other to contribute to the ‘understanding’ presented in the findings chapters. Such a reflexive presentation of each of the qualitative (semi-structured interviews, elicited drawings, neighbourhood walks) and quantitative (GPS tracking, survey, travel diary) research...
techniques should provide the reader with an understanding of how findings on families’ outdoor playing practices are the product of ‘construction’ and ‘understanding’ of the researcher in relation to methods used, participating families and the theoretical approach.

Equipped with these tools, I turn now to the empirical findings of the study after I describe the field study sites and a brief overview of the ‘field of play’. Outlining this field as a product of past struggles allows us to view and understand the structures that shape children’s contemporary seasonal play practices. In Chapter 8, I start to present the empirical section of the thesis. Drawing on the different research method components from all families in the research, I begin to outline the structure-agency complexity of outdoor play more explicitly. I disclose children’s seasonal roaming patterns derived from the visual analysis before I move on to view the ‘profits’ (symbolic capital) families value in their own neighbourhood in regards to detecting seasonal play affordances. It is made clear that both locational and seasonal differences exist within and between study locations, and this offers insights into seasonally place-based actualisation of affordances. The chapter is followed by an attempt to unpack the structural-and-agency-bound complexities leading to the (non)detection of affordances in locations and across seasons. In turn new insights into seasonal and place-based understandings of children’s play in highly walkable areas are offered; (seasonal) norms, rules and (built) environmental features contribute to contemporary play patterns, but their implementation depends on the habitus families possess. The last part of the presentation of findings moves away from the sample as a whole to focus on five families in particular for a nuanced discussion on the paradoxes of (non)detection of seasonal play affordances in each study site in relation to families’ endowment of symbolic capital and the point of view of the world and of outdoor play in particular.
Chapter 6 Locating Auckland Central and Beach Haven

Bourdieu highlights that the experiences deriving from a social placement take place in a physical, tangible location. This chapter situates the urban environment as the physical site where children play and enjoy themselves. For understanding families’ evaluations, experiences and desires it is necessary to ‘localise’ them (see introductory quote); to describe their physical space in which they detect and (potentially) actualise affordances. Thus, this chapter places the two study sites for the thesis as contexts for the parent and child accounts that are presented in subsequent chapters. I begin by providing some insights into Auckland’s climatic conditions. Then I move on to consider the Auckland region as a context for children’s play. The last part of the chapter presents particular characteristics of the study sites. For this description, I draw on my own experiences during neighbourhood observations. This chapter provides an overview of the ‘localisation’ leading to the appropriation of spatial practices discussed in later chapters.

Auckland’s climate and weather

The Auckland metropolitan area is for the greater part located on an isthmus between the Tasman Sea (Manukau Harbour) and the Pacific Ocean (Waitemata Harbour) in a transition zone between subtropical and temperate regions. Auckland’s climate can be described as mild and moderately humid with winter frosts being rare (Hessell, 1988). The mean annual temperature is 15.1°C with temperatures ranging from 8° to 14°C in winter and 14° and 24°C Celsius in summer. The average total annual precipitation is 1240mm; during midwinter the rainfall is approximately twice as high as in the end of the summer period (see Appendix 24). Broad scale weather systems, in particular the El Niño Southern Oscillation, induce high diurnal variability in all seasons, making short but nasty periods of heavy rainfall and high winds followed by hours of glorious blue sky an important feature of Auckland’s weather.
Locating Auckland Central and Beach Haven

(Auckland Regional Council, 2010, Hessell, 1988). Apart from high daily variability, seasonal outdoor activities and weather perception are greatly affected by two constellations. On the one hand, intensive UV-radiation leads to summer days perceived as very hot. To prevent skin cancer, health promotion campaigns in schools and media like ‘slip, slop, slap and cover’ raise parental and child awareness of possible dangers of sun exposure (Armstrong and Kricker, 2001, Callister et al., 2011, Collins et al., 2006; Health Sponsorship Council, 2011). On the other hand, during the wet winter muddy playing fields and playgrounds are often closed and low housing quality without efficient insulation and heating contribute to the fact that perceived winter temperatures are colder than actual temperature (Dixon and Dupuis, 2003, Howden-Chapman et al., 2009, Jendritzky et al., 1990; Nikolopoulos and Lykoudis, 2006). In other words, this situation may contribute to more sedentary indoor play activities and lost opportunities for children to explore their neighbourhood.

‘A localisation’ of Auckland

The Auckland metropolitan area (2012 population approximately 1.5 million people) is one of the fastest growing regions in NZ with an increase of 32% between 1991 and 2006 (the most recent census). Growth projections estimate that 2 million people will live in this area by 2035 (Auckland Regional Council, 2010). The traditional ‘kiwi dream’ of a free-standing house on a ‘quarter-acre’ lot is fast disappearing in the face of subdivision and the construction of medium and high-density apartment blocks (Dixon and Dupuis, 2003, Murphy, 2008)(see Table 6-1).

Being an auto-dominant city, walking infrastructure has often been neglected and safe crossings on busy roads are under-supplied making it difficult for children to safely reach destinations by foot (Bean et al., 2008, Mitchell et al., 2007). Although improvements are underway, from the perspective of many parents, traffic remains a key obstacle for children to independently participate in public life (Collins et al., 2009) with a high frequency of parental chauffeuring behaviours (Freeman and Quigg, 2009a). Children are increasingly confined to bounded spaces that are often subjected to some level of surveillance: the school, the playground, the home and private and third sector providers offering extra-curricular activities and afternoon ‘care’ (Freeman and Tranter, 2011, Kearns and Collins,

100 Prior to the 1st November 2010 Auckland’s governance structure consisted of four local authorities (Auckland City Council, North Shore City Council, Waitakere City Council and Manukau City Council) and one regional authority (Auckland Regional Council) (Council, 2010). Case study sites are located in the former Auckland and North Shore City.

101 With the rise of neoliberal policies in the 1980s (Capie, 2009, Le Heron and Pawson, 2001), the expanding tourism, finance and higher education sectors demanded new office space (Bertram, 2009). In the absence of explicit regional and urban development plans, unregulated construction of high-rise office buildings between 1983 and 1987 and subsequent residential complexes (approximately 16000 between 1983-2006) for new settlers and international students changed the face of the central city and its fringe (Bush, 1998, Le Heron and Lewis, 2007, Le Heron and Pawson, 2001, Murphy, 2008).
2006). Such a primarily sedentary and interiorised life-style potentially deprives children from independently exploring their neighbourhoods and developing ‘environmental literacy’ and competency.

To pursue my empirical objectives of exploring seasonally-specific children’s play patterns and experiences in an intensifying environment, I selected two areas in the Auckland metropolitan region as study sites: Auckland Central and the suburb of Beach Haven (see Figure 6-1, Table 6-1). Both localities are categorised as highly walkable based on the walkability index developed by Leslie et al. (2007) and offer diverse destinations according to the Neighbourhood Destination Accessibility Index (NDAI) (Witten et al., 2011b), but differ in geographic features (see Appendix 25 for a detailed description on the indices).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6-1: Background Statistics for Beach Haven and Auckland Central</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity in %</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacific peoples</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern/Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>American/African</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Residents</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>% Residents under 15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Single parent with child(ren)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<td><strong>School deciles</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Source:</strong> Census 2006 and deciles rating (Ministry of Education, 2011, Statistics New Zealand, 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Locating Beach Haven**

Beach Haven is located approximately 5km northwest of central Auckland and is bound by an inner harbour coastline and wooded hills (see Figure 6-1). Its geography contributes to a feeling of relative isolation and rural living (McCreanor et al., 2006). Beach Haven has long been considered a good place to raise children (Witten et al., 2009). About 25% of residents are under 15 years old and almost 70% of all households in this area consist of families with young children (see Table 6-1).
Locating Auckland Central and Beach Haven

Figure 6-1: Overview study sites Auckland Central (City) and Beach Haven
Only two major roads (Rangatira and Beach Haven Road) feed into Beach Haven. The well-connected, residential streets and variety of destinations are reflected in the high scores of the walkability index and the NDAI (see Figure 6-2, Figure 6-3, Figure 6-4). I speculated that children may experience less parental surveillance than elsewhere in Auckland. Shepard’s Park in particular is attractive for families and children as its large fields invite participation in a range of sporting activities (see Figure 6-5). During both summer and winter fields are regularly occupied by sports clubs practicing or competing (Kamm, 2012). The smaller parks scattered over the suburb often have a basketball court. In addition, one beach located close to Beach Haven wharf is designed to be an adventure playground for children 102 (see Figure 6-5).

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102 This beach has been created by Frank Larkin who rowed every day to Hobsonville bringing back dingy loads of sands. (Larkin, na, North Shore Times, 2008)
In contrast to a rich social life, Beach Haven is also a ‘high-need’ and economically disadvantaged area (Crampton et al., 2000, McCreanor et al., 2006). The median household income is NZ$ 27,000 (see Table 6-1) and many households do not own a vehicle. This low socio-economic status is also mirrored in the poor decile rating\textsuperscript{103} of its schools (see Table 6-1) (Ministry of Education, 2011). A reputation for high crime, drugs and gang activities and the associated stigma is felt by many residents (Kamm, 2012). In sum, Beach Haven is a lower socio-economic suburb which is rich in built and natural play destinations. More importantly, this area seems to offer the pre-condition for children to roam independently with quiet streets and a lively community. These characteristics contrast with the central city to which I turn my attention in the following section.

\textbf{Locating the Central City}

The central city of Auckland is recognisable for the tallest building in the Southern hemisphere, the Skytower, which is located at the heart of the central business hub (see Figure 6-6). The area is characterised by a commercial port and businesses as well as residential high-rise complexes (see Figure 6-6, Figure 6-7, Table 6-1). Apartments have not

\textsuperscript{103} The decile rating correlates with the pupil’s community socio-economic background. decile 1 indicated the 10% of schools which serve the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10% schools with the lowest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities.
been built with children in mind and tend to cater in the first instance for students, young professionals and ‘empty-nesters’ (Carroll et al., 2011). Indeed, most apartments lack outdoor areas or children’s play spaces on their premises. Nonetheless, (primarily Pakeha and Asian) families have begun to move into more affordable central city dwellings prompted by increasing housing prices in the wider urban region (Friesen, 2009, Witten and Carroll, 2011). This situation is also reflected in the lower socio-economic status of many central city dwellers (see Table 6-1). However, children attend higher decile rated schools (6, 10) because of the affluence in the adjunct suburbs of Ponsonby and Parnell (Ministry of Education, 2011).

Auckland is unusual for the way its motorways reach directly into the central city (see Figure 6-7). Central city residents experience the risks and inconvenience of negotiating heavy traffic during peak times as the central city is the destination for many commuters from the Greater Auckland Region. Pedestrian-friendly crossings, traffic light circuits and traffic calming measures such as ‘shared spaces’ have been recently introduced. Apart from the risks of high traffic volumes, ‘disturbing’ elements of the central city like sex shops, revealing advertisements and homeless people, may make the streets an ‘inappropriate’ place for children (see Figure 6-7).
Despite these drawbacks, many of the needs of city residents especially those with international backgrounds are met. Indeed, local and ethnic food, entertainment and education facilities, shops and medical care facilities are within a short walking distance from the majority of apartment complexes. Likewise, afternoon school programmes are close to Queen Street, the city’s main shopping street (see Figure 6-8). This diversity of destinations is also reflected in the high NDAI and walkability index scores of the central city (see Figure 6-9, Figure 6-10). Unlike Beach Haven, the central city lacks abundant native bush and access to beaches as residential and commercial properties are directly built on the edge of the waterfront (see Figure 6-6 and Figure 6-7). Nevertheless areas such as Princess Warf and the America’s Cup village do allow proximity to the sea and as such attract joggers, tourists and commuters\textsuperscript{104}. Albert Park and Myers Park are the two major green spaces along with some smaller ones scattered over the city. More parks and fields like the Domain, Victoria Park and Western Park are located on the central city fringes afford recreational opportunities.

\textsuperscript{104} A play area was introduced into this part of town with the development of Wynyard Quarter, but was not opened at the time of this study.
Figure 6-9: The neighbourhood destination accessibility index (NDAI) of the central city (Source: URBAN team)

Figure 6-10: The walkability index of Auckland Central (Source: URBAN team)
Conclusion

This chapter has described the geographical sites where families participating in this study are located or in Bourdieu’s words, their localisation. I began by introducing the city’s climatic conditions and thus built a context under which seasonal practices of play are formed. In the remainder of the chapter I provided a brief overview on the conditions leading to the residential intensification of the Auckland region and its implications for contemporary childhoods, which was followed by a description of each study site. The areas were chosen as they are similar in socio-economic attributes and are both highly walkable according to both the NDAI and the walkability index. However, on a closer examination the suburb and the central city seem to be two different worlds. While the suburb represents the traditional environment in which ‘kiwi’ children are raised, the central city seems not to cater for children’s needs, but rather is designed with adults in mind. Hence, the remainder of this thesis discusses the placed experienced of families in the central city and Beach Haven focussing on their seasonal play practices. Before I discuss contemporary play practices in these settings, I provide an overview of the structures shaping children’s play and childhood in more general terms in the Auckland Region. In this regard, I follow Bourdieu’s call to unpack the historical struggles leading to contemporary struggles in the ‘field of play’.
Although children might not be aware of the economic and political stage in which they develop their play, they are nevertheless affected by it. In this thesis I present a snapshot of children’s play at the end of the first decade of the new Millennium, a time characterised by climate change, urban intensification and increasing parental surveillance. In line with Bourdieu’s statement in the introductory quote, this snapshot of play is a portrait of historical social realities and builds the basis for future competitions of capital. Present social and physical realities and associated norms and rules are a product of the historical accumulation of struggles over symbolic capital. How struggles developed over time are manifested in social positions and the appropriation of space as explored in Chapter 3. To reveal struggles in the present ‘field of play’ an historical perspective needs to be included which not only considers the local conditions, but also aims to account for the wider perspectives leading to the past and present circumstances under which children develop their play practices. The ‘games’ of children’s play define, and are defined, by local and national policies, industry and market forces and physical infrastructure in the widest sense as well as everyday encounters. I argue in this chapter that children have always had a managed childhood and question whether notions of free ranging children are more nostalgia than factual accounts of childhood in earlier days.

The chapter traverses five historical ‘eras’ providing an overview of struggles over capital (in the broad Bourdieusian sense) and how these struggles are manifested in the management of children’s play through changing urban form, policies, economic activities, people’s beliefs, norms and practices. I explore the implications of these struggles for the distribution of different forms of capital across the ‘field of play’. First I reflect on the introduction of compulsory schooling and its implications for children’s play. I then move to the Turner...
movement as one of the first attempts to structure children’s play as a meaningful pastime. Third, I consider the suburban movement after World War II, before outlining the influences of the feminist movement on children’s play. Finally, I review the neoliberal reforms of the late 1980s and how these changed children’s play in Auckland. Urban children’s play experiences in these eras were diverse, but I focus in this chapter on the common norms and major trends defining children’s play. In doing so, I provide a summary of ‘universal’ play practices of Pakeha children which have dominated views of children and childhood. The brevity of the account does not allow the diversity of childhoods to be covered; rather it’s a summary of dominant norms and mayor trends.

Shanghais and tea parties: paradoxes of the (un)managed childhood of the early days

New Zealand was settled by British and Scottish colonialists during the industrial age. New settlers left behind poverty and pauperism, disease and degeneration in the slums of the many flourishing, but polluted British cities. In this land of abundance, God’s own country, immigrants were promised the benefits of nature. During the early years of settlement, three myths were born that still influence the identity of this country and shape children’s play (Beattie, 2008, Fairburn, 1975, 1989, Husbands, 1992, Nolan, 2007). The first arose out of aspirations for an ideal (egalitarian) society ruled by equity and equality, in which the evil of the mother country, particularly the demoralising slums and class divide, would have no place. The second stemmed from the idea of a prospering, clean and green New Zealand in which inhabitants’ have a naïve and fruitful connection with nature, a precursor to a commonplace belief of Kiwi being outdoor people. Closely connected to this is the third ‘myth’ that every humble and hardworking man could create his own happy place, a paradise “of apple orchards and vineyards, of children playing in thick leaved trees and singing mothers” (Fairburn, 1975: 3). A communal-tinted rural myth was recreated and can still be found in the spatial forms of this late colonised place and the desire of many to live in detached houses with a big backyard where children can play. The desire to be close to ‘nature’ for therapeutic and recreational benefits led also to the establishment of many city parks and reserves during that time (Husbands, 1992).

Although most children did not live the fairy tale life painted by Fairburn, they were either visible on the streets or they could be heard nearby. The air was filled with children’s noises

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105 The Maori name for Auckland is Tāmaki. It has been farmed and settled by the Ngāi Tai tribe, Ngāti Te Ata tribe, Ngāti Pāoa tribe and the Te Arawa tribe Ngā Oho (McClure, 2010). In this PhD project I focus on the social history of play from a Colonial perspective as voices and traditions have been silenced by white settlers and I sadly continue this tradition with dispelling Maori children’s play to footnotes.

106 George Grey set aside 80 ha in 1845 for The Domain and in 1879 the city council opened Albert and Western Park (Auckland Council, 2011c).
in the central city slums (Sutton-Smith, 1981). Aiming to avoid the demoralising slums and hordes of ungoverned and ungovernable (neglected) children wandering the streets like in Britain, educated immigrants used their capital assets to convince the political leaders to introduce compulsory schooling in 1877 (Beagle, 1975, Stephenson, 2009). Educational philosophies at the time were based on the Appolian premise that childhood is a stage of purity and innocence. Therefore, children needed to be protected from the evils of society, like the licentiousness of the lower classes for example. The path to heavenly salvation was obedience, moral citizenship and proper piety best bestowed on children through the right schooling (Frost, 2009, Hendershot, 2009, May, 1997, Sutton-Smith, 1981, Valentine, 2004). This Victorian educational philosophy also found its way into children's play practices. In the advent of public schooling folk games developed as children needed a way to entertain themselves in an orderly, obedient manner. This was often under supervision and in a very confined area such as the school yard, community picnic space or sporting ground. The latter gained popularity during this time (Clark, 2007, Mcdonald, 2009, Sutton-Smith, 1981). Children learned from an early age to obey rules, as institutional constraints were placed on their habitus formation. The Victorian educational philosophy had benefits, although often not as anticipated by its advocates. There were also downsides of demanding obedience through cruelty as children often internalised practices and copied from teachers. Rituals like dares or bullying in and on the way to school was also a common procedure and is not a recent phenomenon (Sutton-Smith, 1981).

Social distinctions were reflected in how children spent their time, their play and activity practices. Despite the glorification of children’s independent mobility in these early days, their lives were managed by teachers, parents and employers. Affluent children’s days were fairly organised and filled with piano, painting and school lessons. However, they had the possibility and time to play both in school and at home (shops, tea parties, Cowboys and Indians) (Hendershot, 2009, Sutton-Smith, 1981). In contrast, playtime, toys and extra curriculum activities were unattainable for the impoverished children and this led to imaginary and self-made play equipment. The social position of impoverished children was mirrored in their play. Often, boys and girls alike combined contributing to the families’ income with play. Wharves, timber yards, the back of factories and the many rubbish dumps were adventure playgrounds for children. Scavenging was a lucrative pastime as scrap metals, used bottles or pieces of timber could be brought home and used or cashed in (Graham, 1992, Sutton-Smith, 1959). Such play was possible for two reasons. Free materials provided opportunities for imaginative play and the population composition catered

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107 The first quarter acre section was only sold in 1922 in Beach Haven.
108 Interestingly, although New Zealand has ‘Natives’, children rarely reflected on them or the Maori wars or Maori in their games (Sutton-Smith, 1981).
for enough playmates. Although children were mostly unsupervised and allowed to roam
freely in the city from a very young age all-year-round, their lives were managed by other
means. Older boys and girls made a crucial contribution to the family income as factory
workers, tailors or delivery boys. Younger ones handled errands, ran messages or sold

With the introduction of compulsory schooling the lives of poor and rich converged: all
children needed to attend school in the morning and have time to ‘play’. Although the play
practices were distinct in each class, the idea that children should play in their ‘free’ time
began to emerge. However, this came with the Victorian obligation to spend this time
meaningful.

**Meaningful pastime: supervising children’s free time in the
beginning of modernity and war times**

Between the 1900s and the 1940s children’s lives became more structured in response to
the militaristic and economic needs of the new colony. Militaristic and social Darwinist ideas
were introduced, consistent with nationalist movements worldwide. According to these
ideologies, moral and economic progress could only be achieved through a large and
healthy society. Investing in children’s moral, physical and literate education was viewed as
an investment in the prosperous (economic) future of this young state (Coleborne, 2009,
Branch., 1994). However, to have an efficient future workforce, it was important to develop
physically robust children who spent their time wisely, cultivating their fitness and health.
Spending time outside being physically active in a natural setting, especially during the
summer months, was believed to build healthy bodies and strong character. Parr, once a
mayor of Auckland, asserts:

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109 For example, the Child Welfare Bill evolved out of the Infant Life Protection Act of 1893 and passed in 1925 to improve
working and living conditions of children (Labrum, 2009). During this time the privileged also lobbied for special attention to
mothers as they reared the countries future. For example, the Society for Protection of Women and Children in Auckland (1893)
was established to ‘educate’ women about the necessity of love and attention for children to reduce neglect and delinquency in
later life and wastage of human resources (Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1902). Likewise, Frederick Truby Kind founded the
Plunket society in 1907 to promote ‘scientific’ mothering (e.g. correct feeding) for children’s healthy development supported by
a range of health services for young children and their mothers (e.g. reduction of maternal mortality in state hospitals) (Bryder
and Royal New Zealand Plunket Society., 2003, Mein Smith, 1986, Parry, 1982, Sullivan, 2007). This idea was later further
developed by the introduction of health camps for children to tackle tuberculosis and malnutrition. These camps were further
seen as a possibility to manage and teach children good behaviour and basic hygienic skills (e.g. brushing teeth, table
manners), which they continued once back home and becoming public health ambassadors in their families (Dow et al., 1995,
developments in the protection of children were the outcome of international links and correspondence with like-minded people
and determined by close relationships of politicians, public servants, lobbyists and constituents of a small elite (Labrum, 2009,
May, 1997).
Since the time of Parr, the positive contribution to well-being of being ‘out and about’ and exposed to fresh air and sunshine especially during the summer months has been inscribed in the New Zealand population, although contemporary practices have been adjusted (at least partially) to the risks of sun exposure (Collins and Kearns, 2007, Collins et al., 2006). Engaging in active free play was an obligation of good citizens. They were expected to form healthy bodies, which were strong enough for childbirth and physically demanding labour in factories. It was believed that children with such a symbolic capital were positioned better for their future role.

The Turner movement\(^{110}\) of the early 20\(^{th}\) century advocated sport “rational recreation” and meaningful use of free time to build strong bodies and guard against delinquency (Daley, 2009: 426).\(^ {111}\) Individuals who held influential positions in local politics and business were instrumental in setting up clubs, and many children remain enrolled in these today\(^ {112}\) (McDonald, 2009). Swimming during the summer months also became a popular pastime for children and families. Beach days were introduced and were possible through an improved and affordable public transport system. Lifesaving patrols were established on the central city beaches, pools were built providing arenas for physical activity and drowning prevention, and during the depression sports fields were built by relief workers (Bush, 1971, Daley, 2003, Olssen, 1996). This development is still visible in the physical infrastructure of neighbourhoods. While extra-curricular activities were not as common then as now, the idea of a healthy population underpinning the economic well-being of the country still structures and transforms children’s play.

The intensification of the city due to economic growth before and after World War I reduced the number of ‘natural’ playgrounds where children could engage in physical activity and the idea that special settings should be introduced for children evolved out of the American Playground Movement. Playgrounds (e.g. jungle gym) provided venues for building healthy

\(^{110}\) The Turner movement goes back to its German founder Friedrich Ludwig Jahn in the first half of the 19\(^{th}\) century, who opened the first open-air gymnastic club in Berlin for physical training.

\(^{111}\) Industrialisation marked a clear divide between work and free-time for adults and children’s attendance in school also divided their week in learning and leisure time.

\(^{112}\) Although children began to attend sports clubs physical education during school hours on a daily basis attempted to teach them that engaging in physical activity should become a habit to counteract the associated weaknesses of an urban life-style and declining bodily demand of work once they enter the workforce. The 1901 Physical Drill in Public and Native Schools Act made physical instruction and participation in sports compulsory for boys and girls (Daley, 2003, Sullivan, 2009). Physical education was regarded as a valuable subject for moral purposes and physical development. Children were not only taught the virtues of teamwork and self-control in victory and defeat, but also standards of behaviour and time-keeping. Boys should be fit for war, whereas girls needed to be healthy for childbirth and motherhood (Daley, 2003, 2009, May, 1997, McDonald, 2009).
strong bodies while at the same time children were easier to control in a small confined area than playing all over the city.

“The conditions of thirty or forty years ago are rapidly passing. In those far-away days before our cities became crowded you and I had no difficulty in finding a playground. The vacant paddock adjoining the school or one’s father’s house was nearly always available. But these spaces have all been built upon, and there is nowhere for the child of to-day [sic] to run about and play his [sic] games. [Therefore playgrounds] should be provided in all residential areas within half a mile of all houses.” (Parr, 1919: 240)

While parks had been established in the early days of Auckland and providing recreation possibilities for adults and children, it is playgrounds that stimulate and entertain growing children (Cavallo, 1981, Cusins-Lewer and Gatley, 2002, Daley, 2003). The playground was seen as the nursery in which good citizenship was cultivated all-year-round through organised play protecting children from ‘questionable amusements’ that would have otherwise tempted them on the streets (Cavallo, 1981, Daley, 2003). Ideas around play were enmeshed with physical and moral improvement, nationalistic, imperialistic and militaristic ideas: playing sports or with educative toys as well as marching, filing and flag salutes were common and children were forced to participate when they wanted to spend time on the playground (Cusins-Lewer and Gatley, 2008, Daley, 2003, May, 1997). The state became a social parent. Paid children’s game supervisors (e.g. Gertrude Armstrong for Myers Park) or volunteers (e.g. Civic League for Victoria Park) monitored and organised children’s play under the umbrella of safety. The aim was less to avoid accidents than it was to prevent vandalism, which reflects how children spending time at the playground were viewed; as poor neglected children that first needed to learn the right behaviour. For example, Armstrong had been the play supervisor for more than 20 years and maintained tight control on her playground, easing the mind of many working class mothers. At the same time she reassured the middle class by keeping poor children under control and by instilling the right values (e.g. discipline) into them. Children learned even on the playground to obey rules and authorities. They learned that their ‘free’ play needed to follow certain norms and rules. Curiously, despite the promotion of physical activity, Auckland’s officials locked up children’s play areas (e.g. tied up swings) to maintain the Sunday rest until 1934 (Bush, 1971).

Economic growth and modernism influenced playground construction, but also impacted on how children carried out their play activities on the streets. While children in Beach Haven still had a more rural upbringing, children in the city needed to adjust their outdoor play to

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113 It was still common at that time that mothers worked in factories or out work (Nolan, 2009, Olssen, 1996).
114 Strawberry picking before and after school during the high season was common for many children and was expected. Weekend amusements during summer consisted often of destruction of bird nests, which caused major damage to orchards as children could earn some pocket money from the Fruit Grower’s Association. While brothers and sisters went stalking, boys climbed on trees as girls might have ruined their skirts and stockings on branches (Graham, 1992). Children’s busy lives on a farm left hardly any time for organised sports (except during school hours), but the closeness to the water fostered fishing and swimming especially during the summer months. Cliff Utting, for example, recalls that during high tide the otherwise muddy
the ‘face lift’ of the city (e.g. electrifying of trams) fuelled by economic prosperity and based
on new technologies (e.g. refrigeration allowed export of meat and dairy products) (Bush,
1971, King and Filer, 2007). With the introduction of asphalt streets children’s games
became quickly urbanised. The hard surface replacing the earlier muddy and dusty streets
was too smooth for playing marbles and too impermeable for Stagknife (Fass, 2004, Sutton-
The most important change was, however, the increase in automobiles in the city. While
children were taught about road safety from the Automobile Association during school hours
from the 1920s onwards, the Minister of Transport highlighted the dangers of playing on the
footpaths of highways in 1936. However, the safety of children was less in his mind than the
possible damage children could cause to vehicles when trying to catch them with a stick

Structuring children’s time with meaningful pastimes to position them for their future life
gained currency around the turn of the 20th century, so it is now a new idea. It has been
inscribed into the habitus of families since and still dominates the discourses of children’s
play, although the rhetoric has changed. Adults with a high symbolic capital had a clear idea
of ‘appropriate’ pastimes for children. They not only interfered on the macro level in
children’s life through bills, legal acts and play advisors, but also on the micro level by
establishing certain norms and rules of play as the attempt of the Minister of Transport
showed. Although less knowingly adults also structured children’s play through the design of
cities and new technologies. Children needed to adjust their play to the changing
circumstances of modernity. Ideas formed during this time live on and continue to influence
the lives of contemporary children.

Play and well-being in the post-war period: the suburban nuclear family

Three major developments transformed children’s play after World War II and influenced
play practices not only in public open spaces, but also in home environments. Positioning
children for their future role as responsible and educated citizens remained an implicit
societal goal.
First, families moved in the 1950s to the newly built or extended suburbs (e.g. Beach Haven) and children needed to adjust their play to these new environments. The flourishing of the economy after the war impacted positively on the financial situation of families. The growing middle class increasingly shaped the nature of children’s play and childhood as they could afford toys. Children’s type of play changed. Street games were slowly replaced by games around the bicycle such as follow-the-leader or bicycle polo. While earlier games often consisted of static pursuits, games became more physically active when balls became essential play equipment for all genders. Similarly, the increase of tagging games can be attributed to a decline in gender specific clothing. Sutton-Smith (1981: 241) calls these developments the “sophistication and mechanization” of the playground. Moreover, informed by the increasing scientific knowledge of children’s psychological development adults began to design toys that stimulated children’s intellectual and physical development when playing inside the home (May, 1992, Piaget, 1950, 1954, 1955b, Shallcrass, 1973). Learning became more important than play in itself, as did increasing children’s symbolic capital to position them better for the workforce. While previously bodily fitness was important, intellectual ‘fitness’ began to be valued and was slowly absorbed by all classes. Instead of designing their own toys or playing skill games, children favoured commercialised and mechanised toys, puzzles and board games from the 1950s onwards (Sutton-Smith, 1959, 1981, Trewby, 1995). Science kits, model airplanes, art material or meccano also became popular as houses which offered more room for ‘play’ made this possible. Only the core family lived together instead of entire extended families as in earlier years. Schools of music teaching violin, piano and singing also flourished in the 1950s and 1960s. Many parents saved for this ‘useful accomplishment’ contributing to children’s development (Trewby, 1995). The most influential change in children’s play began with the arrival of the TV in 1960 (NZ History online, 1960). It confined children to the home. In this way, it supported the ideal of the nuclear family and privatisation of leisure as well as educational aspects perfectly. However, concerns about dallying, societal stultification and diminishing social and physical activity began to emerge when TVs became the focal point in living rooms (Langer, 2009, Lapierre et al., 2009, Moore, 2009, NZNCIYC et al., 1980).

Second, the role of mothers in children’s upbringing changed. Motherhood became a full-time job with well-behaved, well-adjusted children the expected outcome (May, 1992, Morris, 2005, Ritchie and Ritchie, 1970). The role of schools was primarily to teach children literacy.

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115 The state supported homeownership for all of the ‘deserving generation’ and this was based on the growing financial security and economic prosperity after the war (Dunstall, 1992, Labrum, 2000, 2009). Suburbanisation ‘mushroomed’ supported by the opening of the Harbour Bridge in 1959 as well as the rural-urban migration of Maori, who were attracted by the demand of unskilled labour (e.g. in meat factories) as well as the increasing international migration of Pacific Islanders to New Zealand following decolonisation (Dunstall, 1992, Macpherson et al., 2001, Mcherson, 2004, Salesam, 2009).

116 These concerns emerged all around the world. For example Rene Goscinny dedicated the changes of amusement triggered by TV sets a chapter in his famous book “Le petit Nicolas” (Goscinny et al., 1967).
and numeracy, while mothers were responsible for children’s physical and emotional well-being. The cruelty of the war and the tacit understanding in society that such misery must never happen again underpinned these changing mores. It was believed that the key to a more humanitarian world should be found in raising a generation of healthy, emotionally stable and happy children (Byrnes, 2009, Labrum, 2009, May, 1992). The Play Centre movement embodied these ideals providing opportunities for learning and bonding between mother and child. Meeting in community halls, the movement also advanced the notion that even early childhood education could be a valuable stimulant for children and an opportunity to positively intervene in young lives and to better position children for their future (Delaney, 1998, May, 1997). Children’s play, and to an extent the home environment itself, became managed more systematically through the influence of such organisations. Closely related to this idea were implications of enhanced safety as a consequence of the attention children enjoyed from their mothers.

Third, the need to protect children from bodily harm as well as building healthy bodies began to gain foothold by the mid-1960s.117 Parents and the state raised more awareness about possible accidents around independent play. In doing so, the ‘safety paradigm’ began to evolve that developed later its own paradoxes (Lynch, 2006, McDonald, 1978, Rata and Sullivan, 2009).118 For example, with the playground safety movement of the 1970s the materials used for playgrounds that had not changed since the introduction of the first playground began to be questioned. Surfacing, materials and equipment started to be assessed according to possible injuries and harm instead of the learning and bodily fitness aspect of earlier times (Moore, 2009).119 The increasing engagement with safety aspects seems to foreshadow the later ‘bubble-wrap’ generation (Malone, 2007, May, 1992). Children embodied from an early age to be careful and transferred it to their own parenting practices.

117 This coincides with the founding of the National Safety Association at the workplace in 1964, which sponsored safety training courses and exhibitions (Rata and Sullivan, 2009). Very likely these movements informed how safety was approached in the family home, too. At present diverse ‘safety’ recommendations (e.g. health, environment, system safety) are made by the New Zealand Safety Council or the New Zealand Institute for Safety Management. Similarly, the Accident Compensation Act (1972) was set up by the government to provide a 24-hour, no-fault insurance for all personal injury.

118 The main aim of school camps for example was to provide children with the necessary knowledge if something goes wrong. The aim was to develop positive interpersonal relationships through activities and gain a pleasurable experience of the outdoors, which is also linked to the nature romanticism of the Victorian era and the idea of bodily strength in pre-war years (Lynch, 2006, McDonald, 1978). Likewise, the avoidance of danger highlighted by mountain clubs and lifeguards became more important with the rising prosperity in the after war years when leisure became privatised (Daley, 2009). Holiday pay and superannuation allowed increasingly extended family outdoor leisure activities such as camping, kayaking and tramping fuelled, for example by the surplus equipment of the army and navy supplies for the wars (Lynch, 2006).

119 This idea finds it’s latest form in the passing of the 2005 Playground Safety Standard by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2009)
Children’s play and the feminist movement

The baby boomer children moved into parenthood in the 1970s, and they were better educated academically and had a stronger risk perception than any previous generation. Influenced by the feminist movement children’s play began to be managed further and more systematically from an early age. Sending children to pre-school education became the norm.

It became acceptable for educated women to be more than full-time mothers. Mothers began to organise their lives around their career and leisure time while still servicing their children’s needs in collaboration with others: fathers and institutions (Hochschild, 1983, Phillips, 1983). Children who were not attending kindergarten were seen as the badly reared ones who missed out on essential education. They were viewed as disadvantaged. It was believed that kindergartens taught children the necessary discipline to learn in groups under the premise to be better prepared for school. Despite that, Somerset (1976) stressed that all types of play fortify learning and the mistrust of play as learning from earlier times remained also in the 1970s (May, 2011, Morris, 2005). Researchers claim that the majority of children adjusted to readymade entertainment during this time (Duhn, 2009, May, 1992, Stover and New Zealand Playcentre Federation, 1998). They had to conform to rules and supervised play on a daily basis, which in turn influenced their own perceptions when they later became parents themselves. In the afternoons, the norm was for children to play outside independently, but the idea of the necessity of extra-curricular activities began also to structure children’s afternoons more systematically. Symbolic capital (e.g. language, numeracy skills) became increasingly valued by middle class parents by the end of the century. The result was that children in more affluent families had fully scheduled pastimes which left little time for free play. Physical activity began to be seen also as something which stimulated intellectual performance as well as bodily fitness and enrolment in sport clubs increased as a result (Wills, 1973). However, some parents began to question more firmly that children should only be taught facts and skills and began to promote the idea (following Somerset and the liberalising playcentre movement) that children can create their own learning by explorations in play. Subsequently, alternative kindergartens and schools were founded (Morris, 2005).121

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120 Kindergartens in Birkdale and Birkenhead, which served families living in Beach Haven, opened in a large number after the war. Ten kindergartens had been established in this area by the end of the 1970s (Marshall and Auckland Kindergarten Association (N.Z.), 1983).

121 The small number of Maori children attending traditional and progressive kindergartens suggested that many Maori children still played at home with other members of their whanau. However, with the strategy to conserve the Maori language at the beginning of the 1980s and the formation of Te Kohanga Reo centres which should immerse Maori children in their culture guided by the eldest of their iwi they also began to play in more institutionalised settings (Morris, 2005).
Curiously, while children’s time began to be managed more systematically, the focus on ‘marginalised’ views influenced by the feminist movement brought to the fore a new understanding of children as human beings independent of their parents. Children’s rights began to be addressed more openly. Supported by the Plunket Society, and as a result of the International Year of the Child (IYC) the government funded a committee for children which acted as a voice for children and their concerns (May, 1992, NZNCIYC et al., 1980). This heralded the start of a (new) discourse, that of children as vulnerable victims of society, who need protection. For example, the IYC report recommended the review of by-laws and existing legislation to incorporate play and recreation facilities for children and teenagers in town planning (NZNCIYC et al., 1980: 28). This indicated a new shift. Children as a user group of city space had been widely neglected in urban planning since the establishment of playgrounds in the 1920s as the collection of essays by Bush and Scott reveals (1977). The discrepancy between political decisions and children’s role in society was laid during that time. Legally children began to gain more rights and became visible in policies, but in everyday life children’s competencies became curtailed more and more as indicated by Morris (2005).

**Pluralism or individualisation of play? Neoliberal tolls on children’s play**

Three distinct developments influence children’s play in postmodern times. They arise out of the discrepancies between acknowledging children as individual capable actors and the need for protection in uncertain economic times (neoliberal reforms, recessions) and of the downsides of an urbanised lifestyle.

First, influenced by feminist thoughts, a variety of experiences during childhood based on class, gender, ethnicity, culture, family composition and place began to challenge the

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122 While the United Nations declared the Rights of the Child already in 1959, the International Year of the Child paved the way for the 1989 ratified *Convention on the Right of the Child*: the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate children in the full range of human rights (NZNCIYC et al., 1980, UNICEF, 1995). To give children a voice, and to raise awareness of their rights, the New Zealand Commissioner for Children (2003) was established. In general, commissioners brought topics such as child poverty, abuse, bullying, school safety and children’s rights in the media on the political agenda and into the wider societal discourse (Barrington, 2004, Smith et al., 2003, Taylor, 2006, Taylor and Smith, 2008, Taylor et al., 2007).

123 Children were viewed, for example, as victims of the increasing emphasised of academic studies in school, inadequate environmental planning and traffic management as well as victims of the material world with the ever growing commercialisation of their toys (e.g. action figures). The basis for addressing children’s interests in public policy was laid.

124 Authorities began to think about the impacts of their decisions on children, but the traditional divide between adult and child spheres continued (Auckland Council, 2008, North Shore City Council, 2009, Regional Growth Forum, 2005). For example, Auckland City and North Shore City had developed plans which acknowledged the need for safe play spaces (e.g. parks, playgrounds) (Auckland Council, 2006, 2008, North Shore City Council, 2009). Similarly, the new Auckland Council attempts to put children first, but lacks any concrete plans on how to reconnect adult and child spheres (Auckland Council, 2011b). Children’s needs are addressed, but they are still not considered as a full user of public open spaces.

125 Families changed over the past 30 years initiated by the feminist movement, better health services and education systems. Life expectancy increased while birth rates decreased, which is often attributed to postponement of family formation. Nonetheless, Pacific people still value large families and have in general a bigger family than Asian or Pakeha parents. With divorce being socially acceptable, children often live in a patchwork family and have more grandparents, but less siblings (OECD, 2011, Perkins and Gidlow, 1996, Statistics New Zealand, 2011).
former universal (Pakeha) understanding of childhood and its structural norms of play that I have presented above. Simultaneously, the universalising effects of globalisation on children’s play (e.g. toys) gained more recognition (James and Prout, 1990, Jenks, 1996, Qvortrup, 1994). While play (especially toys) became more individualised to cater for children’s tastes, at the same time toys became available globally. Play became a global commodity. Companies specifically target children with their advertisements institutionalising that shopping is also one form of leisure. This idea was based on the premise that young people are competent social actors, who transform their own social worlds and determine their own world view (e.g. Barker and Weller, 2003b, Christensen, 2000, James et al., 1998, Jones, 2001, Kraftl et al., 2007). Likewise, commercial play spaces developed where children can meet and play under supervision (Buckingham, 2011, Gregory, Morris, 2005). A different example, but no less powerful, is the commercialisation of the children’s hospital in Auckland (e.g. the former McDonald’s outlet in the foyer; the overall branding of the hospital as a starship see Kearns and Barnett (2000)). Children began to be seen as part of a big money making machine and their specific needs and desires began to be addressed more effectively than before (Kearns and Barnett, 1999, Kearns and Barnett, 2000). Companies began to manage what children should desire to play with (e.g. electronic equipment) and in which settings. The prominence of indoor games increased.

Second, parents and institutions became increasingly mistrustful of children’s ability to negotiate risks and dangers in their local environments. Parents who themselves grew up in a time in which safety played a more important role now began to raise children. Growing up in what Beck called a ‘risk society’ (Beck, 1992) had influenced their habitus development and in turn affected how they raise their children. Tangible risks in children’s lives are removed as much as possible while they grow up in a culture of fear (e.g. abduction, injury). Playgrounds often receive a new surfacing, pedestrian crossings get installed and occupational health and safety continues to provide guidelines on risk free environments or walking school buses safeguard children to school (Collins and Kearns, 2010, Collins and Kearns, 2005, Mitchell, 2006, Neuwelt, 2006, Sullivan, 2009). In addition, in uncertain economic times both parents usually work which increases the demand for after-school-care. In uncertain economic times both parents usually work which increases the demand for after-school-care. Children’s lives become managed the entire day in an environment in which adults control and structure childhood experience applying procedures and guidelines (Duhn, 2009, Freeman and Tranter, 2011, Wyver et al., 2010). However, this development is still based on the premise that learning in institutional settings is valued higher than independent outdoor play for gaining the necessary symbolic capitals for a successful future.

126 These uncertain economic times also led to the fact that families sought more affordable housing situations and began to move the central city (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 8).
However, concern over the increase of indoor activities and decline in physical activity has risen in the past 20 years. Just as the 20th century’s concerns were on the physical health of children for militaristic performance, the 21st century reviewed these concerns in times of obesity under the umbrella of costs for health systems and the nation state. Public health messages are directed at active play rather than to simply play (Bell, 2011, Burrows, 2010, Ministry of Health, 2003). Attention returns to the outdoors, but managed in terms of the type of play children should engage with (MILO, 2012).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that children have always had a managed childhood and that the contemporary discourse about the loss of childhood needs to be seen in the context of its historical development. Nonetheless, the dominant theme running through all historical eras since colonial times is the idea of children’s need for protection. At first it was rhetoric about the threat of moral decline and public health threats in Victorian times that led to compulsory schooling to ‘correctly’ supervise and discipline children. They needed to be protected through the ‘right’ education, which also implied that their afternoons should be ‘meaningfully’ structured. The idea of meaningful pastimes for children spread slowly and children’s spaces of activity began to be separated from adults with the introduction of spaces designed for children (e.g. playgrounds). This development was also partially fuelled by the development of sport clubs and the idea of leisure as a contrast to work when the New Zealand economy began to flourish. Simultaneously, the automobile began to alter children’s play on the streets. Children needed to learn to be careful about cars instead of the other way around. After World War II, families increasingly began to move to the newly built suburbs and it slowly became the norm to raise children in such an environment. Other settings were looked at warily; they became ‘inappropriate’. At the same time, childrearing became scientifically evaluated and psychological theories began to highlight the importance of structuring children’s play so as to foster a healthy mental, physical and social development. Educational toys and play centres were introduced to enhance children’s development. While Victorian attitudes aimed at structuring children’s free time for the sake of society, children’s free time was now structured for children’s own sake: they should be able to reach their own potential. Parents began to introduce extra-curricular activities into their children’s weekly schedule, which by the end of the last century led to a situation in middle class households in which many children were busy with sports, music or language classes on most days of the week to position them best for their future (economic) well-being. Children’s declining independent mobility and their loss of ‘environmental literacy’ was further fuelled by media reports about stranger-danger.
This historical account of the ‘field of play’ about the common norms and trends from a dominant Pakeha perspective set the scene for contemporary struggles. Current play practices are the result of past struggles for symbolic capital. In the next chapter, I start to present the empirical section of the thesis. Drawing on parental and child interviews I begin to introduce families’ reasoning for inhabiting Beach Haven and the central city. Understanding their reasoning provides insights into families' evaluation of neighbourhood environments for children's play. Such understandings offer insights into the complex struggles in the ‘field of play’.
Chapter 8 The inhabitation of Auckland Central and Beach Haven: a parental pursuit

Bourdieu pointed out in *Distinction* that inferences can be drawn from furnishing or clothing about life-style and vice versa revealing the determined manifestations of economic or cultural capital as well as the social relations which influenced their selection (Bourdieu, 1984, Hillier and Rooksby, 2002b, Maton, 2008). These ‘objects’ leave not only tangible traces in the possession of objects associated with luxury or poverty, but also non-tangible leads through bodily experiences. They “may be as profoundly unconscious as the quiet caress of beige carpets or the thin clamminess or tattered, garish linoleum, the harsh smell of bleach or perfumes as imperceptible as a negative scent” discloses Bourdieu (1984: 79). These experiences inscribe themselves into a person’s taste and more generally into the habitus as the introductory quote to this chapter conveys.

The habitat people live in shapes their habitus. However, at the same time people also need the necessary capabilities to adequately read the requirements of the environment; they shape and learn the appropriate usage and its social implications (Bariösius, 2006, Bourdieu et al., 1999, Fogle, 2011, Grenfell, 2008a). They feel more comfortable in an environment matching their habitus. Drawing on these notions and informed by the appropriation of space discussed in *Site effects* (Bourdieu, 1999b) and Chapter 3, I conceptualise the inhabitation of both study sites in a similar way to Bourdieu’s discussion of relationship between life-style and clothing or furnishing. I argue that families feel more comfortable in an area which suits their habitus. The neighbourhoods parents grew up in or their taste for neighbourhoods influenced their decision to appropriate a certain residential environment in a similar way as growing up with ‘beige carpets’ persuaded a certain taste in *Distinction*. As soon as it is culturally, socially, financially or organisationally possible, people settle in a place suiting their habitus. In contrast, people who are not endowed with the necessary capital to secure a residence in their desired location are left with ‘undesired’ locations. In Bourdieu’s words, they become victims of a ghettoisation effect (Bourdieu, 1999b) (see also Chapter 3).
Introducing the notion of residential ‘choice’ allows interferences to be drawn about parents’ incentives (e.g. capital accumulation) to settle in a location. These aspects provide an arena for understanding the evaluation, from the point of view of parents, of potential play affordances in different neighbourhood contexts and how children are socialised in these settings. It reinforces to embed how cultural, social and physical environments as well as personal resources (context and composition in Cummins et al.’s (2007) words) influence children’s actualisation of affordances as introduced conceptually in Chapter 3. While Kytta (2004) discussed the actualisation of affordances in combination with cultural aspects in the context of child-friendly environments, I see the actualisation of affordances further related to the parents’ aims and the constraints they encounter by inhabiting a certain physical neighbourhood space: the duality of structure (see also Chapter 2 and Chapter 3).

Parental reasoning for inhabiting Auckland Central and Beach Haven along with wider societal changes and beliefs as discussed in Chapter 8 are taken into account in this chapter. The conditions in which people live today are the outcome of negotiations and struggles experienced in the past. For example, the suburban movement in the 50s and 60s still leaves its traces in present parental reasoning and children’s actualisation of affordances (see also Anderson, 2010). In summary, this chapter explains why participating parents live where they do in order to understand their evaluation of localisation profits discussed in a later chapter. Presenting parental rationales for inhabiting an environment is valuable as their beliefs and how they view their living conditions also has an impact on how children evaluate their surroundings and the ways they actualise affordances.

**Structuring the appropriation of Auckland Central and Beach Haven**

In *Everyone in a place of their own* Rosine Christin describes the desire to own a residential property from the perspective of working class families based on their housing career and struggles they encounter during their lifetime (Christin, 1999). She connects personal experiences to wider structural changes such as change in the economic system. As outlined in Chapter 7, the New Zealand Government subsidised home ownership after the Second World War and it became the dominant tenure in the New Zealand housing system. This development reflects not only the favourable political atmosphere for home ownership, but also the desire to possess a dwelling and the belief in wealth creation through home ownership (Dupuis, 1998, Murphy, 2009, Thorns, 2000). Owning your own four walls is still a high priority for many in the 21st century and is often a driver for their aspirations as outlined

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127 I discuss this characteristic in Chapter 9 under the heading of localisation profits and in Chapter 10 and Chapter 11 by introducing norms and rules of outdoor play and families’ struggles in the ‘field of play’ in more detail.
below and shown in Table 8-1. Parents who possess the necessary economic means took on a mortgage pursuing their dream of a ‘place of their own’. However, with rising housing and renting prices, areas to settle in are limited. The choice of suitable residential areas for families with limited economic capital is inadequate. According to Cox and Pavletich (2008), owning a house is less and less affordable in the Auckland region. The median house price is 6.9 times the median annual household income. As a result, families began to move to ‘more affordable’ suburbs, as well as into the central city where apartment prices are lower than house prices (see also Chapter 6). A described by Rosin and others: People seek the most suitable dwelling within their own limits (Christin, 1999, Kendig, 1984, Levy et al., 2008).

The majority of children and parents had lived in their respective areas for more than four years while only two families have recently moved to the city and Beach Haven (see Table 8-1). With the rising prices for properties and the general low socio-economic background of the areas, it is not surprising that most of them rent their dwellings. Only one person owned their place outright and the remaining pay a mortgage (see Table 8-1). In the following pages, I present parents’ explanations for moving to Beach Haven and the central city. I attempt to connect their statements with struggles and negotiations introduced in Chapter 7. In this way, I not only embrace local conditions, but also the hidden context contributing to the shaping of a location. My aim is to reveal a thoughtful account of certain patterns contributing to Auckland Central and Beach Haven becoming ‘home’ to families. I take the historical genesis paired with the ‘explanations’ of parents into account (Bourdieu et al., 1999, Fries, 2009, Schroer, 2006).
### Table 8-1: Housing history of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child (sex/age)</th>
<th>Parents (age)</th>
<th>Dwelling type grown up</th>
<th>Current stay at this dwelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>City participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McBeth (f/8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (30s) Medium-rise apartment city</td>
<td>high-rise apartment rented for three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Father (30s) House rural village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim (m/11)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Father (50s) Poor rural housing</td>
<td>high-rise apartment rented for four years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kim (m/11)</td>
<td>high-rise apartment rented for one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taesong (m/8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (30s) High-rise apartment city</td>
<td>high-rise apartment rented for one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Father (30s) House rural village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward (m/8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elena (f/8)</td>
<td>high-rise apartment rented for three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Father (50s) House city</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilly (f/11)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Father (50s) Farm in rural area</td>
<td>low-rise apartment owned for 35 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Juana (f/8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (30s) House rural village</td>
<td>high-rise apartment rented for two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Father (30s) House city</td>
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<td>Hannah (f/9)</td>
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<td>Mother (40s) Medium-rise apartment city</td>
<td>high-rise apartment rented for six years</td>
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<td>Beach Haven participants</td>
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<td>Josh (m/10)</td>
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<td>Mother (30s) House city</td>
<td>house rented for four years</td>
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<td>Father (30s) House rural area</td>
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<td>Mother (40s) House city</td>
<td>mortgaged house, lived here for 11 years</td>
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<td>Keven (m/10)</td>
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<td>Mother (40s) House on Pacific Island</td>
<td>house rented for 14 years</td>
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<td>Isabelle (f/10)</td>
<td>mortgaged house, lived here for 2 years</td>
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<td>Roslie (f/10)</td>
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<td>Valerie (f/10)</td>
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<td>Mother (30s) House on Pacific Island</td>
<td>house rented for three years</td>
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<td>Maree (f/10)</td>
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<td>Mother (40s) House on Pacific Island</td>
<td>house rented for 11 years</td>
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<td>Father (40s) House on Pacific Island</td>
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<td>Nicole (f/10)</td>
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<td>Mother (50s) Farm in rural area</td>
<td>state housing, lived here for 6 months</td>
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<td>Rebekka (f/10)</td>
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<td>Mother (20s) House on Pacific Island</td>
<td>state housing, lived here for 2 years</td>
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Beach Haven: attracting the undesired?

Parents from the suburb reported growing up in Beach Haven (and other suburbs) or in rural areas. ‘I grew up in Glenfield’, ‘Palmerston North’ or ‘Waikarereomana’ were typical responses when they revealed their childhood play experiences. Beach Haven offered a familiar experience to many (see also Bourdieu, 1999a, Sayad, 1999). Cyane’s mother, who grew up in Beach Haven and modified her parents’ house to suit the needs of an extended family, reveals that they have been living in this suburb for such a long time that “all of [her] kids have grown up with [her] friends' kids and just everyone knows everyone”. In Site effects Bourdieu refers to similar benefits to those mentioned by Cyane’s mother and how these are acquired through “prolonged occupation of a site and sustained association with its’ legitimate occupants” such as social capital of “relations, connections or ties” and especially the privileged ties of “childhood or adolescent friendships” (Bourdieu, 1999b: 128). I discuss this aspect in more detail under the heading localisation profits in Chapter 9. Staying in the area someone is familiar with and has social ties to is not only common to Pakeha and Maori, but also to families from the Pacific Islands. An example is Maree’s mother who moved with her parents and siblings more than 30 years ago from Samoa to Beach Haven. She discloses:

“Well we have been living here since '84 in this street coz we lived with mum and dad [down the road from here] before we moved to this house. So generally it is good. We know a lot of people around here. Not all are Island, but Maori and Pakeha, because we have, I have been involved with the community a lot and because my first school is in Beach Haven.” (Maree’s mother, BH, summer)

Bourdieu highlights that people from similar classes and backgrounds tend to mingle in the same places as they share a common habitus and are familiar with the underlying rules and regulations (Bourdieu, 1999b). Similar studies reveal that immigrants in New Zealand tend to move to the same areas inhabited by individuals from their ethnicity or even their village (Friesen and Kearns, 2008, Johnston et al., 2008, Latham, 2000). It seems that first or even second generation migrants, and also rural-urban and urban-urban migrants, overcome the ‘prolonged occupation’ of a site, as has been stated as reason to stay in Beach Haven by Cyane’s mother above, by settling in areas where they can easily access the necessary capital to socialise ‘with their kind’. Growing up in a similar environment and being accustomed to the ‘rules of the game’ eased the effort to blend in (at least among their own ethnicity) as Keven’s mother explains “We are islander. We understand”. Similarly, after moving from Glenfield to Beach Haven to start a family, Isabelle’s mother declares that their

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128 Glenfield is a suburb which adjuncts Beach Haven to the north, whereas Palmerston North is a rural town in the North Island and Waikarereomana is a National Park.
‘base’ is now Beach Haven and it “has been a great place to live”. Nonetheless, inhabiting Beach Haven seems not always so easy.

Many people with various ethnic backgrounds live near each other in Beach Haven, but the degree of contact varies (especially between ethnicities) as Maree’s mother reveals in the quote above. While some families seem to move easily between cultures in the space they inhabit because their habitus is adjusted to a multi-cultural environment, Keven’s mother summarises another underlying theme in the interviews when she reveals that she sticks to her own culture to keep safe. Only their own culture provides these families with the security to blend in. The habitus these families possess familiarised them with the knowledge about rules; they know how to play the game, but only within a limited context, their own cultural context. They inhabited Beach Haven to be able to draw on the familiarity of people and places as already outlined above. Moving outside this familiar context makes them feel vulnerable; their internalised practices that ease their daily lives are put to the test when moving around in an unfamiliar environment. Only Isabelle, who is growing up in a mixed ethnic family directly talked about the racism she occasionally encounters in Beach Haven. Her experience may be attributed to the fact that various ethnicities inhabit the same space, meeting people who are less familiar with the rules in a multi-ethnic society puts Isabelle’s and their habitus to test. Racism has been around since the early days of New Zealand as a colony, when the immigration of white British settlers was favoured over the ‘yellow danger’, although the target ethnicities changed over time. Communal life still seems to underlie pre-existing prejudices, although antiracist perspectives are held high by political leaders and they are taught in school (see Chapter 7).

“Around the streets of Beach Haven, sometimes people say there is kind of scary people, because like brown people they live around Beach Haven and they say they are quite scary. I would try to change that peoples’ thoughts of that because not all people are scary just because of their skin colour” (Isabelle, BH, summer)

Bourdieu (1999a: 12) observed a similar phenomenon in Jonquil Street in which antiracists’ education “are put to the test on a daily basis by the confrontation with the real difficulties of living together”. In Chapter 7 I discussed the wider social, economic and political changes taking place in New Zealand after the Second World War leading to the appropriation of suburban land on the North Shore and the cohabitation of Pakeha, Maori and later Pacific people and Asians (e.g. the increase of urban Maori to fill the demand of unskilled labour). In turn, this trend led to the development of a multicultural society from the mid-70s onwards (King and Filer, 2007). It seems that the life histories and experiences of families mirror these general trends, but they are sometimes caught up in the struggles of different ethnicities living together on a daily basis (McCreanor et al., 2006).
Struggles, however, are not only limited to different ethnicities living together. Beach Haven’s status as a low income area plays a prominent role in discussions regarding the inhabiting of Beach Haven. Parents often stigmatised Beach Haven as a low income area. Their economic capital cannot buy them into more desirable places as the mean family income in Beach Haven is NZ$27,000/year and many families in the area receive a rent subsidy or live in social housing. By way of example, Nicole’s mother stated that they had no choice but to move to Beach Haven with her family. Given their political status as refugees, they depend on the house offered by Housing New Zealand.

“It’s Housing New Zealand who told us to move here. If they tell I can move to another place, we will do this. Otherwise, we will stay here. I can’t move, but I can stay here as long as they let us”. (Nicole’s mother, BH, summer)

Rebecca’s family experiences a similar situation. Although the majority of their relatives live in South Auckland they were assigned a house on the North Shore. Their growing family of six children could no longer fit in their grandfather’s house where they ‘used to live’ when Rebecca was younger. The new house has enough space. Only the youngest children need to share a bedroom. This situation is unusual for larger Pacific Island households, which often have to deal with overcrowding and it’s implicit health risks (Cheer et al., 2002, Howden-Chapman et al., 2000, Saville-Smith and Amey, 1999, Schluter et al., 2007). In Rebecca’s case this knowledge contributes to the acceptance of some inconvenience and distance to relatives as they are not able to afford a larger house without the support of the state.

Another aspect which I interpret as Bourdieu’s ghettoisation effect is the stigma attached to Beach Haven because of gang and drug activities (Bourdieu, 1999b). Rosie’s mother makes a connection between gangs, drugs and a changing neighbourhood composition in Beach Haven compared to when she moved into the area.

“There is [I] suppose the drug culture and the drinking culture and that gang culture wasn’t so, I mean it was around, but it wasn’t so prominent as it is now. I guess we were hidden more away from it, because we lived on the Shore and it was more South Auckland kind of thing, where it is sort of moved more into our communities now. So they can be your neighbours” (Rosie’s mother, BH, summer)

While Rosie’s mother sees these gang activities as a recent phenomenon, the majority of families collaborating in my project were aware of drugs and gang activities in Beach Haven, but highlighted that the area is improving in this respect. Only some connected these crimes to social housing and related it to struggles and the stigma of this area in the past as Isabelle’s mother explains:
The inhabitation of Auckland Central and Beach Haven

“...I was growing up in Glenfield. Beach Haven was very much a lower income area with a lot of state housing [...] and children were a little bit neglected and there is still this element in Beach Haven, it still sort of carries this stigma about it. [...] You notice them [teenagers] and you know who they are and you know if they dropped out of school and if they are involved with gangs. [...] but in general I mean we really have no trouble in Beach Haven. It has been a great place to live, a wonderful school.” (Isabelle’s mother, BH, winter)

This perceived stigma has an ironically positive effect on the housing and renting prices from the perspective of young families as it offers possibilities denied in other suburbs. One mother whose family returned to live there after some years living overseas highlighted that Beach Haven is a wonderful place for ‘first home buyers’ as the houses are still ‘affordable’ for people with a limited budget. Likewise, Isabelle’s mother compared Beach Haven with a prestigious suburb on the North Shore (Devonport) and explained that richer people tend to move there, whereas Beach Haven is an affordable place for hard working people to make friends.

“It’s a bit it is sort of like the other scale like Devonport to me. Devonport with all the wealth there and all the people and it’s all very expensive, whereas Beach Haven is one of the cheapest places on the Northshore to live. For us as being first home buyers when we came this way here years ago this was an affordable area for us and because now all our friends and all our bases and all our kids’ friends live here we are quite happy here.” (Isabelle’s mother, winter)

The underlying theme in these different experiences is that Beach Haven is still affordable for families and offers various advantages. They inhabited Beach Haven because dwelling prices or rents are still affordable and they wanted to make use of ‘prolonged occupation’ or to settle in an environment suiting their style, their habitus. I discuss this theme from different perspectives in the next chapter under the umbrella of localisation profits after I introduce how the central city was inhabited by participating families.

Auckland Central: attracting only foreigners?

Similar to my foregoing account I reveal in the following section that families located in the central city of Auckland chose this location as they believed it would correspond to their habitus. It has, however, also to be viewed as an outcome of their capital endowments. Participants from the central city seem to be ‘forced’ to live together like those in Beach Haven under the umbrella of Bourdieu’s ghettoisation effect, but their decisions are also closely connected to wider changes taking place in the past decades.

Chilly’s father, who is a Pakeha entertainer, moved to the central city after his high school graduation more than 35 years ago and stayed on like Cyane’s and Maree’s mothers have in Beach Haven. I see him as one of the pioneers in reviving central city living. His youngest daughter is one of the few children in this study who fully utilise the play affordances in the
central city. Mostly tertiary students lived in the apartment complexes as these living circumstances were very unpopular to the rest of the society at that time (Friesen, 1994, Murphy, 2008). Living in the central city had low prestige, but was affordable for ‘small pockets’. Chilly’s father stayed on as some first home buyers in Beach Haven did. Being an entertainer Chilly’s father’s housing career resembles those described by Ley (2003) for Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Ley argued that some impoverished neighbourhoods attract artists valuing their affordability, but more importantly the high cultural capital possessed by their dwellers; creative people finding stimulation in each other. In a similar way, Chilly’s father talks about his neighbourhood which is also labelled the ‘Learning Quarter’. The Canadian neighbourhoods changed overtime into a zone of steadily rising economic capital fuelled by buyers fascinated by the “inner city habitus” of artists (Ley, 2003: 2527), while in central Auckland investors changed central city living and several rapidly built high-rises were constructed attracting mainly lower socio-economic groups. Nonetheless, Chilly’s father shows signifiers of the “inner city or artist habitus” such as “critical aesthetic dispositions” that Ley (2003: 2542) discusses. In his case, these dispositions find expression in the protection of Art Noveau buildings which were supposed to be cleared for the high court extension.

“I am very attached to these buildings, because I was part of the movement which helped to save from being pulled down by the government. They were all going to be demolished these beautiful buildings to build a High Court here. I was very involved in that during the mid-80’s and for that another ten years.”

He talks very fondly about these pioneering years with his likeminded friends and colleagues coinciding with the protection of the built historic landscape of Auckland. His habitus seems to fit in well into this area., But he admitted that the restructuring of the central city’s built environment (boom of high rises) changed the ‘feel’ in this neighbourhood; ‘the initial inner city habitus’ which attracted him to move to, stay and fight for his dwelling, changed with the gentrification of the central city (see also Bridge, 2001, Ley, 2003, Murphy, 2008). Nonetheless, the occasional glimpses of the old ‘inner city habitus’ in his apartment complex remind him why he moved to the Learning Quarter in the first place, why he decided to appropriate this area beyond the time when he spread ‘his wings’ and to raise two girls in the central city. His girls visited him occasionally when he got divorced, but after the death of his first wife they moved in with him. Although he attempted suburban living, he “did come back and come back and come back […] So [he has] lived more or less all [his] life here.” Despite the changes in Auckland’s central city in the past 35 years he has appropriated this place. His return and decision to raise his daughters in this area along with his firm statement of not wanting to move “anywhere else” indicates that this area seems to be the most appropriate one for his capital endowment and habitus: he did not question the suitability of central city
living for children (see also Chapter 10 and Chapter 11). Living in the central city did not imply his daughters missed out on any of the play experiences of suburban children. The same can be said for Tim and his siblings.

Tim’s father is also a single parent who does not question the appropriateness of central city living and decided about four years ago to move to the city with his four children. In his opinion living in a two bedroom apartment in the central city offered two interconnected advantages. First, renting a two bedroom apartment is as affordable as a house in one of the lower prestige suburbs (Carroll et al., 2011). Being on benefits, he is aware of the limited budget at his disposal and pondered his options as he disclosed during the interview. Due to the school zone system in New Zealand he would likely need to send his children to a low decile school if he lived in a suburb, whereas moving to the central city his children were entitled to enrol in higher decile schools. Tim’s father believes that meeting students with a ‘better’ background will positively influence his children’s future and ambitions. His aim is to enrich his children’s cultural and symbolic capital through a schooling system with more prestigious signifiers than the low decile ones. This aspect resembles findings from other studies on parental investment in schooling systems to acquire ‘legitimate’ cultural capital (e.g Accardo, 1999, Bourdieu, 1984, Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, Walker and Clark, 2010). The second advantage is in his eyes is the exposure to ‘a better’ lifestyle. Being unemployed himself he wanted to expose his children to positive role models and ‘rescue’ them from the violence and vicious cycle Isabelle’s mother talked about in Beach Haven. He experienced these problems growing up in a poor Maori community in the rural North and later on as a professional in impoverished suburbs in South Auckland coinciding with the urban move of many unskilled workers of Maori origin to urban centres (Eldred-Grigg, 2011, Pool, 1961). Nonetheless, the decision to move to the central city as the only affordable place for his plans demanded sacrifices from him and his family in the beginning as he disclosed:

“When I moved to a suburban area, I had an environment that was violent. And also the impact around you, people will normally, if you go to an environment where is high unemployment, you normally end up unemployed ok? Because you don’t see people going to work. […] I knew if I get into that syndrome it will continue with my children. I had to move them to an environment that encourage them ‘wow’ got your brain go and [the central city] was the ideal position. It has money, it has knowledge, it had resources, it had everything for the future of my children. So, I came here. It took 18 months like I just said. It was a struggle, I was always owing money […] I was going for a food pack to the Salvation Army, Social Welfare, now I haven’t been to a food bank for two years.” (Tim’s father, CC, summer)

His desire for social mobility, or in Accordo’s words (1999: 514) the “disposition to social mobility” and “hopes for real success”, has been transferred to his children. Giving his children a better life is the main driver of his decisions. The central city is – in his eyes- the only place he can afford to pursue his ambitions. Consequently, he does everything within
his power to ensure the family’s habitus does not rub anyone the ‘wrong way’. For example, he taught his children to be quiet when in the apartment complex, to take care of themselves literally and metaphorically, while being friendly to neighbours.

These two examples show different reasoning for inhabiting Auckland Central from the perspective of New Zealand born parents, while indicating commonalities in groups, ambitions, beliefs and evaluation of a site. I now turn to foreign migrants’ perspectives and their reasoning for inhabiting the central city. The remaining parents are all foreign born and moved as adults to live in New Zealand. Although their stories vary, an underlying theme was that they moved to the central city, because renting arrangements were easy to organise while still being in their home country. Another reason postulated was the ‘security’ offered in apartment complexes. Hannah’s mother elaborates:

“I feel safe because I used to live in a house when I first arrived and once I forgot my keys and I was able to open the window with nothing but like a peg for clothes, it was so easy and I sort of freaked out that if I can do that at my first try” (Hannah’s mother, CC, summer)

The central city is nonetheless for some a short-term plan, a base from where they hunt for more suitable living arrangements (see also Caroll et al. (2011)). As Korean apartment life is “very common”, Taesong’s parents expected a similar life-style in Auckland’s central city and based their decision to look for places in the central city on their previous experience. They expected to connect easily with other families as they had in their apartment complex in Korea. Taesong’s father imparts:

“Korea it’s very common living style. Big apartment and there are many facilities and there are some communities in the apartment.” (Taesong’s mother, CC, winter)

Nonetheless, the family did not find what they expected in the central city and decided to move to a suburban house as his mother reveals:

“I think they are they always see the traffic jam and crowded people especially night they feel tight and nervous and a bit more than suburban case. Yeah, so their characters are always aggressive so actually I was shocked when I came to here. Yeah. So next month next month we have planned to move to another place the suburban.” (Taesong’s father, CC, winter)

Juana’s mother reports on a similar decision to move to a suburb after concluding that central city arrangement in Auckland does not suit her family’s desires associated with their move to New Zealand.

“We’re looking to move to Howick. That area the spaces are bigger there. [we both laugh …] So catholic school are not; they are in the city but it’s in Herne Bay and we also need a bigger house and living in Herne Bay is not affordable at the moment. So that’s why. Mainly because we wanted a catholic school and a bigger house at the same time and that school to be close to our house.” (Juana’s mother, CC, summer)
The central city could not suit the family’s disposition. Their decision to move to New Zealand accompanied a desire to let their children walk to school while pursuing their dream to live in a suburban house symbolically representing that they have ‘made it’: a signifier for family and friends in their destination country and for being assimilated. They adjusted and ‘copied’ Kiwi’s parents’ desire to raise children in the suburbs. While for Tim’s father the decile rating of the central city schools was the decisive factor, for Juana’s parents their religious beliefs were crucial. Although a religious school is within walking distance to the central city, dwellings and tuition fees are beyond reach given the high socio-economic status of the Herne Bay neighbourhood.

While some of the parents aimed to move their families to the suburb, Elena’s father did the opposite. He decided to bring his family to the central city after they had been living in a suburb for some time. The high proportion of people of Chinese origin attracted him to the central city, which compares to accounts of Pacific Island families in Beach Haven and connects further to changes in immigration patterns from the 1990s onwards (see also Ip, 2005, Langer, 2009, Li, 1998, Xue et al., 2011). Elena’s father imagined that they would blend in more easily in the central city after their suburban experiment had failed. They “always lived in a city in China”. His aspiration was to improve their quality of life and to connect more easily to their surroundings than had been the case in the suburb.

“In Blockhouse Bay my wife said this looks like dead […] In the city the neighbourhood looks more like a friendly place. In rural area maybe strange people and people don’t talk too much.” (Elena’s father, CC, summer)

The family decided that their habitus did not match the one of the social field in the suburb they were living in (Bourdieu, 2005, Maton, 2008). By moving his family to Auckland’s central city he aimed to tie in with their previous experiences of urban living in a Chinese city. Parallels can be drawn to the expressions of the Korean family’s ambitions and expectations noted earlier. In the suburb Elena’s family’s habitus did not correspond with the suburban habitus of their neighbourhood symbolised, for example in the statement that they encountered many ‘strange people’. In contrast, in the central city they experienced a higher social connectedness; meeting more people from their own ethnicity. The central city environment in Auckland resembles, in this family’s opinion, the living arrangements in a compact Chinese city (see also Mare and Coleman, 2011, Xue et al., 2011). Therefore, he replaced the secluded and quiet suburban living with the busyness, noises and smells of a place they were more familiar with, and where they can ‘talk’ to neighbours in a common language both literally and metaphorically.

Other participants in the central city found their habitus matched the social field in the central city (at least in bearable ways). They had either lived in similar housing arrangements in their
home country or found an apartment in the central city which suited the demands and complexities of their lives in New Zealand. Hannah’s mother, who had no driving licence until recently, especially welcomed the proximity to destinations. This circumstance triggered her decision to live in an apartment in the central city. However, she emphasises that living in the central city suits only the life-style of singles and university students. Given the struggles of suburban living when not owning and being able to drive a car, central city living was the best option.

“I am living in the city because I was unable to drive until last year so all my work is in the city mainly Queens Street or Albert Street. So I have to be here and also my daughter’s school was in the city […] So for me it was convenient. I could catch the bus, I could go to the supermarket, I could work [but] it is not for kids. […] I think it’s good for young people, the students, young couples with no children who go out a lot and they have everything here…but not for kids.” (Hannah’s mother, CC, summer)

She and her daughter are able to manage their everyday life simply by walking or using public transport. They accepted therefore the downsides of central city living more easily than the earlier examples of Taesong’s and Juana’s families who intended moving to the suburbs. In a similar way McBeth’s mother, who is a university graduate student and also finds it convenient to take the bus out to ‘Tamaki Campus’ as she notes that a car in Auckland’s central city is neither affordable nor advisable, although she and her husband both have driving licences (see also Badland et al., 2010a, Carter, 2004, Collins et al., 2009). Their one bedroom apartment is within walking distance to her husband’s work and son’s school.

“[M]y husband is working in the city in St Paul Street and my son I just put him in school which is closer to the city, you know. I think for them it’s better to stay in the city where you can find everything, you know. Because I just came here about three years ago so I found out that it is better to stay in the city you know and get yourself used to everything so that’s why” (McBeth’s mother, CC, summer)

Stressing the convenience to amenities (not only work or education related, but also for leisure and daily needs) resembles the position of Hannah’s mother above, while highlighting in a similar way as Elena’s father that their suburban project has failed. They now put up with the constraints of central city living for a family as it is certainly better than suburban living in their eyes. The last part of the foregoing quote reconnects with the introductory quote to this chapter. Getting used to central city living indicates that this family got used to the ‘rules of the game’ of central city living: their habitus adjusted to a central city lifestyle shaping the habitat within their means for their own needs.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided an arena for participating families to explain themselves regarding the inhabitation of Auckland Central and Beach Haven. Some decided consciously to move to
these neighbourhoods while others were assigned a dwelling or simply stayed on drawing on profits of ‘prolonged occupation’. No matter which factors triggered their settlement, all parents revealed that they feel more comfortable in an area suiting their habitus; they attempted to settle in an environment familiar to them or fitting their expectations and anticipations. However, whether it is possible to appropriate such a place depends, as outlined, on the cultural, financial and organisational possibilities of each family. Inhabiting a place goes beyond financial means. Economic constraints and possibilities are but one consideration when deciding to inhabit a certain environment. Personal preferences, experiences and evaluations play a part. Moreover, how well someone feels they fit into a neighbourhood combines with wider socio-historic struggles that shape the present positions of participating families and the place they inhabit.

In Beach Haven ‘desired and undesired’ aspects are stitched together in terms akin to Bourdieu’s (1999b) ‘ghettoisation effect’, as an outcome of past and recent local and international migration patterns. Working class families and families dependent on benefits are living in the same neighbourhood which has created an environment in which drugs, alcohol abuse and gangs have flourished leaving impacts on the present. For families aspiring social mobility, the gang culture and vicious cycles evident in Beach Haven are disturbing. As discussed by Isabelle’s mother, they worry about the negative implications that the stigmatised reputation of this neighbourhood has for their children’s future. More importantly, this reputation impacts on the actualisation of affordances as I present in Chapter 10 and Chapter 11. By highlighting how well their children behave and do in school they distinguish themselves from families with less cultural, economic or symbolic capital. Families developed their own little niches and resilience structures to deal with Beach Haven’s reputation. Some would socialise within a limited network, often their own ethnicity, drawing on profits of ‘prolonged occupation’ while others took advantage of low renting and housing prices for pursuing their dream of a ‘place of their own’ (Christin, 1999). For the parents who had grown up in rural or suburban environments themselves, a ‘suburban village’, as Dexter’s parents called it, which combined the benefits of suburbia and a rural life-style seemed the most appropriate site for inhabitation: Beach Haven is their “comfort zone” (McCreanor et al., 2006: 196).

The Central City attracts foreigners and locals alike. Their reasoning for inhabiting this part of Auckland varies. Some pursue ambitious social mobility projects, others are after the ‘urban habitus’ or to settle as they grew up themselves, in an apartment complex. They seem to feel comfortable in an environment matching their habitus. Struggles appear when their habitus seems not to fit central city living. Families often felt like a ‘fish out of water’ and moved as a last resort to the suburbs. The ones who stayed weighed up the convenience of
walkable destinations in a compact living environment against the downsides of raising a child in the central city deciding, that their current living arrangements fits the complexities in their lives best (e.g. combing an education with child rearing in a foreign country). Elena’s father, for instance, aimed to improve his family’s quality of life by moving to an area where more people of his own ethnicity lived to be able to create benefits of ‘prolonged occupation’.

To conclude, the neighbourhoods parents grew up in, or their taste for neighbourhoods, influenced their decision to appropriate a certain residential environment in a similar way as growing up with ‘beige carpets’ persuaded a certain taste in Distinction. These findings suggest that gaining an understanding of parents’ reasoning for inhabiting a place provides insights into their aims and evaluations of a site, but also struggles they encounter on a daily basis. I argue that the effect of how well people feel they connect with an environment also influences their children’s actualisation of affordances (see also Chapter 9, Chapter 10 and Chapter 11). To be able to understand the actualisation of affordances fully it is necessary to keep parental reasoning for appropriation of Beach Haven and Auckland Central respectively as well as different fields in mind. This chapter has therefore provided a context for understanding the evaluation of ‘profits of localisation’ presented in the next chapter.
Chapter 9 ‘Profits of localisation’ for outdoor play in Auckland Central and Beach Haven

In Chapter 2, I introduced my understanding of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. I continued to argue that these landscapes are an outcome of historical patterns (see Chapter 7), and that they shape contemporary play practices. As a first step in this chapter, I reveal the current map-able outcome of children’s seasonal roaming patterns (implying their play practices) in an intensified urban environment. Children’s GPS tracks are the materialised indicators of struggles and they expose the arenas of children’s activity spaces within the highly walkable areas of Beach Haven and Auckland Central. Patterns of activity, as well as the locations in which these take place, represent ‘reified social space’ according to Bourdieu (see introductory quote and Chapter 3). Presenting children with their GPS tracks led to insightful discussions into their play practices. They disclosed choices and constraints determined by the built, natural and social environments and depending on the ‘play class’ families belong to, they utilised different activity settings and evaluated environments and their affordances from a certain perspective.

While I unpack families’ points of view shaping their playing practices in more detail in Chapter 10, I focus in this chapter on the ‘profits of localisation’. Bourdieu (1999b) defines all ‘incomes’ (symbolic capital) which can be possibly obtained through the proximity of rare or desirable agents and goods (e.g. educational, cultural or sporting institutions) with the term ‘profits of localisation’ (see Chapter 3). With this in mind, the second part of the chapter serves two roles. First, it reveals the ‘desirable agents and goods’ that families viewed as important in relation to seasonal outdoor play practices (e.g. availability and accessibility of public open spaces). Put another way, these are the ‘profits of localisation’ that they viewed as important for enabling or constraining outdoor play. Second, I deconstruct the

129 As outlined in Chapter 3 playing the ‘game’ of outdoor play is viewed as social struggle. Agents permanently (re)define their positions in the ‘field of play’. Thus, the GPS logs are snapshots of contemporary norms and rules of outdoor play; the map-able geographies of children in 2010 (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 11).
(non)tangible ‘profits’ viewed through the lens of ‘health/well-being’\textsuperscript{130} and ‘environmental literacy’ as symbolic capital. I chose these two interrelated aspects from many possibilities in the context of ‘obesogenic environments’, because researchers increasingly highlight the positive contribution made by independent and informal play to children’s well-being (Mackett \textit{et al.}, 2007b). On the one hand, children are more active when playing outdoors (Cooper \textit{et al.}, 2010, Kimbro \textit{et al.}, 2011); and therefore are less likely to become overweight or obese when they are habitually active (Janz \textit{et al.}, 2009: ). On the other hand, there is strong evidence that independent outdoor play contributes positively to children’s ‘environmental literacy’, which in turn contributes to children’s present and future well-being (Chawla, 2001, Huttenmoser, 1995, Malone, 2007). Indeed, such play prepares children for the complexities of everyday life and the increasingly multi-functional aspects of the world (see Chapter 1). These symbolic capitals are unequally distributed between people from different social and physical locations (see introductory quote). However, ‘play classes’ constantly (re)negotiate the value of symbolic capital (see Chapter 3). In summary this chapter provides an account of the contemporary seasonal activity patterns of children living in an intensified suburban and vertical living environment, the choices and constraints they face from the proximity or remoteness of desirable ‘agents and goods’ and the profits (symbolic capital) they ultimately gain.

**Children’s map-able roaming patterns**

In this section, I consider where children in an intensifying urban environment spend their (play) time. I am especially interested in the seasonal differences in and between a suburban and central city setting. As stated in Chapter 2 we know little about children’s all-year round roaming patterns. Although this thesis focuses in depth on the often overlooked social practices arising from the intersection and negotiation between structural processes and human agency in two highly walkable areas, I drew on children’s seasonal activity arenas to unpack these structure-agency complexities (see Chapter 2). In what follows, I provide a descriptive snapshot on children’ seasonal play in the central city and Beach Haven. These patterns can be seen as the outcome of historical struggles in the ‘field of play’. I present two maps for each neighbourhood. In the first one, I mapped all places that families visited during the time children were wearing the GPS devices. while In the second one, I zoom into the respective neighbourhood to identify the locations that children walked or cycled to independently and those to which they were accompanied by friends or parents.

\textsuperscript{130} Health in this context embraces a wide field: positive health outcome due to an active life-style or achieved through play as well as general well-being e.g. feeling well in an environment and affirmed to participate in activities (Duff, 2011, Kearns and Andrews, 2010, Kearns and Gesler, 1998). However, I did not measure health and well-being factors of participating children directly such as their height and weight. Hence, these possible profits gained from this symbolic capital are only discussed theoretically.
Figure 9-1: Children’s seasonal roaming patterns
Viewing children's roaming patterns from distance

The neighbourhood overview (see Figure 9-1) reveals that children’s map-able roaming patterns are dispersed and fragmented. Children are chauffeured through the city. Even the one without a car could rely on his networks for motorised transport. This is reflected in numerous car trips reported in children’s travel diaries (see Figure 9-2, Figure 9-3). This observation is also widely reported in the literature (Tranter and Pawson, 2001, Whitzman et al., 2010a). These general patterns clearly mirror the practice of ‘insularisation’ discussed in Chapter 2, although each child’s mobility pattern is unique in its particular context (see Chapter 3). Interviews and diaries disclosed that children visit friends, take part in extracurricular activities or join shopping trips. Two families from Beach Haven, for example, stayed with relatives in South Auckland for an afternoon, while one family drove from the central city to shop in two ethnic supermarkets ‘up North’. Having a closer look at the destinations reported in travel diaries, central city children seem not to participate in unstructured activities (e.g. playing in the park) during winter. Instead, they reported attending educational activities (e.g. math clubs).

The visual analysis of all roaming patterns does not, however, disclose significant differences between seasons. While locations change (e.g. attending festivals during summer, sports tournaments in winter), children spent a considerable amount of time in the backseat of a car both in summer and winter. Interestingly, despite the fact that spending time at the beach during summer is commonly reported as a favourite activity by children
and in parental surveys, only one family visited a popular beach (Long Bay Beach) north of Beach Haven while the children wore the GPS device. Moreover, they went during winter.\textsuperscript{131} Another interesting point is shown in these maps: all Beach Haven children are enrolled in their local school, which is within walking distance to their homes. In contrast, not all city children go to a neighbourhood school. The fact that there are at least two schools close to their apartment complexes provides some insights into parental aspirations (see e.g. Lewis, 2004, Witten, 2005). To conclude, children’s activity patterns mirror the commonly reported ‘insularisation’ of children’s mobilities. When all trips are mapped and viewed ‘from afar’, the environment children are growing up in appears to have no visible effect on children’s roaming patterns. Children in both areas and seasons were chaperoned between fragmented ‘islands’. They frequently left their neighbourhood to pursue diverse leisure activities (see also Witten et al., 2011a), but children were also mobile within their neighbourhoods settings.

**Play patterns in Auckland Central and Beach Haven**

Zooming in to the level of the walking distances that the children traversed wearing the GPS units, patterns show similarities and differences between locations (Figure 9-4, Figure 9-5). Children’s activity arenas varied between destinations visited, but not between seasons. In the central city map-able activities in summer and winter centred on school, friends’ apartments, one after-school-care institution and one park, despite there being more destinations available within walking distance (see Chapter 6). Two activity patterns are stark in the central city. First, children accompanied their parents on shopping trips. This could hint that shopping as a form of leisure is normalised in the central city (Buckingham, 2011). One child in particular seemed to walk in and out of shops along Queen Street in both seasons. Second, children were ‘domesticated’ and ‘institutionalised’ (see Chapter 2). Most central city children indicated they spent their pastime indoors at home or in an after-school-care facility. The majority of reported trips in the central city are made under adult supervision following the notion of ‘good parenting’ (see Figure 9-3 and Chapter 10). However, one particular pattern stands out. One boy independently traversed long distances by foot. During summer he walked with friends to a pool after school, while in winter he went independently to rugby practice. His patterns resemble some of the suburban children.

Children in Beach Haven often utilised parks in both seasons, which may be attributed to the fact that they often played at the closest one to their home. They also popped in and out of local dairies and visited friends, sometimes with their parents but more often on their own or

\textsuperscript{131}This finding could be attributed to the fact that families only had the GPS device for four days. Surveys suggested weekly or fortnightly water-based activities.
with friends (see Figure 9-3). For example, during one of the summer weekends, four girls in Beach Haven met up for a play date at one of the parks and then decided 'to cool down' in a pool. Parents refused to drive them, so the girls walked for 'a very long time' to another friend’s house. Further, the ‘courts’ \(^{132}\) played a prominent role in the suburb and often children walked to their local school in both seasons.

In both locations the school was open after school hours. Beach Haven children frequently played on the school grounds in the afternoons or weekends, but city children only utilised these during school time. City children often spent their time institutionalised in an after-school-care setting or indoors. In contrast, GPS logs did not easily disclose the attendance of extra-curricular activities within walking distance in the suburb. However, the time spent on the fields in Shepherd’s Park, could indicate children’s participation in sports clubs, which was confirmed during interviews.

\[\text{Figure 9-3: Number of trips taken by mode in summer and winter indicated in travel diaries}\]

n BH summer = 9; n BH winter = 9; n CC summer = 6; n CC winter = 8

Children in the central city reported fewer trips undertaken independently. Beach Haven children occasionally walk with parents during summer while city children reported more supervised trips. Indeed, parents seemed to accompany their children most times when spending time outdoors. Parents walked their children to school and cars were not a feasible transport option for short city trips due to high traffic volume and limited ‘free’ parking options. These supervised walking trips could also be seen as an indicator of the city’s high walkability (see Chapter 6). In contrast, families in the suburb travelled mainly by car and reported that trips increased during winter time. Interestingly, only suburban children reported cycle trips. Public transport use and cycling was, however, less important than independent motorised transport options in both settings, which reflects the general negative picture these forms of transport have in Auckland (Bean et al., 2008).

\(^{132}\) The term ‘courts’ represents the many places, often sealed, where children can ‘shoot some basketball hoops’.

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Figure 9-4: Central City children’s seasonal roaming patterns within walking distance to their home
Figure 9-5: Beach Haven children’s seasonal roaming patterns within walking distance to their home
In summary, the children’s seasonal activity patterns indicated the widely reported loss of children’s independent mobility. Children in both settings were chaperoned between locations be it on foot or by car (Zeiher, 2003). They frequently travelled outside their neighbourhood, although as discussed in Chapter 6 both settings were blessed with a variety of destinations commonly reported to foster children’s outdoor play (e.g. public open spaces). It was especially apparent in the central city that children spent most of their time ‘institutionalised’ or ‘domesticated’. One park was prominently utilised; school, home and Youhtown were the common locations children spent their time. Public spaces are mainly traversed on their way to destinations such as the library, cinema and shops. In contrast, children in the suburb seemed to have more freedom and travelled, to diverse destinations, often on their own. Their map-able roaming patterns suggested that they also spent time in extra-curricular activities or pursued other pastimes outside their neighbourhood (see also Chapter 2 and Chapter 11).

Families’ views of ‘desirable agents and goods’ and their promising ‘symbolic capital’

The previous section outlined children’s mobility patterns and viewed them as an outcome of the historical patterns discussed in Chapter 7. However, these patterns, which shaped contemporary play trends, did not disclose how families experience and evaluate these activity spaces. In the following section, I turn my attention to the ‘goods and agents’ families commonly discussed during interviews and the neighbourhood walk to reveal, from their point of view, the seasonal ‘profits’ neighbourhoods offer. I complement their accounts with a discussion of ‘health’ and ‘environmental literacy’ as symbolic capitals that can help interpret families’ explanations of choice and constraint from a public health perspective. The five main ‘profits of localisation’ for children’s outdoor play families valued were the home environment, low traffic volume, organised activities, neighbourliness and, most importantly, the availability of public open spaces.
Parents evaluations in the central city (left) and Beach Haven (right) indicate enabling (yellow) and constraining (grey) ‘agents and goods’. Central city parents view only physical locations and activities as important for enabling children to play outdoors. In contrast, Beach Haven parents focus on human relations: outdoor play ‘profits’ form friends, while in the central city the only human beings mentioned are ‘friendly neighbours’ and ‘diverse people’. However, in the eyes of all parents similar physical locations foster outdoor play (e.g. parks, beaches, school grounds), which implies that certain environments are ‘institutionalised’ to contain children’s play. Interestingly, parents in the central city and the suburb view ‘traffic’ as the main obstacle for playing carefree outdoors, which reflects international findings. However, more interesting is that only suburban parents mention the fear of abduction, which may be another indicator that central city parents mainly supervise their children outdoors; hence this ‘fear’ seems less important; it is an abstract fear, although widely discussed by all parents. Similarly, Beach Haven parents reported about drunk people and bullies. Central city parents focused on the lack of suitable physical locations and the limited number of children playing outdoors. Weather as a barrier in summer was only mentioned by suburban parents and is attributed to the quickly changing weather and the high UV radiation, but it calls for the inclusion of climatic conditions as grounded in everyday life; it is viewed subjectively. For central city parents this might be less important as children seem to spend more time indoors.

Figure 9-6: Tag clouds of ‘(non)desirable agents and goods’ in summer
Parents evaluations in the central city (left) and Beach Haven (right) indicate enabling (yellow) and constraining (grey) ‘agents and goods’. Central city parents value physical (indoor) locations (e.g. cinema, Youhtown, shops, parks) within walking distance as an important factor to ‘keep’ children entertained during winter, while exercise related activities spring immediately into suburban parents’ minds. Their accounts however point towards two views. On the one hand, parents still value similar aspects and locations as in summer and state the feasibility of playing outdoors during winter. On the other hand, indoor activities (e.g. watching TV, relaxing) feature prominently. Interestingly, while ‘traffic’ plays an important role during summer in both locations, it is only apparent in the central city for winter. Both locations, however, highlight seasonal barriers to outdoor play (e.g. inclement weather), which may be the cause of less children spending time outdoors. Interestingly, all parents indicate a lack of suitable outdoor play spaces during winter, although the material aspects of neighbourhoods did not change. This aspect suggests that other factors are also at play in shaping ‘obesogenic landscapes’ and that these need to be read ‘socially’.

Figure 9-7: Tag clouds of ‘(non)desirable agents and goods’ in winter
**Children and their home environment**

The way families spoke about their home environment indicated that they viewed access to a suitable nearby outdoor space to be important for children’s play in both seasons. However, children used their home-based outdoor environments less frequently in winter. While all suburban children could play in a back or front yard, only three children in the central city had access to an outdoor area in their apartment complexes and in all cases this was regarded as ‘too small’ to play properly. Instead the majority of central city children only had access to “the parking lot full of cars” according to Hannah’s mother. Parents did not see these spaces or wide sidewalks with all their affordances as a potential play space, fearing accidents and abduction. Consequently, parents desired a different kind of outdoor environment located within the security of their apartment complex to which children could independently retreat. Parents believed that by having a small outdoor place, ‘perhaps with a playground’, they might enlarge children’s spatial and social freedoms. They could then decide to go ‘downstairs’ and mingle with children from the same complex instead of depending on parental schedules for visits to the park. City children were, however, frequently contained within the four walls of their apartments in both seasons. But their parents compensated their decision to live in a central city environment and restricting their children’s independent mobility with a greater flexibility around indoor play rules.

“They just open the door and they skate on the carpet. Yeah you have to and in summer when it gets really, really hot I usually put just the bucket of water here and give the container and they move water from one place to another on the balcony.” (Juana’s father, CC, summer)

City parents often allowed children to transform their places to overcome the lack of a safe outdoor area; they permitted their children to play ‘outdoor games indoors’ (see also Karsten, 2005).

In contrast, playing in the back or front yard was one of the many potential affordances that Beach Haven children utilised in summer and less often in winter. Their experiences resembled (at least partially) ‘suburban play’ all over the world (Chawla, 2001, Christensen and O’Brien, 2003, Skar and Krogh, 2009), when they disclosed playing ‘tiggy’, ‘hide-and-seek’ or ‘trampoline’ in their garden. Actualising these affordances mainly depended on children’s mood, the time of day and weather. Despite the fact that families viewed yards as an asset for children’s play, parents bemoaned the general trend of shrinking backyard sizes.

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133 Although the access to electronic entertainment has been shown to impact on children’s outdoor play, I focus in this section primarily on the outdoor environments of children’s homes as this project is primarily interested in children’s outdoor play (Dorey et al., 2010, Sisson et al., 2011, Wen et al., 2009). Nevertheless, I interweave children’s fondness for ‘screen time’ throughout this chapter.
In the eyes of parents, children ‘profit’ from having access to ‘any’ backyard. They can graduate from actualising affordances within the ‘safety’ of their garden in a manner appropriate to their physical and cognitive capabilities, to become ‘mobile’ and competent users of their neighbourhood environments (e.g. Darbyshire et al., 2005, Holt et al., 2009, Kytta, 2004). Their ‘environmental literacy’ is gradually enlarged. While suburban children take access to a garden for granted and view its affordances as one of many potential play pleasures in their neighbourhood, central city children are not accustomed to one. The available gardens lack quality and size. Small gardens in the suburb seemed not to bother children as they could retreat to public outdoor spaces, but central city children did not have this option. While active play indoors may contribute to their general well-being, it is challenging for central city children to gain (the symbolic capital of) ‘environmental literacy’. They not only have no ‘safe’ play space within the vicinity of their apartment complex, but high traffic volumes also complicate accessing the available public open spaces independently.

**Dealing with urban mobilities: managing traffic volumes**

Not surprisingly ‘traffic’ was discussed by all families as one of the main obstacles to children’s outdoor play and was heavily documented in the parental listing exercise (see Figure 9-6 and Figure 9-7). Suburban parents particularly brought this concern into perspective during the interviews. Children’s spatial freedoms in Beach Haven ‘profit’ from being located in a residential area, whereas those in the central city suffer from the high traffic volumes related to its function as an economic hub (see Chapter 6). Parents curtailed children’s independent mobility in the central city because of the potential risks associated with roads that were ‘too busy’, ‘red light runners’ and ‘unsafe crossings’. Despite the fact that parents are aware of their children’s capabilities to negotiate traffic, they are less trusting of other road users. To protect children, parents often restricted their licenses to independence. Juana’s mother explained:

“Because there’s no space to play [in apartment complex], they can’t go out by themselves. They always depend on an adult to be able to go…I don’t feel comfortable allowing her to walk to Myers Park even if she does know the park. And even if there are places where she can cross the roads safely. I don’t feel safe sending her all the way by herself. Definitely not!” (Juana’s mother, CC; summer)

While in parental interviews aspects of ‘traffic safety’ played a prominent role, children viewed this barrier as less of an immediate problem. They appeared to have learned to accept road users as an obstacle and in many cases they themselves were frequently passengers in a car. The absence of the theme ‘traffic safety’ in many central city children’s interviews could be attributed to the fact that parental presence provided them with a sense
of security, although they were familiar with rules around busy roads and crossings. The rest believed that a reduction in the number of vehicles could enlarge their spatial freedom and allow them ‘safer’ play outdoors as the excerpt from Kim details:

Christina: Is there anything else you can think about that you would like to have changed around your house so that you can go outside and play?  
Kim: Not many roads and cars.  
Christina: Why would you like to get rid of the roads and cars?  
Kim: I guess it’s like dangerous to play if there’s roads to cross.

Living in an area providing destinations that can be reached with safe, independent travel is desired by many central city children. Currently, the central city consists of too many non-desirable ‘goods and agents’ to provide a safe play environment. In contrast, Beach Haven children ‘profited’ from low traffic volumes in their neighbourhood, although parents still viewed it as an important barrier to granting their children independent outdoor play.

In interviews parents often valued the quiet residential streets as an asset of Beach Haven. There is hardly any through traffic and traffic peaks are limited to commuting and school hours. By highlighting the absence of careless drivers parents reassured themselves that their children were ‘safe’ in this suburb as the following two examples exemplify.

“It is no traffic lights here…it’s not a place where people go through; they come here or they’re leaving from here” (Dexter’s mother, BH, summer)

“It’s probably everyone is good, no one’s speeding, up and down the driveway. No one’s, you know, no silly drivers up and down the street and stuff” (Valerie’s mother, BH, winter)

Negotiating small volumes of traffic are part of children’s daily mobility on their way to school or to one of the many play destinations in their suburb. They graduate slowly from dependence on friends and older siblings to independence; to be a confident ‘sidewalk user’. On their excursions, be it on their way to school or play destinations, they engage in habitual activity and enhance their ‘environmental literacy’ (Kullman, 2010, Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009). Children deal on a daily basis with the dangers of traffic equipped with ‘appropriate behaviour’ learned over a period of time from parents, at school or being a school patrol guard. These ‘educational lessons’ affirmed that parents trust children’s capabilities. At the same time they also trusted, that neighbours would tell ‘people off’ when speeding, thus exhibiting the ethic of ‘in loco parentis’.

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134 Many influential writers, therefore, suggest modifying the built environment (e.g. low speed limits, vehicular obstacles, reduction of lane numbers, pedestrian friendly streets) to enhance children’s freedoms and reduce the risk of injuries and harms (e.g. Mackett et al., 2007b, Panter et al., 2008, Whitzman et al., 2010a). Auckland Council began to address these issues in their recent draft plan to make Auckland the most liveable city for all ages (Auckland Council, 2011a).

135 For example, Maree’s father reported that he ‘chased’ with some neighbours ‘boy racers’ in their street to “keep the children safe”. 
Although all participating parents and children referred in some way to the increase of traffic volume and its negative aspects on road safety, suburban children are still ‘profiting’ from living in a residential area where traffic is limited to peak times. In contrast, families in the central city viewed ‘traffic’ as an immediate barrier and becoming ‘streetwise’ is more challenging if one is largely confined to the backseat of a car or indoors. However, it has to be highlighted that parents in Beach Haven and the central city create a ‘social trap’ with the increasing ‘institutionalisation’ and ‘insularisation’ of children’s pastime in both areas, which is also closely connected to the general increase of societal mobility (Sheller and Urry, 2000). Through their auto-dominant practice of chauffeuring children between these destinations parents increase the risks for actively and independently commuting children and the ones playing on or around streets.

Desiring organised pastimes: the ‘institutionalisation’ of play

As established earlier children’s participation in extra-curricular activities is normalised and desired by many parents and children (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 7). Parents not only send their children to after-school-care settings when their working schedule demands it, but increasingly they also do so to extend their children’s skills (e.g. sport, music, linguistic, numerative) (Leverett, 2011). Most of the children participating in the study enjoyed attending organised activities. Consequently, parents and children evaluated their neighbourhood environment in relation to the availability and quality of structured activities.

All central city children attended afternoon activities year round ranging from sports to ‘science clubs’. Many of these activities are undertaken in the afterschool programme at ‘Youthtown’. The activities offered were regarded as an ‘enticement’ for attendance. Going there is part of children’s daily routine and they speak enthusiastically about the activities offered. Spending time in this place is, in children’s eyes, often a synonym for ‘supervised, safe fun indoors’. For example, Juana highlighted that she “like[s] Youthtown, but it’s like all concrete”. Neither parents nor children’s positive evaluation of the programme changed between summer and winter. Children seemed to have accepted that taking part in their activities means pursuing affordances such as ‘basketball’, ‘swimming’, ‘running around’ or ‘making stuff’ inside. Children did not challenge this fact and neither did parents. Parents appear to suppress their awareness of not providing outdoor play opportunities by telling themselves that children are able to engage with ‘friends’, while being active at the same time. More importantly, they will be supervised (see also Wyver et al., 2010).

136 This agency offers after-school-care and holiday programmes in the heart of Auckland throughout the year and is frequently utilised by central city children (see Chapter 6).
McBeth’s mother (CC): If you want to send your son to some after-school-care it’s quite convenient for us, because Youthtown is very close by. […] And I think it is very good centre for children to get together they have some very good activity there which is good.

Hannah’s mother (CC): My daughter is happy because she meets people from other schools as well and they are quite active, they run a lot. And they have all the young staff. They are all very energetic.

This after-school-care facility contrasts the more sedentary nature of children’s lives at home. As indicated earlier the size of apartments and lack of suitable outdoor areas constrains children’s home-based pastimes. Hence, parents were relieved that children engage in ‘healthy’ activities. That these take place indoors then becomes less important.

Nonetheless, many parents regretted the unavailability of organised activities beyond Youthtown in the central city. They highlighted this aspect mainly during winter which may be connected to the fact that they view public open spaces as less accessible during this season. In their eyes clubs and events they believe children could attend in a suburban environment are non-existent in the central city. All the activities offered by the Auckland Council, which organises free activities for children during festivals (e.g. heritage festival, Diwali) or at its museums and libraries, seem not to meet this need. However, it is parents, not children, who wished for more ‘institutionalised’ play spaces in the central city as they are the ones who mainly decided on children’s extra-curricula activities (see Figure 9-8). Children seemed pleased with Youthtown.

Families in the suburb were also mainly satisfied with the activities offered in their neighbourhoods. None of the children in Beach Haven attended an after-school-programme in either summer or winter and no parent mentioned this as a need. In the suburb it still seems to be normalised that mothers only work part-time to take care of their offspring in the afternoons or, if they work full-time, rely on their family networks for after-school-care. Children attended scouting programmes, sports clubs and artisan activities, which were frequently run by the local school and volunteers often associated with religious and ethnic groups. All girls and the majority of boys enjoyed playing for the school netball and basketball team respectively, while others participated in the choir, the kapa haka group or ‘reading buddies’. Coaches were often parents; meetings and practice took place after school or during lunch breaks. Churches organised gender-specific activities such as ‘Zumba’ or ‘boxing for the boys’ all-year-round, although Maree and others disclosed that more “stuff is happening during winter”. Extra-curricular activities did not take as much of children’s leisure time in Beach Haven as experienced in the central city. Clubs provided

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137 Adjunct central city suburbs have plenty of clubs, but only Tim and Chilly were enrolled in some of them.
138 ‘Kapa haka’ is the traditional dance of Maori people.
opportunities for both children and parents to strengthen their social networks. For example, on Saturday mornings parents enjoyed joining their children’s sports games and chatted with other parents on the side-lines.

![Figure 9-8: An account for indoor play and the resistance to ‘institutionalised’ activities in summer (top) and winter (bottom)](image)

This central city boy disclosed two interesting aspects in his drawing about his favourite (left) and least favourite (right) play spaces. His favourite activities in his neighbourhood were carried out indoors (such as at his friend’s house, a pool and the cinema), while he ‘hates’ institutionalised activities (library, kumon), but he revealed during the interviews that he enjoyed going to Youhtown. Nonetheless, it is interesting that he views a tutoring institution (kumon) or ‘studying’ at the library as one form of play (Kumon, 2012). This boy did not detect any potential outdoor affordances, which sparked his interest in a similar way as playing computer with his friend or board games. Most of the activities he participated in (table tennis, handball, tutoring, language school, piano) were located outside his neighbourhood and the ones within walking distance required entrance fees (cinema, pool), which may indicate an ‘insularised’ pastime (see Chapter 2).

Parents in Beach Haven were less worried about the availability or quality of clubs and activities than their affordability contrasting central city parents’ concerns. Michael’s mother’s account of the cost of organised activities echoes those of many others. She also exemplified parental desires for a ‘youth club’ that older primary school aged children could attend.

Christina: What would you think would be good to have?
Michael’s mother (BH): Youth things would be awesome. Really well run Youth Centres. [like in Epsom…]
Christina: And what did they do?
Michael’s mother: Oh! Anything and everything they ran programmes specifically for teenagers... they ran art programmes yeah. But it was also funny, too; like it was either free or a minimum charges... we have the YMCA here which has completely changed over the years... kids got to do really cool fun stuff and learned so many things whereas now it’s not financially viable for a lot of people to even do or make the most of the programme.

Not many parents in Beach Haven can spare the money for their children’s extra-curricular activities, although some would like to. Income levels are low. Their aspirations cannot be met with some of the existing programmes requiring ‘high’ fees, such as the one run by the YMCA.

Although children can attend extra-curricular activities in both neighbourhoods, parents value their availability and quality differently. The suburb seems to ‘profit’, despite the question of affordability, from the diversity of activities. However, the central city children are more likely to attend after-school programmes characterised by constant supervised play. While organised activities can contribute to children’s well-being through participating and meeting friends, they offer limited opportunities for children to become ‘streetwise’.

**Trust, social networks and neighbourliness: determinants of outdoor play and ‘environmental literacy’?**

All families in this study desired independent outdoor play. Studies have shown that the more parents perceive their neighbourhood as a ‘safe place’, the more likely children can independently explore their surroundings (Freeman, 2010, Prezza et al., 2001). Therefore, it is not surprising that parents and children in this study also evaluated their neighbourhoods’ ‘profits’ in relation to trust, social networks and neighbourliness (see Chapter 1). They frequently discussed (the lack of) opportunities for gaining social capital and “environmental literacy”.

Children and parents labelled Beach Haven as a ‘safe place’. They loved the feeling of being part of a community whose members trust each other and which is not restricted to “one street or a small area” as Rosie’s mother described (see Figure 9-6). Families reported many opportunities for encounters such as ‘school BBQs’, ‘Christmas Carols’ in the park and the ‘wharf’ during summer. The majority of children had spatial freedoms to roam and to develop their ‘environmental literacy’ while parents could let their children ‘go off and explore’. Children often did not hesitate in doing so. They knew who to turn to when in trouble as, for

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139 In this section, I explore how the general neighbourhood ‘design’ in relation to social capital may contribute to children’s independent mobility; hence, to ‘profits of localisation’ based on ‘higher’ ‘environmental literacy’ (rather than the individual social capital that exists between a child and his/her parents for trusting the child’s capabilities to negotiate independent mobility) (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3).
instance, Rebekka highlighted. “[T]here’s a lots of people that help you.” However, pranks and bad behaviour came to parental knowledge due a community ethic of ‘in loco parentis’.

“[I]f my kids go off the beaten path, and get lost, they know a door to knock on or I’d get a call from someone who said they have seen my kids do something such and such and I like that about it. It’s a really, really friendly place! (Dexter’s father, BH, summer)

Children could easily ‘bump into each other’ without needing to arrange play dates. They could cultivate their own social capital independently of their parents. Friends acted as an affordance for playing outside (see Chapter 3) and were often an incentive to get out and be active at one of the many public open spaces or sport clubs in Beach Haven (see also Allender et al., 2006, Veitch et al., 2007). But the Beach Haven community is less active during winter in terms of spontaneous encounters outdoors.

Children profited during summer from the neighbourliness in this area, but in winter people generally retreated indoors. In the eyes of many children, Beach Haven appeared deserted due to inclement weather as the following story exemplifies.

Christina: You haven’t been outside because?

Cyane: Because mostly it’s been raining lately. And because no one is outside and because we all mostly come outside in the summer not really in the winter.

Christina: So there’s no one to play with.

Cyane: That makes it quite boring.

The trust in the community and people did not disappear during winter, but with fewer people spending time outside this suburb lost, in the eyes of its inhabitants, its ‘neighbourly feeling’; making Beach Haven a ‘boring place’ for some during this time (see Figure 9-7 and Figure 9-9). Holt (2008) argues that for understanding social capital a broader socio-spatial context is warranted, but this example clearly states that this view should be further expanded by a seasonal component.

Furthermore, comments from parents and children about ‘tagging’, ‘drugs’, ‘yelling neighbours’ and ‘boy racers’ also hinted that negative social capital exists in Beach Haven. Although these incidents negatively impact on parents and children’s perception of ‘safety’, more widespread reports of community cohesion seemed to have overwritten these aspects (see also Freeman (2010)). The negative aspects of symbolic capital were more prominent in interviews with central city families who universally agreed that ‘there is no neighbourhood [in the central city]’ either in summer or winter. The neighbourly, close-knitted sociability praised in Beach Haven was non-existent in the central city, but was desired by many

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140 It is popular in New Zealand for a minority of enthusiasts to participate in illegal street races and often young males race. Moreover, many drivers do not stick to the recommended speed limit and there is a culture that gives prominence to cars instead of pedestrians.
parents. They believed that a ‘safer’ environment would allow children to play outdoors independently. Instead, parents reported unwelcome encounters with ‘homeless people’, ‘prostitutes’, ‘drunks’ and ‘erotic advertisements’ (see Chapter 6, Figure 9-6 and 9-7). They passed their fears, willingly or unwillingly, on to their children.

“I was there [landscaped entrance to apartment] once alone. There was this man walking past. He looked strange. I like it better when my parents are around.” (Taesong, CC, summer)

Unfamiliarity with local residents impacted on families’ attitudes towards the wider residential area and influenced children’s licence to roam. The resulting invisibility of children living in central city apartments complicated the development of friendships; they were at times unaware of other children residing in the same building. The majority of their friends lived in the surrounding suburbs, but they rarely met up for play dates. Instead, children retreated indoors disclosing their love for ‘drawing’, ‘reading’, ‘watching TV’ and ‘computer games’ in both seasons. Kim’s story is representative of the majority of central city children participating in this study. He wished for more spontaneous encounters with friends.

Kim: Well, my mom says I’m good at playing by myself. Yeah, not that boring.
Christina: What do you think yourself?
Kim: Yeah, it’s okay. Better with friends.

When parents took children to one of the central city parks, which happened mainly during summer, they first had to establish relationships as the constellation of children changed frequently. This aspect is especially the case for children who attended organised activities or after-school-care during the week. As reported earlier, they only have a limited time at their disposal on weekends given that parents needed to accompany them to the park.

Hannah’s mother (CC): She is very happy when she goes to the park and she says hello to the kids she comes back and says I made a new friend.[…]
McBeth’s mother (CC): Oh yeah! That’s true. […] And children are very fast in making new friends.

Children often played for an afternoon with a ‘new friend’, meaning that the process of building a relationship began again at the next encounter. They need to get to know each other and develop their social capital under supervision in contrast to the suburban children who can find a different way for communication and building trust. Huettenmoser (1995) suggests that this lack of familiarity also leads to a lack of creativity in children’s games. They are missing the time to develop ‘play projects’. Although there may be a feeling of sociality existing during these short play periods, it depends on the combination of parents and children inhabiting places of interaction at any given time. However, this time is more
likely to be during summer than winter. This situation is similar to the suburban families who stayed indoors during winter and could not ‘profit’ from the already limited opportunities of gaining social capital and some sorts of ‘environmental literacy’.

‘Profits of localisation’: valued destinations in Beach Haven and the central city

In Chapter 6 I demonstrated via the NDAI index that both neighbourhoods in this study were characterised by diverse destinations where children could detect and actualise affordances. Families also valued these ‘profits of localisation’ derived from the proximity to destinations they desired. In the central city commercial (game zone, cinema, shopping mall) and public spaces (library, museum, pool) were named frequently as spaces in which leisure time could be spent. These destinations were not available in Beach Haven (apart from dairies and ‘take aways’), but in both neighbourhoods families viewed public open spaces (parks, playgrounds, (basketball) courts, beaches) as the major asset of their neighbourhood (see Figure 9-6 and Figure 9-9). Moreover, possibilities for water-based activities were also valued. These were the spaces which enabled the highest detection of affordances. However, evaluations varied between localities and seasons.

‘Shepherd’s Park’, ‘Myers Park’ or ‘the park down or across the road’ were mentioned by all parents and children alike as a synonym for having fun and engaging in activity during summer.141 Girls and boys in both neighbourhoods found many potential affordances to be ready available in parks. Children enjoyed the combination of installed equipment, open fields and landscaped nature:

“Well, there’s across the road from the apartment there is Myers Park and that’s quite a nice place to play…Because it has a little bit of a field and also some pathways which you can walk and look at the flowers and everything and also there is the playground there…I play the most on the monkey bars and on the swings.” (Hannah, CC, summer)

“Because there’s lots of trees, so that you can climb on and lots of grass to play on and I like going to the playground in the park.” (Maree, BH, summer)

These quotes highlight that children in both neighbourhoods like to choose between different activities. They actualised diverse affordances in summer. ‘Profits of localisation’ encompassed choice in children’s eyes. The more choice in potential affordances the better, as they could occupy themselves with another game or activity when they got bored of the first one (see also Feda et al., in press, Kytta, 2006, Veitch et al., 2007). All children aspired to spend time in such an ‘enabling space’, but their access was unequally distributed in both

141 In the eyes of suburban children the term park often embraced diverse public open spaces such as (basketball) courts, playgrounds, fields and natural as well as landscaped settings for “playing around”. Children in the central city used the term park only for fields and playgrounds. There are no public (basketball) courts in the central city. The term park refers in the following to playgrounds and fields and I make distinctions where necessary.
neighbourhoods during summer. However, this assessment seems not to be attributed to the quality of available spaces in children’s eyes. Rather, the supervision of outdoor play complicated children’s enjoyment in the central city.

Figure 9-9: Evaluation of parks by Beach Haven children

All children and parents in Beach Haven valued the availability, accessibility and quality of parks which were located within walking distance of home. Indeed, all children showed at least one park in their summer drawing (see Figure 9-9). In contrast, some central city children did not indicate a park in the neighbourhood map, which hinted that they may not praise parks to the same degree as suburban children (see Figure 9-10). One possible explanation could be that central city children were not granted independent and spontaneous actualisation of affordances as were the ones in Beach Haven. While the majority of central city children enjoyed public open spaces and sometimes had to ‘beg’

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142 Boys tended to enjoy fields more, while girls loved playgrounds. However, all children integrated both settings into their play.

143 Therefore, it was not surprising that all children participating in the neighbourhood walks from Beach Haven during the follow-up meeting showed researchers Shepherd’s Park and the school grounds as a good place to play.

144 None of the city children showed the Beach Haven children one of the city parks as a good place to play. Tim only highlighted affordances of Albert Park as they traversed it on their way to the university where the follow-up meeting took place.
parents to take them to such spaces, even during summer ‘profits of localisation’ only came
to the fore when a parent had time to come along. Moreover, parents chose parks aligning
with their judgements of quality.

“In this area, there’s not much you can do. It’s all the city, commercial. It is difficult for kids and Myers Park is a cute park, but sometimes it’s full of drunks and people smoking. I don’t like to take her there, because you have to pick up beer bottles first and then so I am not very excited about that park in particular [, but she loves it].“ (Hannah’s mother, CC, summer)

When parents deemed a park unsuitable for their children, they stopped taking them there (see Figure 9-6 and Figure 9-7). Unless they found a park matching their aspirations for children’s play within walking distance, families who were able to afford public transport or owned a car retreated to suburban playscapes. No matter if they walked or drove to a park, spontaneity in engaging in outdoor play was lacking and this impacted negatively on children’s evaluation of these environments. The repetition of the same activities under supervision often appeared to be ‘boring’ as McBeth, highlights (speaking typically of the central city children):

Christina: How does it feel that your parents have to be with you all the time when you want to go outside?

McBeth: Boring.

Christina: Why?

McBeth: Cause we get to do the same stuff.

Christina: What kind of same stuff?

McBeth: Mhm, bicycling, soccering and the playground. It gets boring when you keep on doing it again and again. I wish I could go loose, loose when I want something.

Although these places offered many potential play affordances, children could not access them independently at a time they desired. However, the majority of children in both neighbourhoods only revealed sufficient affordances in parks during summer.

“I really don’t like going down there [park] sometimes. […]because there is not much to do“ (Cyane, BH, winter)

“We don’t really go to parks in winter, because it is muddy everywhere” (Valerie, BH, winter)

“There’s nothing really fun about the park in the winter, because everything is wet and really it is always raining…And it is like going only out when you get a sunny day, I would play there.” (Juana, CC, winter)

Many children in both neighbourhoods disclosed that despite having similar potential play affordances at their disposal in winter, the wet weather made it difficult to actualise and enjoy these affordances (see Figure 9-9 and Figure 9-10). Either the equipment was still wet and unsafe in their opinion or the number of sunny days was too limited. Moreover, when the
weather seemed suitable to spend time outside, playgrounds in the central city were packed and children needed to wait for their turn on equipment like slides, which they disliked. This waiting delayed the actualisation of their desired affordance and made the park a less pleasurable experience. However, it could also be an indicator that many central city children in the study were only-children and not used to sharing or waiting for turns. While the presence of other children in principle meant more fun, many turned this experience into the opposite in practice. In addition, in the eyes of the majority of parents parks were not a suitable destination during winter in both neighbourhoods. Juana’s mother explained this view in a way that was typical of the parents interviewed:

“Well, you know, New Zealand weather, when it’s finally not raining in winter, it’s so cold that even going to the park is not an option, because even so when you have beautiful clear skies, it’s very cold. And when you do get to the park, everything is damp. There are puddles everywhere so they try to run and it’s impossible. The slides are still wet...And it gets dark really early so; kids finish school at three, they go back home, they have a snack, do their homework. By the time they are done it’s 4.30 and it’s dark at six. So no, no. You don’t go out that much during winter.” (Juana’s mother, CC, winter)

Parents denied their children the enjoyment of detecting and utilising the affordances offered by public open spaces as they see the adverse weather and shorter days as a barrier. While parks within walking distance were a major asset for both neighbourhoods during summer, they were only utilised occasionally by some families during winter. However, these families were somewhat astonished that just because the season changed, parks were seen differently by others:

“Umm, winter. Umm, I mean we still have got lots of parks...we got the beaches, we got bush walks umm we’ve got little tracks where we ride. […] I think there is lots for them to do. No, no it’s good. […] I think because everything is so close. We have sort of got most, we are lucky” (Rosie’s mother, BH, winter)

Parks could also be accessed in winter offering a variety of affordances even in a wetter season. Children in both locations who actualised affordances still played on the playground, ‘rode their bikes’, ‘practiced rugby kicks’ or played ‘hide and go seek’. The rest retreated indoors especially in the central city.
As many central city children got ‘grumpy’ when they could not get rid of ‘their excess energy’ many families developed coping strategies. They took their children to alternative play spaces such as ‘playgrounds and game zones’ offered by some fast food chains or malls. Of course, these are invariably placed indoors.

The only public open space all Beach Haven children still accessed during winter was the courts. While the boys enjoyed playing basketball, the girls were more into netball. They all revealed that they played a proper ‘game’ on the school grounds, which they also accessed afterhours. But the small courts around Beach Haven were used to practise and improve skills. Thus, ‘playing master’ was often a welcomed diversion for both genders during winter.

“We are just playing master there, coz that’s pretty much the only game we know with a ball. […] it’s actually not a big place [court] and then yeah, we could not have played a game of netball or anything, coz it was too small.” (Isabelle, BH, winter)

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145 Master is a skill game during which you try to score and prevent others from scoring to become the “master” of the game, the best player with the highest score; or in Josh’s words “It’s a game. There is a master. It’s like you have someone in front of you. And you kind of try to shoot it in. You get a basketball or anything to play with and you shoot at him, you shoot into the hoop. The master is the person who gets it in and if he gets it in he can be the master. That’s how we play the game.”
Similarly to their children, the majority of Beach Haven parents also connected exercise-related activities with parks during winter. Not only playing ‘master’ at the courts, but also ‘serious’ exercise such as soccer and rugby featured prominently in parental interviews in relation to these settings. Parks seemed to carry a notion of ‘organised’ activities during the winter time for the majority of suburban families and were not utilised beyond these functions by the majority of participants.

Parallels to the affordances in parks can be found in water-related affordances and children enjoyed talking about their adventures during the interviews. All participating children highlighted that they enjoyed affordances on and in the water, especially during summer. These activities were preferred over all other activities. However, the central city’s ‘built’ waterfront was only been mentioned a few times for walking, skating or bike-riding, whereas beaches and pools were discussed in a lively manner by all children in both locations. For example, some children ‘like[d] fishing’, while others preferred ‘[s]wimming and getting wet coz you cool down’. They all indicated that being in the water affords ‘diving’, ‘floating’, simply ‘playing around’ or ‘being happy’. Some preferred the natural setting of the beach and the ‘rope swings’, while others ‘like the pool better’. While Beach Haven children often utilised the wharf or the beach close by, central city children went to the inside-and outdoor pools or were driven to ‘a beach up North’.

In contrast, natural settings were less frequently discussed in winter indicating that the beach carried the overwhelming connotation of summer activity. Only Josh occasionally “jump[ed] off the Beach Haven wharf” into the cold water during winter; others sometimes go to an ‘indoor pool in Glenfield’ or Youthtown to satisfy children’s desire for playing in the water. These families attempted to escape the ‘horrible winter weather’ with making a play occasion. Children’s affinity for water-based leisure activities (especially in the summer time) had been passed down from generations (see Chapter 7). It was therefore not surprising that Beach Haven children showed the wharf area and Taesong the Youthtown pool as a good place to play during the neighbourhood walks.

‘Profits of localisation’ in terms of ‘the proximity to desired’ destinations revealed interesting accounts. Parents and children valued affordances in parks and around water-based activities highly during summer. While suburban children could often access these spaces independently, the majority of central city children only ‘profited’ from engaging in activities when parents accompanied them. This often made it a less enjoyable experience for the ones desiring more independence. In winter, however, families overwhelmingly declared that parks were not an ‘appropriate’ play space and they went from time to time to a pool for diversions. Nonetheless, whether supervised or not, these activities contributed to children’s
well-being and their ‘environmental literacy’, albeit in different ways. For example, whether children were supervised or acting independently they could experience pushing their boundaries by jumping off either a low cliff at a beach or a diving platform at a public pool with parental permission.

Conclusion

Drawing on Bourdieu’s ‘profits of localisation’ I have illustrated which ‘desirable agents and goods’ families viewed as important in relation to children’s outdoor playing practices after I presented children’s mobility patterns via their GPS logs. These logs showed that children frequently spent time in and outside their neighbourhood. In a second step, I disclosed that families evaluated the home environment, low traffic volumes, organised activities, neighbourliness and public open spaces as enabling factors for children’s outdoor play. Respectively, if these ‘desirable agents and goods’ are attainable in their neighbourhood environments, children were granted greater licenses and gaining the symbolic capitals of ‘health/well-being’ and ‘environmental literacy’ was less challenging.

Despite both study areas being characterised with destinations within a short walking distance, the evaluation of potential affordances needs to be seen in a nuanced way in terms of localities and seasons. Based on walkability and NDAI, both the suburb and the central city are walkable and have good access to amenities relative to other suburbs of the city. However, these ‘objective’ measures do not hold up to the evaluations of parents and children when they reveal the profits of their neighbourhood in regards to outdoor play. Families revealed inequalities between both locations, which go beyond the simple availability and quality of destinations within walking distance. This suggests that environments may not necessarily directly impact on the detection and actualisation of potential affordances.

In the suburb extra-curricular activities, especially sports, are one of many options to be physically active. In the central city spending time at Youhtown is the synonym for active pastimes. This runs the risks of ruling out ‘free play’ (e.g. in parks) as a valuable active pastime all-year round and connecting activity mainly with organised exercise (MacDougall et al., 2004). Nonetheless, meeting and engaging with friends contributes to children’s general well-being and engaging in sporting practices reflected positively on their physical health, as revealed by parents and children in both study areas. Children may master educational skills better, but they may lack the opportunity to become ‘streetwise’ during these activities. Central city children spent a lot of time ‘institutionalised’, but for suburban children these activities are pursued beside playing outdoors. Findings revealed that while
In the central city no seasonal influence on the participation in organised activities could be found, the enrolment in sports clubs in the suburb was higher in winter than summer. Central city parents wished for more suitable organised activities like sport clubs. The ones children currently attend were located outside the central city fringes and required travel by car. Activities offered in Beach Haven also implied the use of motorised transport; this was not been mentioned as an obstacle as all families owned a car, contrasting central city parents’ concerns. While the central city offers many potential play affordances beyond the designated child-friendly play spaces (e.g. playground), these appear to be rarely detected and even less commonly actualised. These spaces (e.g. sidewalks, parking lots) are considered inappropriate for central city children’s play. Rather than in everyday or ‘in between’ spaces (as with the majority of suburban children) central city children seem to have learned to find affordances for play in places designed for them by adults. Parents consciously need to ‘plan a trip’ when taking children to the park or playground as the high traffic volumes are perceived as a barrier. In turn, this degree of planning and use of structured spaces and activities hampered the spontaneity of children’s outdoor play, with implications for cumulative physical activity, wellbeing and the possibility for children to become streetwise independently.

In the suburb, children graduate from the safe haven of their own garden to the streets and beyond. Independent outdoor play in summer represented the majority of children’s business after school in ways that encouraged the development of their ‘environmental literacy’ and future health gain. In winter, more children spent time indoors in both neighbourhoods. The ones playing outdoors in both seasons found potential affordances in many diverse environments, in places specifically designed for them and in places which do not immediately spring to mind as a play space.

The availability, accessibility and quality of playscapes are important for the actualisation of potential affordances. As well, the socio-cultural aspects also play a role. It seems to be a complex matrix which constitutes the actualisation of potential play affordances in both study areas. An explanation for the detection of potential affordances and their actualisation may be found in the influences of habitus, capital and field. In the next chapter, I explore these influences in greater depth and consider how this triad can explain locality and seasonal patterns in the actualisation of affordances. I investigate how the logic of seasonal outdoor practice is formed in the central city and Beach Haven, which offers some explanation as to why some children actualised affordances all-year round and others did not.
Chapter 10 Spaces of points of view: the logics of outdoor play in summer and winter

Bourdieu argues that practices, desires and tastes are inscribed differently in social classes (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990c, 2000). For example, in his essay on sport and social class Bourdieu reveals how the affinity for certain sporting activities depends not only on cultural and economic capital, but also on spare-time and embodied dispositions (beliefs, attitudes, lifestyle) (Bourdieu, 1978). Depending on one’s habitus, people evaluate (as outlined in the introductory quote) costs and profits contained in each sport differently. Sporting practices need to fit into an existing habitus to meet the intended social aspiration. I argue in a similar way that seasonally-specific participation in outdoor play is shaped by the interrelationship between the meanings embedded in outdoor play activities and anticipated benefits about the (non)actualisation of various affordances. Practices are the result of relations between one’s habitus and one’s current circumstances (Maton, 2008). In the first half of this chapter, I consider norms, rules and structures as forming the logic of practice in relation to the (non)actualisation of affordances in a compact and suburban living environment.

This chapter unpacks the practical logics of outdoor play practices by bringing the multiple perceptions and competing points of view around outdoor play together. These ‘spaces of points of view’ are driven by the habitus. Families are equipped with a practical sense to act as expected and as one should. Their habitus frames perception, experiences and evaluations of play spaces and situations in relation to families’ symbolic capital. Complementing the findings in the previous chapter, I provide some selected explanations as to why the seasonal ‘profits of localisation’ and the actualisation of potential affordances are perceived, experienced and evaluated by families differently. In the chapter, I deploy an account of the multi-layered dimensions of the social realities of outdoor play developed over
time and voiced by children and parents themselves as a result of exposure to, learning of and experiencing the actualisation of play affordances. Habitus captures how we transpose this history into our current circumstances, and how we then make choices to act according to certain means and no others (Maton, 2008). Consequently, I explore in the second half of this chapter, the nature of outdoor play by discussing outdoor play as an inherited disposition, experienced as natural and unconscious. Overall, the aim of this chapter is to provide an account of the complexities of outdoor play considering that these presented practical logics shape in their own way ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

**Outdoor play and the ‘practical logics’ in actualising affordances**

The actualisation of affordances depends not only on the individual’s capabilities and endowments, but also on the socio-cultural practices shaping the perception of potential affordances and their actualisation; that is practical logic. Agents need to be aware of the ‘rules of the game’ in the field of outdoor play. Analysis of the different methods yielded that affordances can only be perceived and actualised when an actor is able to master the rules associated with certain affordances.

An array of skills and sets of knowledge as well as tactics enable families to successfully negotiate seasonal outdoor play. Starting with the attitudes towards children’s outdoor play in both case studies and moving towards narratives explaining diverse seasonal practical logics developed around outdoor play, the chapter concludes with three internalised habitus forms, namely an all year-round outdoor habitus as well as a hibernating and curtailed one.

**Attitudes towards children playing in a central city and suburban environment**

“Oh my goodness!” is the response of Josh’s grandmother when she compares the size of central city apartments with their suburban dwelling which has a front and back yard and various possibilities for children’s play. Dexter’s parents reveal the same attitude many central city parents worry about when they depict a happy, independent childhood in the suburb.

“I like being a mum here and my son likes exploring. […] There is a rock down the estuary and they call it the pirate ship and all sorts of adventures […] There’s so much, because it’s not kind of an artificial environment, it’s just giving them space that they can use […] Does make you feel good. The environment does make a huge difference. I wouldn’t if I lived in a concrete jungle, I definitely wouldn’t be feeling the same way.”

(Dexter’s parents, BH, summer)

Dexter’s parents’ account exemplifies a general glorification of the suburban childhood, one that many central city parents also idealise but believe they are unable to offer their children:
The logics of seasonal outdoor play

"I would like to live in a house. I didn’t think I would, because so far I have lived all my life in apartments [...] because I was able to do all these things [independent outdoor play], but my daughter is not. She is stuck in an apartment [...]. It would be easier for her to socialise with her friends, because their parents are not that keen [...]. On a beautiful summer day, ‘what are you going to do?’ ‘Oh come to my apartment, stay with my cats locked up in a room’. Of course they would rather play in the garden in somebody else’s house.” (Hannah’s mother, CC, summer)

Raising children in a central city apartment is therefore regarded warily in Auckland, as something unusual and not ‘appropriate’ despite some families consciously deciding to see it as the most suitable living arrangement at present. Nonetheless, living in this way is generally seen by participating families as attracting certain kinds of people, but not families with children as Hannah’s mother asserts:

“I don’t think the central city is a good place to raise kids. I think it’s good for young people, the students, young couples with no children who go out a lot and they have everything here, people who go to restaurants, who go clubbing, who go shopping but not for kids. I think it’s a rubbish place for kids. It’s very constrained. [...] It is a very selfish arrangement just because of me, because I couldn’t do anything else.” (Hannah’s mother, CC, summer)

Dispositions associated with family life are seen to be dissonant with a central city life-style of partying and adult culture requiring a different set of symbolic capital. A suburban environment is considered the ‘appropriate’ place for parenting. None of the suburban parents questioned whether Beach Haven was an ‘appropriate’ place for children to roam independently, although licences varied (see Chapter 9). Rather, parents follow a tacit agreement and knowledge about simply doing it the ‘right way’ (no matter if they decided to move to Beach Haven or got a residence assigned in this neighbourhood). In contrast, central city parents reflected frequently on their choice to move to an apartment and raise their children in the central business district; especially thinking about the particular style of play this imposed upon their children. Many central city parents feel strange raising children in apartments and some prefer moving to a suburb. This situation is not only generated by the child-unfriendly setup of apartment complexes, car-centred city planning and an adultist life-style, but also by the prevailing attitudes towards children in this part of the city. Parents such as Juana’s mother get ‘looks’, unmistakable signs, that their children disturb the general performance of city life.

“[T]he city is not for kids. It’s not the ideal place for kids to be. [...]. If they want to use their scooters what we do is we usually go to the Warehouse [shopping centre] or something and they ride their scooters in Queen Street which... in the rush hour [laughs] is not, I mean I think it annoys a lot of people with kids on scooters, but you know I think the city is not the place to be if you have kids.” (Juana’s mother, CC, summer)

Juana’s mother has learned from the looks when children encounter city spaces normally occupied by adults that children are expected to play more safely and undisturbed in places created for their age and development stage. Parents read these signs as indicating that
children belong to a suburban environment (see Chapter 7). Children’s sticky fingers, their different path of walking, their laughter, their colourful clothing, their playful engagement with their surroundings collectively do not sit comfortably with the typically busy, smartly dressed business people. Central city parents, therefore, respond with distinctive practices to afford, at least partially, their children some aspects of suburban children’s outdoor play. Strategies include taking their children to designated “kid-areas” as Elena’s father calls the playground, parks or children’s corners in shops (see also Chapter 9). However, parents also aim to escape the gaze of fellow central city residents and business operators with these practices. Child-friendly places allow children to roam around independently within sight of their parents, make friends, enjoy themselves and detect the affordances of these places as another mother discusses. It counteracts the shaping of ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

“So she wants to be with other kids… she of course as an only child she is enjoying our love, but I think she would have more fun with other kids playing in the park or going out. [...] Whenever she goes to the park she tries everything. She takes another turn and another turn, its repetitive” (Hannah’s mother, CC, summer)

Hannah’s mother reveals two reoccurring problems. First, it is taken-for-granted by central city parents that children need to play in parks. Nonetheless affordances of the park or playground in the central city are limited as discussed in Chapter 9. In contrast, the Beach Haven children and parents see these spaces as one of many potential play affordances the suburb offers. Put simply, “in the city we have only three playgrounds as Myers Park, Victoria Park and the school, but here ...all of Beach Haven is an adventure playground” (McBeth, neighbourhood walk, see also Ergler, 2011a). Second, these limits to potential play affordances are due to the reoccurrence of activities often labelled as ‘boring’ or as something ‘for babies’ as explored earlier. Children rarely get offered the possibility to explore their surroundings beyond the adult-prescribed and intended affordances of a park (e.g. throwing a ball) or playground (sliding, swinging); they experience these environments sometimes as dull. However, children are easier to manage in a small defined area. Consequently, they do not intervene too much with the adult city world (Hart, 2002, Malone, 2002, Woolley, 2008).

Children are few in number compared to adults in the central city and are not visible as they are confined to certain places or stay indoors. Central city parents often mentioned that the city is ‘lack[ing] children’ and their children have ‘no friends’ close by. As there are no children playing outside whom their children can join, parents learned that children in the city belong indoors or need to be supervised; they adjusted their symbolic capital endowments. Parents unanimously agree that they have to accompany their children to ‘let them run free’ (e.g. in parks). They also have to walk them to friends’ houses even when friends live just across the street and inviting friends over seems ‘inappropriate’, especially during the
summer months, highlighted Hannah’s mother earlier. The invisibility of children playing on the wide sidewalks, in front of the landscaped entrance to buildings or the parking lots (although all these spaces offer many potential affordances requiring imagination and creativity\textsuperscript{146}) helps normalise indoor or supervised outdoor play. Parents followed the implicit norm and embodied consciousness that the right way is to supervise children to not annoy other city dwellers and to protect children from any danger. Bringing children to ‘child-designated’ places reassures parents of being a ‘good parent’ both in the eyes of other city dwellers and their own. These logics of practices led to the non-actualisation of potential affordances.

The practical logics of families’ schedules: managing business

Economic constraints as well as educational achievements of both parents led to the fact that all parents of participating families pursue paid work. To sustain certain living conditions they feel the need to work. All fathers have a job except Tim’s, who receives welfare benefits. Some mothers support the families’ income either through a full time job or they work at least a part-time, while children spend time in school or after-school-care. Parents’ lives get increasingly busy with negative implications for their mental health.

“People are a lot more stressed out now. There’s a lot more things and now there’s been people work a lot more worried about, could we financially, work and like that.....Whereas back, when I was a child, not all the parents worked at that time especially the mothers. My mother worked but my friend’s parents never worked.” (Josh’s mother, BH, summer)

“I think just if I am busy then I won’t go with him to the park. If I am not, I think I like to spend time with my son a lot. I feel guilty, because I am studying now so I don’t have time to spend with him. But I think I always want him to go out and do a lot of stuff you know. [...] I am quite busy so I don’t have time to bring him to a lot of places.” (McBeth’s mother, CC, winter)

They juggle children, work and leisure. Parents feel stressed as Josh’s mother indicated managing their own schedules and the ones’ of their children. Mothers commonly talk about the ‘guilt’ they feel when work interferes with children’s pleasures. This aspect is amplified in the central city where ‘good parenting’ includes taking children to safe play spaces. Managing families’ schedules incorporates, therefore, a multiplicity and complexity of duties, responsibilities and feelings. To establish a certain routine and security for parents’ consciousness, an organised mental safety net, children’s lives become increasingly structured (Banwell et al., 2007, Rissotto and Guiliani, 2006).

\textsuperscript{146} Often the quality of environments is discussed in relation to the actualisation of affordances (Elsley, 2011). However, environments of poor quality and low socio-economic standard do not necessarily need to be experienced in this way as for example Tim and Chilly’s stories suggest (see Chapter 11).
Long daylight hours in summer leave plenty of time to access structured and unstructured activities. As reported also in the international literature, children play with friends and can partake in extra-curricular activities this time of year (Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009). Winter exacerbates the situation leaving hardly any opportunities to pursue both undertakings. Parents centre their attention on structured activities in winter.

“Umm, and also because it gets darker quickly, so Josh has a hectic schedule on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, because he has got practices. He would come home from school and he would be then off to rugby practice or basket practice or the basketball game. So that’s another one, because he has not a lot of time to play outside. This is good, but in the weekends you have your rugby game. I think he just likes to relax. And just not worry about playing outside.” (Josh’s mother, CC, summer)

While historically children just picked up friends in the afternoon to play on the street, they now have to arrange play dates (Hart, 1979, Lynch, 1979, Moore, 1986, Ward, 1978). However, parents seem to take on extra shifts to be able to afford these activities; to distinguish themselves from other families (Pinkster and Fortuijn, 2009, Sutton, 2009).

“A lot of people that we know seem to work just constantly. They have everything organised throughout their entire weekend to do and to do this, this, this and this and we hardly do that. Let’s go here or you know, or let’s not go somewhere, because we have been out all week. You know doing sports and stuff that’s kind of, ey. Everyone, everyone is just so busy. So busy with their lives and plus you have, both parents have to be working you know make enough money to do, pay bills and afford good extra curriculum activities for your kids to do in the first place and mhm that can be, wired, it kind of overwrites everything.” (Michael’s mother, BH, summer)

Dispositions, aspirations and desires for children’s well-being play an important role in structuring their pastimes; different sets of symbolic capitals to previous generations become more ‘valuable’ in the eyes of parents. A paradoxical logic evolves. Parents work to afford children’s extra-curricular activities exposing themselves to greater stress levels, while increasing children’s business at the same time. As a result parents deprive children from independent play opportunities while also jeopardising their ‘environmental literacy’ and mental well-being (Freeman and Tranter, 2011, Malone, 2007, Pienaar, 2010).

**Maximising children’s well-being: seasonal ‘rules of the game’**

Parents and children see health benefits in children’s outdoor encounters. Play is an activity that offers physical exercise charged with fun, as well as time to be spent with friends and family. Play as an active, but unorganised activity, is frequently cited by city as well as suburban participants as enhancing children’s bodily fitness. Rebekka (BH), for example, plays “rugby, soccer, netball …and sometimes dancing at morning tea” as it is “fun and you can always get into it, getting fit”. In a similar way Valerie (BH), who gets together with friends after school to “shoot some hoops” describes that she “likes sports and it just keeps

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147 Bodily fitness or a lean and slender body is one form of materialised symbolic capital children can gain from playing outdoors.
[her] fit and [she] like to be fit". It seems that governmental campaigns about ‘healthy eating, healthy action’ have entered children’s consciousness: active play helps shape a lean, healthy body (Burrows, 2010, MacDougall et al., 2004). While children discuss the fitness aspect of outdoor play - often in relation to sporting activities or formal play in both seasons - parents in both study areas distinguish between summer and winter particularly with reference to the physical benefits of ‘free’ play. In winter, fitness aspects are primarily discussed in relation to ‘winter sports’ in school or clubs (e.g. rugby) no matter whether children participate or not. Only three city participants have joined sporting activities, while seven were enrolled in a sports club in the suburb. Practice often happens after dark, while games take up Saturday mornings in the family diaries. In summer, parents centre their attention on exercise-based play when discussing the fitness aspects of outdoor play. Almost all parental participants described outdoor play (here in the words of Elena’s father, a city parent), as a “good exercise for them […] they can train in muscle” and a main attraction for why they sent or take children outside to play. Children have not yet realised that outdoor play keeps them fit and healthy, while it was a prominent theme in parental interviews during summer. For example, according to their mothers, Juana “does a lot of exercise going up [and] down the slides”, while Michael “comes home absolutely shattered” after he had again spent an afternoon in the park across the road on the exercise machines, exploring the area or playing soccer or cricket with friends. Spending time outdoors, supervised or not, was commonly reported to engage children in playful and healthy physical activity during summer (Tandy, 1999, Veitch et al., 2007).

Despite the anticipated health benefits of outdoor activities, high UV radiation and its associated health risk (due to New Zealand’s location vis a vis the thin ozone layer) alter playing practices. “[You]ou got to be sun smart” highlights Elena’s father and Rebekah’s mother asserts, “I make sure they do have their hats and sun block on” when they are outside. Another strategy is seen in Dexter’s family who “prefer the beach in winter, it’s not as crowded and you don’t get sunburn”. For actualising play affordances and to profit from outdoor activities families in both study sites adjusted their practices (Collins et al., 2006).

Time for free play is more constrained in winter. Breaks in the school day are often the only time children can be outdoors but on a rainy day opportunity to engage in outdoor activities is often denied. Parents report children become ‘restless’ and ‘grumpy’ especially in small central city apartments and cramped housing situations in the suburbs, and several parents confided that they are likely to punish their children more quickly in winter when everyone ‘gets on each other’s nerves’ in a small space.
Reflecting on the limited opportunities for outdoor play in winter children explicit commented on the benefits of exercise. Michael said he does not “feel as tired as if [he] was sitting” around indoors. “[G]oing outside and playing touch [a form of rugby] with [my little brother] like takes my mind away from everything else”. Often playing indoors does not bring this anticipated effect. Dexter, for example told me that “you have more energy inside the house. It is really, really hard for me to sleep. Yeah, really, really hard to sleep. Cause the energy, my energy recharges like a lightning bulb.” (Dexter, BH, summer)

The majority of participants learn that they can improve their mental well-being by engaging in outdoor activities. However, this knowledge is often overwritten in winter by the ‘appropriate behaviour’ of staying indoors and not risking illness. The unpredictability of the weather is especially a concern in the eyes of parents.

“I just tell them to go outside and play or don’t have to sit inside and sometimes you get off the games, playstation or whatever it is. I have a break [for] one hour when they’re outside.” (Valerie’s mother, BH, winter)

Inclement weather and daylight hours have, in general, been shown to reduce outdoor activity levels in children, adolescents and adults unless people are habitually active or enjoy participating in active leisure activities (Bélanger et al., 2009, Brodersen et al., 2005, Salmon et al., 2003). Many parents, however, link weather not only to declining fitness possibilities, but also to the risk of falling ill in wet environments. Some parents ‘fuss’ less about the rain and encourage their children to make the best of the weather and integrate it into their games.

“I encourage them to go outside in winter like put gumboots and rain coats on. I am not, I don’t, I know that you don’t catch a cold from playing in the rain, so [laughs] go out... and they love it. They love to go out in the rain and they play up here and they go on the trampoline. I mean definitely not as much as in summer, but I still encourage them to go outside and play in the rain whatever, in the puddles.” (Rosie’s mother, BH, winter)

While Rosie’s mother represents parents who see outdoor play even in winter as a healthy pastime, for some children in both areas it is out of question as they have no one to take care of them when they fall ill. All but one mother worked at least part-time and many relatives live far away or have to work themselves. If children get ill there is no security network close by. Parents need to work and can often not follow the societal expectations of ‘good parenting’ when their children become ill.
Parents taking this approach believe they are protecting their children from suffering and themselves from a negative public gaze when they keep them indoors in winter. Through their actions however they contribute to the formation of ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

Although children were aware of the mental and physical benefits of engaging in outdoor activities, ‘rain is a permanent excuse’ to engage in ‘unhealthy’ activities. Under the pretext of seeing winter as a time to ‘relax’, ‘to recharge batteries for the summer to come’ and that there is a time ‘to rest and […] a time to play’ children bend the rules to engage in activities they are not supposed to do like ‘watching cartoons [and] the comedy channel’.

In this way, children resist ‘healthy’ activities bestowed on them (Bell, 2011). While in summer it is expected that they spend a considerable amount of time outdoors be it supervised or independently, staying indoors is a way to oppose this active, busy life-style during winter. Each season therefore brings benefits in parental and children’s eyes; summer carries the connotation of being always out and about, being on the move and active, while in winter, even in a moderate climate, families enjoy easing up from the busy times in summer. Seasonal play is more complex than the sheer absence of activity.

**Two perspectives of play: evaluating children’s development**

Outdoor play benefits children’s development. Parents and children, no matter if they regularly play or provide their children the licence to play outside, discuss that outdoor play equips children with environmental, social and cultural competencies. With these accounts, parents echo scholarly findings that children learn through play (Harker, 2005, Malone, 2007, Moore, 1986). They gain confidence and self-esteem as well as cognitive capabilities; children can act out their creativity and fantasies. In line with many suburban and some central city parents, Dexter’s mother eloquently summarises benefits of outdoor play as follows:

“I think a lot of people look down on you when you are outside in the rain, especially with your kids. Oh my gosh, I think they should be inside. I think it is just a change of perceptions or whatever you know. […] Umm, just cold or ‘what are you going outside for, it's raining’, ‘no, no you wanna stay home’ or ‘you are sick’, just the basic.” (Cyane’s mother, winter, BH)

“Oh, well it’s like it’s a good excuse to stay inside and sleep in and stuff like that, yeah. […] to say to my dad oh can I go to the movies, cause it is winter and it is cold outside and the movies are inside. Yeah. Umm, and I prefer summer to winter, because you can go out and do stuff, but winter is still fun” (Chilly, winter, CC)
She especially highlights that outdoor play offers children a different kind of play. While children may not gain any computer literacy, using their imaginations stimulates diverse mental and cognitive competencies. Children also enhance their symbolic capital (e.g. social capital, cultural sensitivity). Children allowed outside on their own get ‘streetwise’ and will benefit later in life in their ability to handle the complexities of a multifaceted world (see also Malone, 2007).

In contrast, in the eyes of the many families (especially in the central city) independent play was deemed not suitable for maximising children’s development. Their aspiration was to offer their children a ‘better’ life through enrolment in afternoon activities. “Youthtown [an afternoon programme] is good for them, they learn English, make friends and learn the culture” discloses Elena’s father. For him, and many other families, playing has been discursively linked to institutionalised learning to provide their children with a better start for their future. Independent outdoor play thus seems unappealing as it does not carry the signifiers for a better life; children will not encounter skills to play piano, speak a different language or gain advanced mathematical understanding; they are less likely to gain the symbolic capital anticipated by these parents. Institutionalised learning offers more easily enumerated ways to give their children a better life and bestowing such skills (e.g. music, linguistic, numerative) have come to symbolise that you have ‘made it’. Thus, understanding families’ rationales and how they evaluate outdoor play can contribute to better target interventions tackling the threat of obesity.

Managing children: minimising ‘risks’ of outdoor play

I discussed in an earlier section of this chapter the place of children as a potential threat to the normatised social order in the central city. I turn my attention now to the perception of children ‘at risk’. This paradox is attributed to tensions in the conceptualisation of children and childhood: as knowledgeable, independent agents, on the one hand and as passive, innocent dependents on the other (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 7). Perceptions of risks and risk anxieties around outdoor play take various forms. They are, however, not limited to children’s physical and mental well-being. In this section, I focus on injury prevention strategies and discuss paradoxical complexities parents face in keeping children ‘safe’ and healthy.
Accompanying the diverse perceptions of risks and safety aspects is also the idea of avoiding play accidents. Although safety hazards in play environments have generally been minimised (Gill, 2007, Pollack et al., 2012, Wyver et al., 2010), parents remain concerned about children's physical well-being. The following two examples illustrate how the fear of bodily harm in play environments alters children's outdoor play.

“They maybe fall down. They fall down the swing, […] the water on the swing. When it rained we don’t go to the park. Because the kids are too young. They are not old, they don’t realise how to protect themselves. So there any could have caused damage or hurt them they don’t really know how to protect themselves.” (Elena’s father, CC, summer)

“At first he wanted to go the parks, but some of the parks yeah it’s quite hilly and quite slippery. Once he falls down and you know he got hurt. That’s why he doesn’t like to go to the park as he used to like a lot before.” (McBeth’s mother, CC, summer)

Children are often denied the opportunity to play outdoors, especially in the wet winter season. Studies increasingly report children's incompetency of negotiating the risks of play environments (Gill, 2011, Karsten, 2005, Valentine and McKendrick, 1997); their horizons are shrinking and they are less likely to learn to assess their strength and boundaries through exploration and discovery; their symbolic capitals changed. Previously accepted activities like climbing on trees are often considered a safety hazard.

“That’s the big oak tree [on the school grounds]. They planted it when I was in kindy [kindergarten]. At lunch time we sit here in the shade and talk to friends, but we are not allowed to climb. We might fall down.” (Isabelle, neighbourhood walk BH)

Hence, children's interaction, exploration and discovery of affordances are limited by safety aspects. Children become less confident in negotiating their play environments and testing their abilities and capabilities. A ‘safety paradigm’ influences children’s logics of practice in actualising affordances. Paradoxically, the majority of children still enjoys ‘risky’ play as it is ‘more fun’ (Gill, 2007, Hart, 1993, Woolley, 2008). They can test their physical and mental boundaries, which is especially attractive in their eyes:

“I like the flying fox because it’s cool and you feel like good. And then you can actually slow down and then because you like…. touch and flip….touch and flip right here. You actually can touch the wheel but it’s a bit scary. […] Sometimes we experiment stuff like one of my friends tried to go actually standing on it. One of my friends tried to go standing with one leg and I tried to holding on to her “. (Juana, CC, summer)

“[I]t’s really fun jumping off the wharf. It’s just really fun doing that. Really cool! Yeah [laughs]. […]But I feel scared, because it’s quite high. But then I feel happy after I have done it, because I’ve succeeded something.” (Valerie, BH, summer)

Children reveal tensions about ‘appropriate’ and ‘prescribed’ affordances and activities they actually enjoy, but are not allowed to actualise. Depending on their own confidence children often develop their particular practical logics, while still trying to meet parental/adult expectations of safe play affordances.
Parents, however, are also caught up in tensions. They are supposed to meet the expectations of ‘good parenting’, follow regulations and rules imposed on them by governments and society, while at the same time offering their children the freedoms of childhood often indulged by nostalgic perceptions of the same. Parents in Beach Haven are very concerned about breaking the law. They are unsure whether they can send their children off to play outside independently or if it is illegal informed by the rule that children under 14 have to be supervised at home. Parents are caught in the complexities associated with being ‘law obedient citizens’ and offering their children ‘the same freedoms [they] had as children’.

Dexter’s mother: We’d just played with them [younger siblings] really. My poor brothers used to tie [my sister] to the clothesline and play cowboys and Indians.

Dexter’s father: You would get arrested for that now!

When they remember their own childhood they come to the conclusion that a lot has changed regarding ‘what we can and cannot do’. ‘Too many rules’ constrain children’s independent outdoor play. Despite the good intentions these regulations may have to reduce the negligence of children (see Chapter 7), the increasing tendency to structure children’s pastimes also has an effect on children’s play experience. Parents are uncertain about the ‘right’ behaviour as so many different messages, rules and regulations appeal to them. They often ‘manage’ their children more than they wish based on their doubts. They aim to minimise risks for children and themselves. Consequently, they are proud when children show signifiers of good upbringing, which has been primarily discussed in the context of the suburb suffering still from stigmatisation. They succeeded in protecting their children form ‘moral corruption’ (Pinkster and Fortuijn, 2009: 329) as children themselves seem to threaten the institution of childhood when they are out of control.

“[I]t is slowly changing […] like there used to be a lot of graffiti and they are it is definitely changing. It is still there the element of like I said the kids that get themselves into trouble, but this is just very rare, but that's just not only in Beach Haven obviously. Umm, what I mean by bad influence is I suppose, the girls hadn’t gotten into involved, the older kids aren’t in with kids that aren’t doing the right thing you know, they go wagging school or are they in touch with so far to make good choices.” (Isabelle’s mother, BH, winter)

Minimising the ‘risks’ of outdoor play takes diverse forms and influences multiple aspects of children’s lives. Parents adjusted their parenting practices to the current circumstances within their environment and to societal expectations. Similarly, children negotiate their own ideas of minimising the risks of outdoor play. Complex practical logics around outdoor play evolved in the context of safety-conscious playing practices.
The emotional aspects of outdoor play: practical logics of experiences

Actualisation of affordances is closely related to the emotions experienced during an activity and based on the memory of an activity. Kytta called this aspect the emotionalisation of affordances, while Duff referred to enabling places in relation to affective experiences (Duff, 2011, Kytta, 2003). Distinct tastes, preferences and experiences evolve around the actualisation of affordances. Children utilise the environment seeking certain experiences for creating positive and happy practices and memories. They avoid other environments to circumvent negative feelings.

All participating children reported on scary places or experiences when playing outdoors. These articulations of scary experiences are often based on safety-conscious parenting practices. The literature extensively reports anxieties around strangers, dogs, dark alleys and vandalism as well as biophobia (Chawla, 2001, Louv, 2005, Mitchell et al., 2007, Spencer and Blades, 2006, Timperio et al., 2008, Tipper, 2011, Valentine, 2004). The following excerpts provide an insight into the diversity of children’s concerns ranging from individual safety to population health:

“[Dogs] bark at you, chase you and then they kill you and they smash you.” (Nicole, BH, summer)

“When you go there [park at night], there’s all these bushes and stuff that there’s birds and that that make noises and it kind of like scares you a bit when you are actually in the park”. (Michael, BH, winter)

“I was so scared. It was just like a scary feeling. And if they [gang of teenagers] wouldn’t be there smoking, I wouldn’t be so scared. Coz smoking isn’t just bad for the person that is smoking, but it’s bad for the other people that are around. [pause] I know that.” (Juana, CC, winter)

These fears and concerns alter children’s playing practices, but individuals handle and enact them differently based on their dispositions. Some seek the company of friends and older siblings or adults, while others prefer indoor environments or the safety of their own garden.

“In our neighbourhood we hear yelling and glass breaking. We hear fighting and shouting. […] I mostly play in my backyard” (Valerie, neighbourhood walk, BH)

“The backyard is the safest because outside can be quite dangerous..There are drunk people walking around..and broken glass.” (Nicole, neighbourhood walk, BH)

Although the suburb is undergoing gentrification, Beach Haven’s stigma as a gang and drug environment affects children’s playing activities and experiences often fuelled by safety-conscious parenting practices (Valentine and McKendrick, 1997, Wyver et al., 2010). Central city children less frequently reported ‘scary’ aspects in outdoor play than suburban children. One possible explanation is that supervised children can easily retreat to the safe
environment that parental presence offers. Anxieties only arise when this safety net is missing and children independently move through places.

Experiences and perceptions not directly related to outdoor play also influence children's practical logics of outdoor play. Valerie often watches 'horror movies' with her older siblings. She fears the 'haunted house' down the road.

Valerie (BH): I was walking down to my friend's house, but then I couldn't, because there was the, there was two haunted house and one joined the other house, that was scary. Yeah. […]

Christina: So you kind of walk a different way to your friend's house?

Valerie: Yeah. I mostly walk just up to [road name] instead of going the shortcut through [street name]. There are lots of people.

This extreme example provides an interesting insight into children's practical logics. Experiences out of context fuel their imagination and alter their behaviour, in Valerie's case to take the detour and mingle in crowded places in order to minimise perceived risks. Fears, anxieties and apprehensions structure the logics of actualising affordances in opposite ways to the way affirmative environments and experiences do.

Affirmative environments create positive feelings and children replicate activities to regain happy experiences. Children have different affinities depending on time, location, season and memories. ‘Happy’ places encompass environments, which are seen as mood enhancing and restorative.

“I just like to play on the swings, because swings make me feel more cheery like it makes me want laugh [she giggles]. When I am not aehm happy, I like to go to the swings.” (Valerie, BH, summer)

“[A]t Shepherd’s Park, there's this exercise machines you can go on it and I usually go around the whole circuit just to play on them and then on the playground. Mhm, it feels funny when you step [a certain machine], because you have to try and step around and it feels funny and good.” (Maree, BH, summer)

“I just love feeling like being free – running and kicking the ball across the field.” (Chilly, CC, winter)

Children return to environments in which they are ‘happy’. They seek these environments to return to positive memories and to minimise ‘sad or scary’ moments by developing their own practices. Children associate places in which they appreciate actualising affordances with satisfaction and pleasure expressed by laughter and joyful sounds. Dexter's parents name these aspects of actualisation of affordances 'happy sounds' indicating the fun people have when emerged in activities.
“We love it that we can hear the happy sounds from the park. Like we hear the sound of the cricket game, which is really a unique kind of sound. Yeh, it's the joyful sounds, they're really...The people enjoying themselves and cheering, cackling and laughing.” (Dexter's father, BH, summer)

The feeling of joy when boundaries are broken and goals are achieved is also closely related, especially when goals are seen as unattainable.

Maree (BH): It's fun and it can get tiring [sports] but I push myself to do it.

Christina: Why do you like to push yourself?

Maree: Because then it's more fun and its like its like trying to get to a goal. And I like getting to, I like trying to; I like having ambitions. Yeah. I am a little excited for tomorrow, because we have netball field day and we play four games and if you win all of them, you get into the finals.

Depending on their disposition children, develop their unique practical logics in gaining these diverse states of happiness. Some find it in sporting activities, others on the playground or by utilising the affordances of bluescapes. Some even utilise the seasonal aspects like 'jumping into puddles' to make use of all aspects of diverse amusements. Friends also play an important role as moderators for joyful pastimes. Children often report that playing is 'more fun' with friends and those activities get a different, a more enjoyable touch when friends join their play.

Cyane (BH): We normally play tiggy and go rush and just run around and mhm like that.

Christina: Who usually plays with you?

Cyane: Pia, Lana, Flower, Anastasia and Benji, Mirjam and us three. I get to play with different people like every day. I feel happy [then].

Children even develop coping strategies so that weather and illness cannot deter them from their pleasures in playing.

“You have to play you have to be active a lot. You have to play really fit activity to keep yourself warm, so you don’t get too cold and then just have to stay inside and catch a cold.” (Maree, BH, winter)

Affirmative environments carrying the meaning of joyful settings also encompass locations in which children feel safe and develop a feeling of belonging and ownership (Chawla, 1992, Kullman, 2010, Moore, 1986).

“Cause I love to go up there play a long time since I was small” (Rosie, BH, summer)

Yeah, but it is really far away. It's not here. It's over the harbour bridge. It’s must be my grandpa and grandma's house. Because umm I was brought up there and they are quite like my parents. (Rebekka, BH, winter)

These environments positively support children's identity formation and become interwoven into their dispositions, tastes and preferences. For example, Wells and Leskies (2006) show
how nature experiences in childhood can trigger environmental activism in adulthood. Children’s identity formation and habitus can therefore be seen as a result of exposure to, learning of and experiencing the actualisation of play affordances; to the settings connected with joyful memories and activities. On a more general level, these dispositions, tastes and preferences shape ‘obesogenic landscapes’. For example, the experiencing outdoor play as a child influences affinities for more active pastimes in adulthood (see also Janz et al., 2009, Waters et al., 2010). I turn in more detail to this aspect in the following section.

**Habitus and seasonal outdoor play**

Habitus conceptualises internalised, mostly unconscious structures: tastes, preferences and what feels natural and normal; simply how dispositions ‘motivate’ our actions and structure practical logics (Maton, 2008). Practical logic originates based on a ‘feel for the game’, in which agents improvise to maximise their positions. When they enter a field they are not fully knowledgeable of positions, beliefs and capacities of other agents, but they follow their own point of view based on their habitus. They acquire the unwritten ‘rules of the game’ over time through experiences they make. It is this ‘practical mastery’, ‘sense of practice’ and ‘practical knowledge’ which turns the embodied social game into a second nature; the feel for social regularities (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1998). In the case of outdoor play, much of this practical logic is embodied in schemes of perception and patterns of interaction with the physical and social landscape. The seasonal (non)actualisation of potential affordances in turn helps to shape ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

The remainder of this chapter explores how the ‘performance’ of outdoor play is linked to the concept of habitus by bringing together the social regularities with the experiences of agents and their symbolic capital. Bourdieu argues that members of the same social class share comparable experiences of structures, processes and social relations. They share structurally similar positions within society, although the script of stories is unique for each individual. Dispositions are inherited and accumulated over the lifespan in the context of families and social classes. Habitus as a conceptual tool combines dispositions and present circumstances provoking unconsciously the logics of practices, which simply feel natural for agents (Bourdieu, 1984, 1999c, Maton, 2008); hence they feel like a ‘fish in the water’.

**Inheriting a certain type of playing?**

Habitus links the past, present and future as well as the social and individual, structure and agency. Practices are then the result of relations between one’s habitus and one’s present circumstances. Family members are influential in facilitating play practices within the given conditions (e.g. contemporary view on childhood).
Despite the opportunities Dexter’s parents talk about in providing their son a childhood full of freedoms and exploration of Beach Haven’s affordances similar to those experienced by his father, there are also limits. They disclose:

Dexter’s mother: I think [Beach Haven is] one of the few places in Auckland that mhm can give our kids that kind of lifestyle that we had that you know that we roamed till our parents were away, from morning till night. [...] 

Dexter’s father: When I was Dexter’s age with my, mhm with my brothers, particularly my elder brother, we would go when we lived in Glenfield we’d think nothing of cycling to Devonport which is miles away [...] and then we’d come home after dark, you know, we would after that going [again] in the morning, we wouldn’t come home especially on the weekends until it was after dark. You just wouldn’t do that now. [...] I fear the kids are riding on the road on push bikes because of the crazy drivers around that weren’t there when we were growing up. It sounds like I’m one of those people bring up talk back, but it’s just that the sheer velocity of traffic, the volume of traffic has wrecked kids riding around the roads. [sadness in his voice …]

Dexter’s mother: I think they get it drummed into them that there is a bit of wide dangerous world out there even if we try not to send them that message. I think that it filters through the whole thing on mhm, stranger danger thing, that you need to take care of yourself. I think that’s put the, put the brakes in little kids in some ways.

Nonetheless, Dexter has inherited his father’s passion for bike riding. The freedom to ride around, to explore the environment on his own terms as well as to test his own boundaries and capabilities play a central part in his outdoor play practices both in summer and winter. He talks as passionately as his father about cycling around the area, although his roaming distance is smaller than his father’s has been.

“I am playing usually means I am on my bike. […] I love my bike, because I love riding my bike. I occasionally go to the park, but I [also] like my scooter, but mostly I ride on the road when I use them. […] It means you can go to different places without anyone to take you. I like that about it. It is really easy to go uphills fast, it’s…and when you go downhills instead of going down or walking down or running down you just go down on wheels.”
(Dexter, BH, summer)

Similar to his father, Dexter spends hours riding his bike around Beach Haven. His expeditions are only put to an end by bedtime. His GPS maps cause surprise and pride when his parents realise the distances he traverses on his bike; visiting places and destinations they never had him imagined he was discovering yet. He stays within the natural boundaries of Beach Haven, contrasting his father’s experiences, but adjusting to the ‘different circumstances’ his mother talks about.

Chilly also adjusts to living and playing in a central city environment, which is quite different to her father’s rural upbringing on a farm. Nonetheless, the enduring nature of her father’s experiences in actualising the affordances of the natural environment is reflected in her
playing practices, although this happens unconsciously as her father’s reaction to my questions shows.

Chilly’s father (CC): We had a little bit of bush, yeah. […] That was quite a big hobby of mine making a dam to catch water. […] We had been pinecones fights with people. We were located opposite the dams and threw pinecones at each other.

Christina: How do you feel about that building a dam or throwing pinecones is not possible in the central city?

Chilly’s father: I don’t think it is possible to have pinecones and dams.

Christina: How do you feel about it that it is so different to your childhood?

Chilly’s father: You have questions. Umm, we’ll it is just not possible unless you had a farm, so we couldn’t built dams or threw pinecones. Funny questions.

Utilising natural affordances of any kind of environment be it on rural farm land or a city park has been unconsciously initiated by both their habitus. Chilly may not build dams and have pinecone fights with her friends, but her fondness for affordances the natural environment offers has been discussed previously and is reiterated with the following example reflecting her commitment and excitement about utilising nature for her play practices from an early age on.

Christina: How do you feel when you climb on trees?

Chilly: It’s really fun. Because like you swing off the tree and the branches and stuff. [giggles] Mhm, It’s fun being able to go up high. Normally people don’t like going up high but I like going up high and like climbing trees is fun. But like some of the trees …are a little bit high to climb, but it is kind of fun when you try to get up and climb them and I also like when I was younger I used to get twigs and make fairy houses and stuff with leaves and stuff. That’s when I was a younger.

Taesong, a committed game console and Lego player, unites the complexities around discussing the habitus formation and its associated practices in an intensified central city environment. His habitus has not only been transplanted from a different society, but he also inherits his playing preferences from two very different playing practices. His father seems to have been a tomboy, while his mother strictly followed the gendered rules of playing in an intensified urban environment.
Taesong’s father (CC): I was born in a rural area so every day I played outside, because if I, if I was at home I had to help my parents and so I really hated it. So after finishing the school I just put my bag in floor of my house and I ran away to play with friends.

Christina: And what did you play with your friends?

Taesong’s father: A lot of things. We played sports and sometimes we played battle game and went fishing and yeah there are so many things because it was a rural area. […] Winter was also good season, because there was so many snow. We had snow fight and we went sliding and sometimes we went flying kite, because it was so windy in winter. There were so many good places to go for children. […] No car, no noise and no bad people and it was great, but I think Taesong was born in city and he plays in the city most of his time so it’s a big difference.

Taesong’s mother: I was similar to Taesong. I was born in city apartment. So that’s why I can understand his feeling. [We played in front of our apartment building [e.g. hopscotch, Double Dutch, things girls do, but often within sight of our families …].

Taesong’s father: Yeah but time is changing so these days a lot of electric devices like Nintendo and things like that. I think today’s children know those kind of things rather than nature.

From this small excerpt on Taesong’s parents’ playing experiences and view of the world, I discuss two aspects, which are imprinted in his actualisation of affordances: supervised play and the alteration of affinities to sports and ‘battles’ in a vertical living environment. First, Taesong hardly actualised any affordances without his parents present. The one time he attempted to was a scary experience. “I was afraid that the man would take me. It’s better when my parents are there.” He has been scared of being kidnapped. This fear seems to be bestowed on him by his parents adapting to the present expectations around ‘good parenting’. His father highlights that when he was growing up in a rural environment discourses around stranger-danger and traffic safety have been less prominent. In his parents’ eyes, the freedoms especially his father experienced as a child are impossible to afford someone growing up in an intensified city environment today, while at the same time they draw on his mother’s experiences. She has often played within sight of her parents. She has learned from a very young age the unwritten rules of outdoor play in her neighbourhood and passed this ‘knowledge’ on to her son. This brings me to the second point I want to make: inheriting, but adapting play empathies to the current living environment. His father’s affinities for sports, war games and fishing are mirrored in Taesong’s favourite indoor and supervised activities. While he reveals during the summer interview his knowledge about the best fishing spots and New Zealand’s fish species, he talks passionately about his aquarium in winter. His father’s experiences in battling his friends within a natural environment have been replaced by competing via electronic devices. Taesong often meets up with his friends to play ‘more player games’ and ‘battle’ them in a virtual world. Often after dinner he and his
father race, play video soccer or dive into adventures together. These virtual adventures they hurl into day after day are experienced from the safety of their living room.

Children further adopt their parents’ passion for certain types of sports. Some follow into their parents’ footsteps by participating in diverse clubs, while others simply enact their favourite ‘sport’ casually on the courts or fields turning ‘sports’ into some kind of play. For example, Michael’s mother has herself inherited a curiosity for fast cars and cross-bikes from her father at a very young age and passes this interest on to her sons. Michael tells me with starry-eyes about a national race he attended as spectator a week prior to the interview. On a day to day basis, he transforms their long driveway into a race course and times himself copying the ‘real race atmosphere’.

“We’d just play like races down the hill on our bikes...and if my friend, if I am, if my friend don’t have a friend over there, then I’ll go and time myself down the hill and back up and yeah. So I’m not that bored if I am alone.[...] So I just take and go back up the driveway. It’s just like...It’s like it’s a good place because we’d be going down here and there is actually a hill so you can go a bit faster, too.” (Michael, BH, summer)

The phenomenon of sports leagues in New Zealand has been discussed in a previous chapter, so it is not surprising that sons take up the same passion as their fathers for playing rugby or the girls often become netball players like their mothers. Many engage in a playful way with sports, but Tim whose dream is to one day play for the All Blacks¹⁴⁸ (New Zealand’s national rugby team) adopted his father’s passion for playing rugby and competing.

“When I was young, I was a rugby player. We spent a lot of time doing rugby, but where I was brought up in the country it was seven, four kilometres you had to go [run] to training. And then you had to play rugby. [...] By the time I have done all my running into the training and back, I was fit anyway. So by Saturday, when we played our outdoor activity, namely rugby, we, I was able to match, keep up with the [other] boys.[...] Ah, for my son, because he enjoys excitement, he enjoys being involved in some activity. Very, very, ah, assertive. He asserts himself very, very well and in the field of sports.” (Tim’s father, CC, winter)

His father has lacked economic means growing up in a ‘poor rural area up North’, so he has seized every possibility be it working on farms as a labourer, exploring the area on his bike (on some weekends he travelled more than 100 kilometres) or swimming in the river to improve his fitness and skills. Tim also turns many different kinds of play into some sort of rugby workout besides his weekly training sessions. For Tim, playing is exercising.

¹⁴⁸ This aspiration is partially fuelled by his father’s expectations and the scholarships he has received for playing rugby. Having limited financial opportunities this family sees Tim’s capabilities and skills of playing rugby as an entrance card to “the best schools”, which would be otherwise out of reach. On the one hand, Tim can pursue his passion playing rugby. On the other hand, attending these educational facilities also offers him a “better education”, which comes in handy, regardless of whether or not he may one day be paid for playing in a rugby team.
The majority of the interview time with Tim was taken up by his preferences for sports and exercise. Drawings and interviews suggest that rugby has played a central part in his and his father’s life and identity formation since early childhood. Tim even brought a rugby ball to the first neighbourhood walk in Beach Haven to utilise the affordances he has expected to discover in Beach Haven.

As a logical consequence, the shaping of ‘obesogenic landscapes’ is not a recent phenomenon and cannot simply be attributed to urban design or environmental factors (see Chapter 2). Rather, following the accounts I have introduced, ‘obesogenic landscapes’ have to be viewed as complex structures, among which the inheriting of dispositions in relation to an individual’s preference is one, but an important aspect.

Playing naturally: embodied play practices

Habitual actualisation of potential play affordances are often unconsciously initiated, feel natural and are taken for granted. This aspect of the embodied practical logics comes to the fore through reactions individuals show when their ‘normal’ play practices are disturbed or unattainable. They feel like a ‘fish out of water’ as the following selection of examples highlights. This section draws on the observations made during the neighbourhood walks and analysis of the semi-structured interviews with child participants.

McBeth (CC) only plays occasionally in the ‘manicured’ natural environments offered by parks in the central city. He seems uneasy amidst Beach Haven’s natural environments.

“This sand feels uncomfortable... It’s too muddy.”

“I hate the slippery sand! I wish it was just like plain concrete stairs so I don’t fall down.”

“Watch out, don’t fall into the water... you could break your head on the rocks... and there could be sharks in there!”

Being shown the natural wonders off the beaten path in Beach Haven, his competency in interacting with natural environments is further put to the test when an insect landed on his T-Shirt. He shrieked and seemed scared; loosely showing signs of ‘biophobia’ (Louv, 2005, White and Stoecklin, 1998). The ‘plain’ built environment of the central city is easier to read and interact with for this boy. His unfamiliarity with a more ‘natural’ play environment makes him feel at unease insinuating his familiarity with, and favour for, actualising affordances within the built environment. In comparison, Isabelle, from Beach Haven, who steps into an ants nest while inspecting a silver fern, has ants crawling all over her legs. She is not
flustered, more annoyed, rather than scared of this experience. Isabelle is accustomed to such aspects of playing outdoors in natural environments.

While unfamiliarity with natural play environments can disturb otherwise ‘normal’ play situations, changing the composition of actors and objects within a well-known play environment also puts children to the test. Taesong who is used to being accompanied by his parents when he plays outside feels uncomfortable when he is not supervised. He disclosed:

“I was there [landscaped outdoor area in front of apartment] once alone. There was this man walking past. He looked strange. I like it better when my parents are around.” (Taesong, CC, summer)

Playing outside alone is unpleasant and unfamiliar for Taesong. His learned practical logic of ‘safe’ actualisation of affordances is tested to his dislike. In a different situation, he reveals that one of his remotes is broken making it impossible to play many of his video games.

Taesong: When I was playing video game, video game remote wasn’t working. And I couldn’t play with my dad, because there were two remote but one was...

Christina: What is it that makes it more fun to play it together?

Taesong: When I play racing game I like winning racing game with dad.

Christina: How did you feel when the remote broke?

Taesong: Very sad and very angry.

Taesong takes for granted the ability to play virtual games with either his father or his friends. This usual course was disturbed when the remote broke. He is not used to actualising affordances as much in the ‘real’ world as in his ‘virtual’ worlds.

Beyond the interior world of disrupted play due to a broken device, children also spoke of play activities circumcised by collective beliefs and practices. For those attending church regularly outdoor play possibilities were constrained on Sundays. Bewilderment is often heard in their voices when answering my questions on outdoor play during weekends and especially Sundays.

Christina: What do you usually do on a Sunday?

Keven: Going to church. We would just watch TV and go on the computer.

Christina: Is there any special reason why you don’t go outside on a Sunday?

Keven: Cause it’s church and it’s like rest!? It’s not allowed to be noisy and stuff.

Keven and many others clearly indicate with their perception that I lack the understanding of the unwritten rules of playing on Sundays. These children, however, follow these rules naturally be it that they stay indoors and “do nothing coz it’s a resting day” (Maree) after they
have had lunch with their extended families (often at their grandparents’ house) or play “just calm and not so active things” (Cyane) to respect Sunday rest. However, even families who had no clear connection to religion believed in Sunday as a resting day. Kim told me that on “Saturdays, [he goes] somewhere and on Sundays [h]e and [his] mum rest”. Children embody that there are times and days for active play and there are also periods to spend sedentary recovering from busy times in school and activities.

The earlier introduced practical logic of children as well as their embodied play practices that they inherited from their parents informed the development of three distinct conceptual tools. In the following, and final section of this chapter I discuss three distinct habitus or ‘play classes’, expressed by the study families: an ‘outdoor, hibernating and curtailed habitus’.

“I am a wild outdoor one”: an outdoor play habitus

For many families, providing their children with the licence to independently explore the neighbourhood, detect and actualise affordances, reflects their broader point of view of the world. New Zealand projects a ‘green and clean’ image internationally and its citizens regard themselves as outdoor people.

“New Zealand culture is based on outdoor activity. The whole thing is that New Zealanders, you know, we go out camping and we [Kiwis] you know go shooting, hunting and fishing […] Really down to earth people” (Dexter’s parents, BH, summer)

Playing outdoors all-year-round is a distinctive life-style choice, which easily embeds in families’ broader dispositions. Talking about active travel to school, Michael, for example reveals his concerns for the environment, while highlighting its benefits for gaining symbolic capital (e.g. health and social capital).

Michael (BH): School’s right up the road so just walk there and don’t have to worry about being dropped off by a mom or dad.

Christina: What is bad about being dropped off?

Michael: Sometimes we have to wait for them to get ready as well and if you’ve got a little brother, [he] might have to leave mhm…later and can’t take you to school with me. Go and come back and take him and waste some petrol. So, it’s really hard getting dropped off as well.

Christina: Do you enjoy walking to school? What is good about walking to school?

Michael: Well, I can just walk and keep myself fit as well. And sometimes my friends will come and they’ll be walking up the road, too. So I’ll walk with them.

Playing outdoors locally also reduces negative costs for the environment (Freeman and Quigg, 2009b) and improves children’s social and health capital (Brockman et al., 2010, Weller and Bruegel, 2009). At the same time some children embody from an early age the ‘Kiwi outdoor culture’. Weather and season seem to play a minor role in this perception.
Parents in these families even encourage their children to participate in outdoor activities. They ‘kick’ them outside.

“Honestly I don’t think it kind of pertains to whether it is winter or summer. It’s just the sheer factor from going outside and playing, yeah just the freedom they get from that, yeah. […] I don’t think it has to be separated by summer and winter. I think it is just them going outside and playing, playing with their mates and playing rugby on the back lawn, which my kids constantly do, you know and they set up little obstacles courses and it is just finding your own entertainment. […] If it is raining a small bit, you know I let them go outside”. (Michael’s mother, BH, winter)

In this context, these children possess enormous symbolic cultural capital for playing outdoors and entertaining themselves. They have a feel for people, places and seasons. They creatively and confidently manipulate the outdoor environment for their play needs. They can read their surroundings based on their key environmental, social and cultural elements and more importantly navigate and function within (Malone, 2007). Dexter, for example, can easily name native flora and fauna.

“Oh, this is a Tui! [pointing excitedly to a bird outside the window in the middle of the interview] I think it is here, can you see it between the leaves there!” (Dexter, BH, winter)

He often strolls around and memorises routes and places for viewing the native wildlife or for collecting materials, which he later utilises for his games. He and his friends have built a ramp for their scooters with material found along the estuary. Michael indicates his knowledge of different places for playing and exploring “when he is bored at home”. He also highlights his seasonal experiences of playing outdoors. He views home as a place with limited play affordances, while affordances outdoors are unlimited.

“You have been doing something at home you have to do it again and then you have to do it again, but you already have done it, so kind of getting boring. […] In winter it is usually very cold and bars on the playground will be really cold and slippery and often in summer they might be really hot or just nice and warm. […] I also like] going on the field, so I go and watch them [sport teams] if I am bored and if I don’t have anything to do at the park. […] Or you can do the bush walks. […] And one time when me and friend went there we ended up finding a rusty bike. It didn’t have a chain or and the tire were flat.” (Michael, BH, winter)

Michael and all others embodying this all-year round outdoor habitus speak confidently about mastering outdoor play in both seasons; they possess the necessary symbolic capital required to ‘survive’ this ‘game’. Likewise, Chilly who also moves confidently between locations and activities, indicates her awareness of the possibility of ill-meaning people. She has a ‘feel’ for people, timing and when to be careful (see also Cahill, 2000).
This knowledge, however, does not stop her from utilising the affordances in the park during daylight hours. She shows no signs of anxiety. She is confident to manage and negotiate her surroundings independently.

A signifier of this outdoor orientation ‘class’, of experiencing the outdoors with all senses, of being tough and ‘not feeling the cold’ is disliking ‘wearing jackets’ or ‘jumpers’ and going out in ‘shorts and T-shirts’ or barefoot.

While in other countries being barefoot is a signifier of being poor or badly dressed, in New Zealand wearing no shoes shows a special relatedness to the natural elements, an aspect which is less likely to be acceptable in other cultures or environments.

Outdoor play in this scantily-clad manner can only work in a ‘cultural’ milieu in which others can easily read the status implication: “I am a wild outdoor one” (Dexter, BH, summer).

Hibernation of the outdoor play habitus

Stories are frequent of those who rarely play outdoors in winter. The all-year-round outdoor habitus is an ideal only some families embody and practice. In others this habitus is dormant as soon as the winter season arrives. They retreat indoors and come out of hibernation in spring. In other cases families’ outdoor habitus is not woken up at all in spring and slowly turns into a sedentary habitus all-year-round, in which the ‘old’ outdoor habitus only flares from time to time. Nonetheless, it is held high as an ideal in these families. I turn to this aspect in more detail in the next chapter focusing in this section on the dormant outdoor habitus during winter.
The taken for granted freedoms of playing outdoors, of running around or being noisy in summer is disrupted during winter by the hibernation of their outdoor habitus. The perception of the winter season as a time to relax and stay indoors is deeply embedded in these families. This practical logic guides children to tell me during interviews conducted in winter that it is ‘too cold’, ‘too windy’ and ‘too rainy’ to play outside, although it has not rained in days. Even the nicest and sunniest days can hardly alter these internalised structures.

“[I]n winter because it gets cold and kids don’t really want to play outside, because it’s just very cold in winter and it is windy.” (Maree, BH, winter)

According to Maree children did not desire to play outside during winter. She sounded like parroting her parents and other family members, which at the end make her believe that she really does not enjoy playing outdoors in winter due to inclement weather.

“It is not a big issue for me, because I think it is up to them if they want to go outside or not. Umm, because it is their choice. They decide to go outside and play. That’s fine, if they don’t they have their reasons for not going outside. I don’t stop them from what they want to do. If they want to go and play outside, they are allowed, they can.” (Maree’s mother, BH, winter)

Parents accept and often endorse their children’s choice to stay indoors with empathy, which in turn also contributes to children’s experiences of play in winter. Depending on their own parental hibernating outdoor habitus, they evaluate outdoor play differently in winter. Indoor play is normalised as outlined earlier. It is assessed less negatively than in summer. Their offspring move easily between outdoor and indoor play environments: in summer they play outdoors and in winter they utilise affordances indoors.

Some children find plenty of affordances indoors besides watching TV or being on the computer. They have the knowledge to entertain themselves without the help of ‘prescribed’ activities, toys and equipment that limits the actualisation of affordances in certain ways.

Christina: What do you usually do in the winter?

Elena (CC): We stay in the house and play games. We play in the apartment.

Christina: What do you play in your apartment?

Elena: We play hide and seek, tag, soccer.

Some of these children transform indoor environments with the same creativity as they actualise affordances outdoors, while others simply transplant outdoor games indoors. Karstens reports similar observations on the changing childhoods in Amsterdam, although in the context of affluent families (Karsten, 2005). Some Auckland children of various economic backgrounds move easily between seasons and locations and utilise the indoor environment for their play, while still having fun; they possess the necessary symbolic capital to creatively transform the environment for their needs.
The majority of children, however, reveal that they are bored inside. They lack the capabilities, knowledge, competence and confidence to handle the indoor environment as well as the outdoor environment with its plentiful potential affordances during summer. Their creativity also falls asleep with the hibernation of their outdoor habitus.

They desire to play outside, but the internalised logic of practice hinders them to see outdoor play as an alternative to the boredom experienced indoors in the winter season, although they all disclose affinities for outdoor play during summer. These children have little knowledge of potential outdoor affordances during winter or even consider playing outdoors in the rain as a pleasurable experience. They often spend time at the window, watching the rain and dreaming of summer activities, while yearning for the next sporting practice or game to be entertained at least for a couple of hours. During winter, they have hardly any success stories of actualising affordances outdoors and, if they do, they face difficulties in mastering outdoor play as Hannah disclosed, for example.

If children do not possess the necessary symbolic capital, playing outdoors in winter is often intimidating and embarrassing. Children’s evaluations are guided by ‘traumas’ of physical discomfort when spending time outside in the cold, play accidents and illnesses afterwards. Families’ stories with a hibernating outdoor habitus reflect the lack of confidence in outdoor play during winter. It is no wonder that Maree’s sister says that it is better to “have them stay inside [in winter] than going outside and playing where it is dangerous”.

**Curtailing the outdoor play habitus: prioritising the ‘safety paradigm’**

Playing outdoors is widely upheld as an ideal. Many researchers, however, have argued that a ‘safety paradigm’ curtails children’s independent mobility along with growing concerns about children’s physical and emotional well-being (Jack, 2010, Morrow, 2002, Scott et al., 1998). But perceptions and evaluations of risks overwrite the outdoor play habitus. In some
cases the outdoor habitus is modified slightly to the current societal circumstances, in other cases the outdoor habitus is ‘put to sleep’ out of fear of children’s safety. The extent varies widely depending how deeply embedded the outdoor habitus still is, children’s capabilities, symbolic capital endowments and locations. I discuss this aspect in more detail in the next chapter, but engage with two main themes curtailing the ideal of the outdoor play habitus in this section, namely children’s physical and mental capabilities and societal expectations and anxieties of ‘good parenting’.

Each child is endowed with different symbolic capital (e.g. physical and mental capital) to navigate outdoor play. Parents often talk about play based on children’s age and developmental stage. In parental eyes children’s confidence in managing the risks of playing outdoors varies and influences their decisions to grant licences for outdoor play149 (Valentine, 1997, Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). Even Michael, who has one of the most definite characteristics of an all-year-round outdoor habitus enjoying great freedoms of independent outdoor play, seems to be restricted in fully utilising affordances the environment offers by his own capabilities (or what Potvin called during the XIII IMGS in Durham (2011) biological capital). His mother discloses:

“I mean, it comes different with age a child what is ‘appropriate’, for their own safety and if Michael was confident, was, umm, he was more confident, more aware of his personal safety then it would be probably more different and he would be more involved in going off individually. Umm, if we go swimming down to the beach, we go all. He is a boy that lives in his own world, which is amazing and he has awesome conversations with us about it, but … and it is really important to know that he forgets to be on the bike when he is on the road, you know. That sort of stuff. His, his own, his own awareness I suppose, brings restrictions to go. Whereas our oldest son, he was very aware of what was going on around and he was down there at like eight [wharf], ey. It was quite different what he was allowed to go down to different places and do different things, because just that confidence let them. We knew where he was, what he was doing.” (Michael’s mother, BH, summer)

Despite his parents’ awareness of his lack of capabilities to negotiate his personal safety in certain environments and situations, they nevertheless grant him freedoms to explore the affordances in his neighbourhood, although gradually (Hart, 1979, Kytta, 2004, Valentine, 1997). The more confident he gets in managing risks, the greater his licences become. Michael’s parents decide to let him gain more confidence in certain locations and environments autonomously, while other children are denied the change to become confident ‘users’ of their neighbourhood. Being constantly under supervision complicates gaining competence and a feel for people, places and situations as well as detecting potential affordances; children miss out on the possibilities to accumulate symbolic capitals to master independent outdoor play.

149 It is, however, important to note that parents often underestimate children’s capabilities (Valentine, 1997).
Further, the meanings of ‘appropriate’ and safe play vary culturally. Cultural rules manage children’s outdoor play. They determine play spaces, licences and practices (Barker and Wright, 1951a, Holloway and Valentine, 2000, Holt, 2011). To protect her daughter’s reputation, to keep her safe in her eyes, Nicole’s mother, who is originally from an African country, restricts her daughter’s outdoor play.

“It’s not good that kids go outside alone. She is young, a little child. […] They watch TV or play these things [points to game console; older brother rents video games, which they then play]. […] We did not do much on our own and we stayed always close to the house. The only thing was walking to school. That took a very long time, but only naughty girls go on the bus or to the cinema. You don’t want to be a naughty girl, so better stay close by and don’t go outside too much.” (Nicole’s mother, summer)

Drawing on their own learned experiences this mother and other parents follow distinct rules of culturally safe play practices altering the outdoor play habitus.

Parents also internalised discourses around traffic safety and ‘stranger-danger’. These widely discussed risks (e.g. Carver et al., 2008, Mitchell et al., 2007, South, 2011) trickle slowly, but constantly into parental logics of practice. With time they overwrite the ideals of the outdoor habitus and alter it accordingly. The majority of parents in the central city and some in the suburb either laugh or look very puzzled when I ask them about their children’s independent outdoor play as this activity is uncommon, although desired by some. For these residents the traditional New Zealand outdoor habitus has been replaced by a ‘safety paradigm’, which aims to protect children’s physical and mental well-being as the following parents reveal:

“Too many cars its noisy and not too many kids, because like back home in [Eastern European Country], I grew up in an apartment but there were so many kids and all of us would just go out in front of the building and there would be some grass and we would play in front of the building and it was safe our parents would know where we were. I won’t allow my daughter outside.” (Hannah’s mother, summer, CC)

“They are too young for the safety and the other reason, […] Maybe when they are teenagers I let them go outside, now they are too young […] I, the other reason is from my deep inside, I sometimes, I am scared maybe, they get kidnapped.” (Elena’s father, summer, CC)

“I don’t like when they go outside by themselves because if the kids go somewhere by themselves, you don’t know what’s going on, what they do or if something happens to them.” (Nicole’s mother, BH, winter)

Distrust in children’s capabilities to negotiate the ‘dangers’ of the city independently inhibited these children detecting the potential affordances within walking distance of their home (both in the suburb and central city). Children provide answers like Elena: “There is not such a place close to my house where I can play”. They appear to learn the ‘rules of the game’ that affordances for play are limited to certain places based on parental anxieties; these children’s lives are centred around outdoor expeditions to play ‘Mini Golf’, to go to ‘the park’,
The logics of seasonal outdoor play

Destinations appear to vary little between seasons, but depend on parental income and time.

“I think just if I am busy then I won’t go with him to the park. If I am not, I think I like to spend time with my son a lot. I feel guilty because I am studying now, so I don’t have time to spend with him.” (McBeth’s mother, CC, winter)

“If [the kids] wanted to go outside, we needed to go to the park, shops and playground”  
(Nicole’s mother, BH, summer)

Sedentary indoor activities are less frequently discussed by these families as ‘inappropriate’ activities (both in summer and winter). Nonetheless, most of the parents who internalised a ‘safety paradigm’ wish for some more active outdoor pastimes for their children to pursue (flaring up of the outdoor habitus). These parents follow the implicit norm and embodied consciousness that the right way is to supervise children such that they are protected from dangers of traffic, molesters and kidnappers. This logic of practices resulted in the non-actualisation of potential affordances in the central city and for some in the suburb initialising the alteration of the outdoor habitus.

Safety schemes are so far reaching that parents also affect their children’s social networks. They interfere with and manipulate their children’s social capital. Out of anxiety that children may meet and develop friendships with children not ‘socially suitable’, parents purposefully intervene with whom their children are playing. To safeguard their children they are more interested in the family contexts of their children’s friends than previous generations. Josh’s mother revealed the following experience; still astonished:

“I think parents, they say like for example with Josh’s friend, he has two, both of his two good friends, they go to their house. He is used to go over there and play with them. The first time, they wanted to meet me, whereas in my days, I wouldn’t even, that would even be knowing the parents to meet at the house while your kids are playing. Now it’s like first you have to go there, meet them and all that sort of stuff “  
(Josh’s mother, BH, summer)

Parents are involved in their children’s play beyond the regulations around access to the built and green environment. To safeguard their children and protect them from mischief and harm parents control their children’s play and friends. They scrutinise family backgrounds and are less trusting in their children’s capabilities to develop ‘appropriate’ friendships. Parental anxieties and fears centre around possible exposures to family violence, drugs and crimes. These aspects seem beyond control of parents when children play away from their own home. Families undergo scans for becoming ‘socially suitable’ play partners.

Parents both in the suburb and city revealed how societal expectations structure their parenting practice. Cyane’s mother summarises expressively how discussions with other parents constrain how children are raised. What was acceptable and ‘appropriate’ when she was growing up may not be suitable at present despite that she enjoyed spending time
outdoors by herself, climbing up trees and lighting fires in the forest. These days, you have to follow the rules otherwise a child might lose out on friends or education as your parenting style can leave you labelled as an outsider.

“It’s a shame. It is a real shame, because we used to umm everyone of my age we used to talk about how we were growing up in doing different things and how the society changes and you got to change the society or you get looked at as ‘oh you can’t do that’, you are an outsider, you have to assimilate to the perceptions of what society wants you to do.” (Cyane’s mother, BH, summer)

Likewise, these increasing protective schemes also alter parental behaviours when their children’s friends are visiting. A general uncertainty on the ‘appropriate’ play behaviour, licences and beliefs of their guests’ families limits children’s play experiences during play dates. Michael’s mother discusses the complexities and uncertainties she is facing when other children are visiting.

“I think it is just a literally child’s safety, because you have to accept that so many things are different with and in families and that’s what makes everybody different which is a really good thing. [...] sometimes if another child is here, cause I don’t know how their parent might feel about it [playing outdoors in drizzle], so then I’ll say it may not such a good idea, but for my kids it’s fine.” (Michael’s mother, BH, winter)

To endure the critical eyes of parents, communities and society parents follow a certain practical logic of ‘good parenting’ to protect their own children, but also to uphold the public gaze and expectations (Collins and Kearns, 2005, Furedi, 2008, Malone, 2007, Pain, 2006).

Conclusion

Viewing outdoor play through a Bourdieusian lens has shed light on the relationship between the actualisation of affordances and actors’ dispositions. I noted that the empathy parents and children have for outdoor play reflects the locally constituted beliefs about what is ‘appropriate’ children’s activity in summer and winter. I showed in this chapter that (seasonal) norms, rules and structures should be considered as forming the logic of practice in relation to the (non)actualisation of affordances. This chapter further touched upon how the exposure to a certain habitat (neighbourhood, lifestyle) cultivated a sensibility for certain tastes and dispositions in those inhabiting this area. Norms, rules and structures of certain environments had been inscribed in preferences, tastes and evaluations of situations and in turn structured their logics of practice.

The responses to unsupervised playing practices in the central city reflected indoor and supervised outdoor play having been normalised. While independent outdoor play across seasons is deemed possible under certain circumstances in the suburb, in the central city it was seen as largely ‘inappropriate’. In this commercial environment, the public gaze and dangers perceived by parents devalued outdoor play as an alternative to interior or
supervised pastimes. Extra-curricular activities and supervised excursions appear to be the norm in the central city all year around and only vary by the type of destination according to parental time availability, income and perception of the weather (see Chapter 9). In contrast, independent outdoor play in summer represents the majority of suburban children’s business after school in ways that facilitate their ‘environmental literacy’ and future health gain. For a minority of families these symbolic values are replaced by safety concerns. Nonetheless, summer carries the connotation of a long play time, of being out and about, of spending afternoons and weekends playing in parks and beaches with friends, families and relatives. Play is regarded differently in winter. It seems that even in a mild climate like Auckland’s region a practical sense develops in which winter is the time to relax and stay indoors unless children have an outdoor habitus. The non-actualisation of affordances in the suburb is centred on children’s and parents’ knowledge of the ‘rules of the game’ during winter. They master these unspoken rules in a perceived ‘time of illness’ by confining children indoors.

I believe that studies of children’s physical activity have overemphasised the influence of availability and quality of built and green environments to children’s outdoor play. This chapter has revealed that these environments also need to be ‘read’ socially to understand the underlying logics of practice. It is important to understand the values (accomplishments in Bourdieu’s words) that families see in outdoor play in different seasons and locations for an improved understanding of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Agents shape through their actions their ‘obesogenic landscapes’ within the areas and positions they inhabit. I have showed that even in an environment in which children enjoyed independent outdoor play and detected affordances of the environment, it may not fit their habitus all year around. Indeed, I have illustrated that participating families exhibited three distinct types of habitus in relation to outdoor play. The ones who play outdoors in all seasons signify an ‘outdoor habitus’, while the ones who only play outside during summer have an ‘hibernating outdoor habitus’. However, they have in common that children frequently play outdoors independently (at least in summer). In contrast, families with a ‘curtailed outdoor habitus’ take children on outdoor expeditions and supervise their play all-year round.

In the next chapter, I move away from the sample as a whole to focus in detail on the practical logics of five families to address the complexities of children’s outdoor play in different environments and under diverse parenting practices.
Chapter 11 Struggles in the ‘field of play’: five insights into understanding and explaining ‘obesogenic landscapes’

In the previous chapters, I began to unpack why determinants of seasonal outdoor play transcend modifiable barriers such as traffic and unsuitable play spaces as well as the inevitable issue of inclement weather. In particular, I explored the ‘profits of localisation’ in Beach Haven and the central city contrasting the perspective of public health researchers and participants. I illustrated that despite both areas being blessed with diverse play destinations, the detection of potential play affordances has to be seen as more nuanced. Not all families detected and actualised potential affordances within their neighbourhood setting. I deconstructed the complexities and multifaceted reasoning for perceiving and actualising only some affordances from the point of views of families in the next chapter. I showed that these aspects are closely related to the analytical concept ‘outdoor habitus’ and exposed how this habitus is carefully (re)structured revealing the patterns it takes. I highlighted, following Bourdieu’s initial concept, that in the ‘field of play’ not only economic capital structures this field, but diverse symbolic capitals are instrumental for the character the habitus forms (see also Chapter 3, Chapter 9).

In this chapter, I move away from the sample as a whole and focus on five families. In particular I focus on their symbolic capitals, which also find impression in their ‘outdoor, hibernating or curtailed habitus’. I attempt to offer, as highlighted by Bourdieu in the introductory quote and as discussed at length in Weight of the World (Bourdieu et al., 1999), a ‘general and genetic comprehension’ of who these five families are based on the struggles they face; the conditions (symbolic capitals they possess, social position) and the mechanisms (practical logic of the habitus) they are caught up in (see also Harker, 2005, 2006).
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Matthews, 2001a). These conditions and mechanisms bring as assets social or cultural advantage or disadvantage; hence, these patterns contribute to persistent social inequalities in the ‘field of play’. Focusing on five children in particular allows me to provide in-depth insights into the complexities contributing to inequalities in the seasonal ‘field of play’. Before I move on to discuss their accounts in-depth, I provide a brief justification as to why I decided to present a ‘comprehensive’ picture of them and not others.

I chose the five children inspired by an analytical framework developed by Kearns (1990). The two-by-two matrix accounts for the representativeness and variability of participants’ accounts. The chosen participants, however, were not necessarily located in the centre of their respective quadrants. Absolute representativeness was judged less important than their ability to provide nuanced details of their everyday life (Kearns, 1990).

I built on this analytical framework and represent children’s outdoor playing habitus based on their licence to independently play outdoors and how they comprehend their neighbourhoods’ key environmental, social, cultural and seasonal elements. I believe that these variables are interlinked. The higher the children’s independence the more likely they are able to read, transform and confidently actualise diverse affordances outdoors (Kytta et al., 2004, Malone,
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2007, Matthews and Field, 2001). In Figure 11-1, ‘Environmental Literacy’ is represented by four separate scores. Children were assigned a score for all-year-round outdoor play (yes = 2 points /no = 0 points), and a score based on their endowments of symbolic capitals for playing outdoors that consisted of their ability to transform environments based on their creativity (max. 4 points), confidence being outside independently (max. 2 points) and their social capital within their neighbourhood (such as familiarity with neighbours and diversity of named friends = max. 4 points) (see also Chapter 9). These values were totalled to assign each child a score out of a possible 12. To arrive at a score for ‘Independence’ I developed a point system based on the parental survey encompassing the diverse destinations children are allowed to access independently. The highest score possible was 12 points. When children were not allowed to go outside they received a score of 0 and children without any license restrictions could receive a score of 12. Families were chosen to represent two distinct playing classes. McBeth and Nicole were chosen to show a curtailed outdoor playing habitus in the suburb and central city, while Tim and Michael signify the outdoor playing habitus in both areas. Juana disclosed a hibernating-curtailed outdoor habitus after her move to the suburb. A ‘general and genetic comprehension’ of these five families follows separated by location.

Making the most of Beach Haven: stories of an outdoor tomboy

Michael is a 10 year old boy from Beach Haven, who spoke of his love of playing outdoors in summer and winter, saying “there is always something to occupy you there”. His family moved to this suburb into a two storey house at the end of a long driveway about five years ago and settled well into the community. The house was located close to a local park, but they have to traverse a busy road to access the park. He had one older and one younger brother. Both his parents worked full time and his mother enjoyed being schooled in the private system. She worked shifts and when she was not home in the afternoons a caregiver came in and supervised the boys. His father’s evenings were mostly taken up by his part-time postgraduate studies. Despite their busy schedule they identified themselves as ‘laid back’ people, who sent their children to selected, but ‘affordable’ extra-curricular activities and take them on ‘family trips’ on weekends. The family owned only one car and they were the only participants who possessed enough bicycles to go on trips together, which they frequently did. This family, however, tried to resist the busy life-style they observed around them. Michael’s parents attributed this desire to their ‘rural’ upbringing.

150 Family trips encompassed activities in and outside Auckland like going to beaches, bush walks or races and games. Michael attended a swimming club all-year-round. He played basketball and rugby in winter. Games take up the Saturday morning. His mother put special emphasis on the sport programs run by community members and everyone can join for free (see Chapter 10).
“We are also, like [my husband] is from [town] originally and I am from [different town]. So, we are very laid back and cruiser as far as things go when umm it seems we are a lot slower than everybody else. Other jam packed everything in their day, whereas we not.” (Michael’s mother, BH, summer)

Both parents came from very active families. Along with their parents and siblings they had been engaged in diverse sports and activities when they were growing up such as cycling, rugby and netball. They still participated in sports both on their own and together with Michael and his siblings. Both parents also had frequently played outdoors in their childhood. They recalled their main business as children to play outside and they noted that season and weather did not seem to matter.

“We were kind of forced to make our [own] entertainment I guess when we were younger, just not having the same ability as today [e.g. TV, computer]. So we would come home from school and then, then we would play Cowboys and Indians. We were somewhere in the bush”. (Michael’s father, summer)

“Oh, what did I do? I don’t know. Everything. Of all the sports I think I could do. Netball, BMX, gymnastics and softball. I think I drove my parents insane. I played outside in the rain just the same [as my children do]…We lived in a dead end street…the road completely unsafe, but that was like our play area for the entire street […] We had two big cherry trees in the front of our house which we would build huts and that was cool. Just all sorts of stuff.” (Michael’s mother, BH, winter)

Michael’s parents attempted to provide their children with the same freedoms and pleasures of playing outdoors they had experienced as children. Outdoor play felt natural in their eyes and they internalised outdoor activities in their dispositions. Michael’s parents aimed to pass on their fearless and creative engagement with the outdoor environment. The social and physical setting in Beach Haven allowed them to pursue their deeply embodied belief that children needed to independently explore their environment to fully develop their potentials. They believed that ‘prescribed’ affordances limit children’s development, creativity and ability to become streetwise; to become a competent and independent user of their environment. Gaining this knowledge was one of the symbolic capitals children needed to fully master the rules of outdoor play.

“I don’t think you can have a child that bases their entire play around whether or not you are going to play with them and what you are going to do like it you got to give them freedom to play on their own and find their own limitations and their own creativity, not brought on what you think they need to be doing or not doing.” (Michael’s mother, BH, winter)

They bestowed their children with fairly autonomous play experiences granting comparable licences they had received from their parents, although they adjusted them to the current circumstances influenced by the debate on ‘good parenting practices’ (Dowling, 2000, Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). They disclosed that they had been involved in “all sorts of things that you would just gasp when your child did it now [both laugh]”. Nonetheless, Michael’s parents tried to offer their son the possibility to detect the diverse potential
affordances within their neighbourhood all-year-round resembling their own childhood experiences. They hardly put restrictions on Michael’s roaming desires.

“The boys don’t really go that far, you know they haven’t gone off, wandering around the streets and stuff like that and Michael would have specific places to go to, like over there to the park or he would go over to the shop or he would go out to the school and those are quite many places where he goes to on his own.” (Michael’s mother, BH, summer)

“Honestly I don’t think it kind of pertains to whether it is winter or summer. It’s just the sheer factor from going outside and playing, yeah just the freedom they get from that. [...] If it is raining a small bit, you know I let them go outside, but if it is absolutely bucketing down they can’t and they have to stay inside…so they feel a bit restricted and contained and it can make them grumpy”. (Michael’s mother, BH, winter)

It is not surprising that Michael inherited the same passion for ‘being out and about’ as his parents. A recurring theme in Michael’s interviews, drawings and GPS maps was his love of being outside, of engaging in diverse activities with his friends and exploring and actualising with them many different affordances parks, fields, courts and bush offers (see Figure 11-2, Figure 11-3 and Figure 11-4). “Summer is a big long play time for kids”, while winter you “watch TV for a bit and maybe go outside play or sometimes [you]’ll have like a sport on”. His parents limited from time to time his use of electronic devices (he has access to a TV, computer and game console), but in most situations Michael fluidly moved between indoor and outdoor, sedentary and vigorous activities both in summer and winter (Holloway and Valentine, 2003, MacDougall et al., 2004, Zeiher, 2003). Michael even sacrificed his passion for craft work to be able to spend more time outside in summer. His desire for outdoor play structured his play practices and was closely related to the positive emotions he experienced as rewards for utilising affordances.

“There is more time to draw [in winter] and sometimes you want to stay inside and draw in summer, but then you want to go outside as well.” (Michael, BH, winter)

“The park [is my favourite place], cause I just play games sometimes…I have sports over there, too. [...] I feel excited, because I’m playing with my friends [tiggy, rugby] and we are having a really cool time.” (Michael, BH, summer)

“You have been doing something at home you have to do it again and then you have to do it again, but you already have done it, so kind of getting boring. For fun you have to go out in the cold.” (Michael, BH, winter)

Michael regularly explored his neighbourhood independently and actualised many ‘naturally detected’ and ‘prescribed’ affordances on his own creative terms in all seasons (Kytta, 2004, Tranter and Pawson, 2001). He had an amazingly detailed knowledge of his suburb as his neighbourhood maps reveal taking both spatial and ‘environmental literacy’ into account (see Figure 11-2 and Figure 11-3). He moved competently between places and activities negotiating the diverse dangers he encountered by, for example, actualising affordances only in some places and not others.
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These perceived dangers and possible accidents, however, did not stop him and his friends from actualising and testing the boundaries of affordances. Michael was also curious about his neighbourhood spaces and was interested to find out more about the wonders of ‘nature’.

“Umm, like if it something...you haven’t seen it before you it feels like you found something [shells, cicada] that you want to know and you want to find stuff about it or something.” (Michael, BH, winter)

Michael was blessed with social capital, although his parents were not actively involved in the community or institutions. He often ‘rang up’ his friends to arrange play dates for meeting up in the park or he wandered around expecting that someone would show up sooner or later (Freeman, 2010, Weller and Bruegel, 2009).

“Even if I go to the park and just sit here and nobody's here to play with...You need to be creative and sit there a long time to think about what you could do [...] But most of the time my friends might come over as well and I don’t know they will come so I just go and play with them while I am there.” (Michael, BH, summer)

Matthews (1992) characterised these processes as encountering, learning about and engaging with the multiple facets of one’s neighbourhood.

Figure 11-2: Michael’s neighbourhood map in summer
Michael’s map resembles his passion for outdoor play and indicates his ‘environmental literacy’. For instance, he has drawn a bus on the busy road he needs to traverse for spending time in the park. Michael clearly elicits his knowledge of landmarks such as the DVD store, roundabout or shops and indicates where he enjoys spending time and where not. The shops at night are an unpleasant place, while the park, playground, driveway and the school’s field are good places for playing. He elicited diverse play environments hinting that each maybe utilised differently, which he confirmed during the interviews. However, he only included ‘institutionalised’ play spaces; settings adults would expect children to like. However, they still can creatively transform these places. Nonetheless, Michael has only highlighted outdoor play spaces and this is in contrast to many other children.
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Figure 11-3: Michael’s neighbourhood map in winter

Michael’s map in winter resembles his summer one. Although, he has not finished his map it seems that he has centred his favourite play space on the driveway to his house. The change of season shifted his focus from diverse play spaces in his immediate neighbourhood to places closer to home. Nonetheless, the number of places he disliked increased. His bullet points of favourite and scary places suggested that places he enjoyed in summer feel different in winter. This aspect again reveals his in-depth knowledge of places and situations. While in summer he might have been already in bed when it got dark, shorter daylight-hours impact negatively on how he experiences the same environment during winter. While Michael had only outdoor places in his neighbourhood map during summer, he included a friend’s house for winter. This aspect could hint that it was easier for him during summer to meet with his friends as more children play outdoors; in winter he needs to arrange more consciously for play dates; hence he included his friend’s house.

Michael clearly embodied the New Zealand outdoor habitus. All interviews with him and his parents, his drawings and GPS maps were insightful in this family’s outdoor playing practices indicating their natural and fearless encounters with diverse potential play affordances in this suburb. This habitus was the structured and structuring disposition he brought with him into the situations of playing outdoors (see also Lee and Macdonald, 2009, O’Brien et al., 2000). Especially revealing in this respect was the neighbourhood walk in the central city.
Michael’s map of placed experiences shows that he plays outdoor all-year-round and that he is knowledgeable about seasonal differences at play. This snapshot shows only his immediate neighbourhood and places he frequently visits during summer and winter besides the route he negotiated with a second ‘guide’ from BH (see also Ergler, 2011a). Their cooperation influenced that the wharf is shown: it is the other child’s favourite spot in BH. The wharf does not play a role in Michael’s life; he has no licence to go there. His family’s trips to the beach or extra-curricular activities are also not shown; they are implied through the dots leaving from this neighbourhood. Interestingly, the places he frequently talked about during the interviews and in his elicited drawings are all present in his GPS tracks. While he did not go down to the estuary wearing the GPS unit in summer and winter, he disclosed his ‘adventures’ in this area during interviews and the neighbourhood walk. All places shown in this map are utilised by Michael on his own or with friends.

Figure 11-4: Michael’s placed experiences
Michael followed Tim, who lived in the central city, through his neighbourhood and took a respectful, but slightly bored interest in the activities and places shown by his ‘guide’. Field assistants noted that he seemed less relaxed than in his own suburb. He lacked the enthusiasm beyond the expected politeness of ‘copying’ all affordances Tim utilised. For example, Michael quickly got tired of an interactive exhibition on a city square after they had ‘played’ with some of the pictures and photos displayed (see Figure 11-5). Alternatively, his body language changed and Michael even sighed with relief when Tim led him into Albert Park. Michael ran loose excitedly and climbed the first tree, which came into his view (see Figure 11-6). The affordances this park offered were familiar to him; they felt natural and sparked positive memories. In this environment, which seemed to remind him of his own favourite play spaces, he could rely on the unconscious routines of practices in actualising potential affordances more easily.\(^\text{151}\). In the environments previously visited by Tim the taken for granted practices sat less comfortably.

**Figure 11-5: Impressions of the interactive exhibition**

**Figure 11-6: Tree climbing during the city neighbourhood walk**

Michael did not have the best start in life to become an outdoor oriented child. His health capital was severely limited:

“I remember when Michael was a baby, because he was born with severely deformed feet umm and he has had 10 surgeries to correct them and the worst thing is he is prone to arthritis especially in his feet and knees”. (Michael’s mother, BH, winter)

Knowing his story it was surprising how well Michael managed playing outdoors and participating in sporting activities. If his mother had not disclosed his health history, I would not have noticed these restrictions. He seemed to break through all obstacles of his own bodily limitations. Although his bodily limitations put not a hold on his outdoor activities, his parents allowed him only to visit some place to play. They were concerned about his safety as he was often too absorbed in his play activities (see Chapter 10).

\(^\text{151}\) Célé (2006) observed comparable sensory based place experiences expressed verbally and non-verbally in Swedish and British children. Nonetheless, she was less interested in the influences of socio-economic background influencing the actualisation of affordances. Rather she was interested in the bodily expressions in utilising diverse environments.
Michael inherited, embodied and practiced an all-year-round outdoor play habitus, although his bodily capital had been limited. His parents endorsed outdoor play despite his bodily state. His parents did everything in their power to provide him with a ‘normal’ childhood and protected him from being stigmatised and labelled as ‘disabled’. The only possible practical logic in his parents’ eyes was to allow him to play outdoors, to find his own boundaries and eventually overcome his bodily disadvantages as they also enjoyed and embodied a love for the outdoors since their childhood. Only outdoor play felt natural for them. A logical consequence was that Michael’s parents did not restrict his outdoor play; they did not deny him the pleasures of climbing trees or playing sports. They did not curtail outdoor play fearing for his safety and health distortion as many parents may have done in the same situation. Instead they encouraged him to actualise affordances within the limits of his bodily composition and to learn his own physical boundaries and to play with them. Michael needed to learn to handle outdoor play within the boundaries of his capital.

Michael actually detected that he could overcome his bodily restrictions and actualised diverse play affordances in the same way as any other child. He mastered playing outdoors often better than many other participants did due to his imagination. He could detect, actualise and transform affordances creatively to avoid the boredom. This knowledge was regarded highly, along with the bodily capability to actualise affordances, as it opened diverse possibilities to play; to actualise the same affordance diversely within and between seasons. Playing outdoors simply felt natural for him. He and his family clearly positioned themselves as part of the all-year-round playing outdoors ‘class’. They valued and rewarded playing outdoors higher than playing indoors, which had been inscribed in Michael’s preferences, tastes and dispositions.

Limits in Beach Haven? Curtailing the outdoor habitus

Nicole is a lovely, confident ten-year old young lady with a mind of her own. The first time I met her was on the phone when she called up to confirm her participation in this project. During the year in which I had the pleasure to get to know her better, she became more mature, but also severely gained weight. Nicole envied an outdoor lifestyle contradicting her own indoor playing practices. She was, however, lacking all dispositions, tastes and preferences for the outdoors Michael possessed. In the following section I briefly outline the struggles she was caught up in.

Nicole’s family sought refuge in New Zealand from an African country about 10 years ago. Since settling in they had been living on and off benefits. During the time of this project the

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152 I did not measure height and weight of children, but her weight gain was so severe that it was hard not to notice.
family had to rely on state welfare payments. On their arrival in New Zealand they were assigned a house in Beach Haven and moved later to Glenfield into private accommodation. The family resettled a little less than a year ago to Beach Haven into a two storey house owned by Housing New Zealand. Located close to a small basketball court and within a short walking distance to major parks and beaches, the house fitted the family of seven well. They enjoyed moving back to Beach Haven, although they are aware of some of the darker sides of the suburb: ‘drugs, stealing, broken glass’. This aspect was, however, less of concern as Nicole and her younger sister hardly left the house unaccompanied.

Nicole’s mother: Her sister or brother take them down to the beach. If they go to play outside here [Beach Haven], they know their way around…In Glenfield we lived near a road. If we wanted to go outside we needed to go to the park, playground or shops. Here there is no danger, the road is safe. They can go outside…But I don’t like when my children go outside by themselves…

Nicole: But it is boring. It’s boring always being in here.

Christina: What is boring?

Nicole: I have nothing to do. It’s always the same.

Nicole’s mother: It’s not good that kids go outside alone. She is young, a little child.

Beach Haven was in Nicole’s mother’s eyes a safe place to play and her children had the necessary capabilities and confidence to negotiate road safety, although she restricted the licence for autonomous play severely. The only time her two youngest daughters were unaccompanied outside was on their way to and from school and when they were sent to do some errands. Despite her own childhood experiences Nicole’s mother believed that “it is good for children to go to park and play”. Her dispositions, however, demanded to supervise her children in these play settings. She was concerned if the girls’ behaviour was appropriate, but she was also worried about her children’s personal safety and reputation (see Chapter 10).

Nicole’s mother’s childhood experiences of playing were characterised by her rural upbringing in a pastoral society. Play was gendered, but demanded a creative engagement with the environment. Play was limited to their property and was often interrupted by chores around the farm and home. Seasons hardly differed and were only

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153 Nicole has some older siblings who moved into accommodation of their own besides her three older siblings and one younger sister still living at home. They regularly visited each other.

154 Sport clubs and participation in sports by females were not existent. Boys, but not grownups played soccer. Consequently, none of her or her husband’s relatives participate in sports legitimised in Western societies. But they participated in their culture legitimised practices such as cultural dances and ceremonies, which can compare to the leisure practices in Western societies, but they take a different form.
noticeable by the tasks required for cultivation except in the ‘rainy month’. This month implied finding entertainment indoors.

“I was growing up in [African country]. My dad was a farmer, so we had to help. We worked on the farm. We had a swing and we played with a ball. When the war came we fled.” (Nicole’s mother, BH, summer)

“April only is winter. It’s hot not cold. [Boys] during winter in my country like to play football…, the girls dance, hopping, hopping [Double Dutch, hopscotch]. In winter still it’s normal to play outside. …We invented our own games. In April we often had to play inside, because of the rain…You did some crafty things to keep you occupied. […] We did not do much on our own and we stayed always close to the house.” (Nicole’s mother, BH, winter)

Her mother learned to entertain herself according to the practical logic of her family, which also requires staying close to home during the summer months. The boundaries of chores and play were, however, fluid. The social and cognitive functions for children’s development served mainly by play or institutionalised extra-curricular activities in other cultures were replaced by a mix of chores she took on in her family and creative, entertaining play outdoors (see also Gaskins et al., 2006, Zukow-Goldring, 2002). These experiences influenced her parenting practices also in New Zealand. Especially the norm to stay within parental sight shaped Nicole’s seasonal play.

Figure 11-7: Nicole’s neighbourhood map in summer

Nicole’s preference for sedentary activities, be it voluntary or out of necessity, is also reflected in the quality of her maps. Although she is aware of outdoor play spaces within walking distance (e.g. the park in her map) and walks to school every day, her spatial mapping skills are limited. On first impression, she attempted to integrate some spatial insights, but all places important to her are located on one big long road. Especially revealing was that one of her friend’s homes is in reality located close to her home, but in the drawing it is the one furthest away. Although this might represent her feelings for this friendship at that time, it does not present her placed environmental knowledge. She included four houses, which seems to indicate that she has a rich social life, but these places seem insularised. The only public place which can be directly labelled as a place for playing outside is the park. All other places are private places, for example friends’ houses or the shopping mall. However, she leaves the viewer completely in the dark about her evaluation of play spaces as all are coloured in similar.
Nicole wished, as indicated above, for more freedoms to play outside autonomously engaging in outdoor activities with her friends as “it’s fun” and “not boring”. In the first half of the summer interview she told me excitedly about diverse activities children can pursue in Beach Haven and diverse places and activities she favoured around Auckland. She gave me the impression of loving to play outside and getting active. In school “you get to jump jag and get to play with your friends” like “tiggy and hide and go seek [or you can go on the] the swings”. Mission Bay [a suburb resembling the Italian beach promenade] was the “place to get ice cream” and it “has a beach there; you can swim and stuff. You get to play like basketball and on the playgrounds”. She also recalled fondly her time at a school camp. She especially highlighted the diverse vigorous activities she and her class mates got involved in.

“It was cool because we had a flying fox. ...And the abselling when you go down a wall..We just wanted the swings and there is a lot of things that you can do. [...] We jump all around. [...] There’s more than one thing to choose from.” (Nicole, BH, summer)

On weekends she enjoyed spending time at her cousin’s house, “because [she gets to] play games with them and go on the trampoline and do stuff”. These activities carried positive memories and feelings about actualising affordances outdoors. It became clear however that these activities and events contrasted her indoor sedentary pastimes at home. Desires and reality did not match (see Figure 11-7).

Nicole longed for more active amusements to disrupt her monotonous everyday life of watching TV or playing on a game console. At the same time she rejected vigorous activities all-year round. She disclosed, for example that she hate[d] walking to school, because of all the energy [she] need[ed] to put into walking.” Similarly, she also preferred sedentary play activities. For example, during the winter interview outdoor activities were absent from most of the topics we covered (see also Figure 11-8 and Figure 11-9). The symbolic values and pleasures of outdoor play were replaced by agony and even the few positive memories such as spending time at her relative’s house could not overwrite these negative feelings towards active pastimes and contrasting the first impressions she have.

Christina: When do you feel happy?
Nicole: When I just sit there doing nothing.
Christina: What makes you happy about doing nothing?
Nicole: I don’t know. You don’t get tired, you are just sitting there, doing nothing; you don’t have to get tired from running [while playing] and all that.
Christina: Why don’t you like running?
Nicole: Because you get tired..and that hurts. You get tired and it hurts.
Nicole learned that exhausting and demanding play activities appealed less to her. The less she engaged in activities the more difficult and unpleasant they became. It was not surprising then that watching “Shortland Street, Quiz and Neighbours [New Zealand and Australian TV series]” and playing video games felt simply more natural and less causing of distress in both seasons.

Christina: What do you like about playstation games?
Nicole: They’re fun. You get to play all different sorts [excited]. Like you get, you get to have one way of enjoying it.

In winter playing outdoors carried further a notion of becoming sick. Nicole’s mother also preferred spending time inside as she was used to doing so from time in her home country. She expected her children also to stay indoors. Therefore, she looked puzzled when I asked her about her daughters’ outdoor playing experiences in winter.

“In winter? Here it’s too cold. It’s too cold...When we came here it was summer. They went outside and played in the backyard. But in winter it’s not good here. It’s not good to go outside and play outside...Sometimes they play outside, but then they get sick...I don’t like to go outside in winter, too. If they stay inside, I feel good. I know where they are and that they are safe and that they don’t get sick.” (Nicole’s mother, BH, winter)

Nicole’s outdoor play was curtailed. Her limited licence of outdoor play contributed to her lack of knowledge to confidently cope with the affordances outdoors; to detect, actualise and transform affordances creatively. Outdoor play then felt unnatural most of the time. Indoor play was in her eyes normalised. She acquired the knowledge to master this type of play: she was more familiar with TV characters and game moves than playing outdoors.

Playing supervised outdoors and pursuing sedentary activities indoors was deeply embodied in this family making it difficult for Nicole to engage in outdoor activities she actually enjoys and attempts to copy from her friends (see Figure 11-9). The enjoyment that she experienced from time to time while engaging in outdoor activities got buried deeper and deeper over time in her memories, substituted by memories of sedentary activities. Even the neighbourhood walks shed light on Nicole’s tastes in this regard. She proudly showed a field assistant around as she was aware of diverse affordances Beach Haven offered for playing outdoors. She pointed out many potential affordances, but hardly engaged in actualising these except having a rest on one of the exercise machines around Shepherd’s Park (see Figure 11-9). She was more excited about sedentary activities and was keen to take pictures of birds and flowers. Bird watching and looking at flowers were activities she can pursue from afar without testing her strength.
Struggles in the ‘field of play’: five insights

Nicole’s winter map resembles her summer one, but this time she indicated how she evaluates places. In summer she included a park in her drawing, but her winter map only seems to speak of indoor places. She has drawn, for instance, her cousin’s house, the church or a shop. The focus on indoor settings reflected that her life is centred on indoor activities and mainly supervised. Nicole seems to have not much knowledge and more importantly no interest in possible outdoor play spaces close to her home, which are also accessible during winter. Her map mirrors the ones drawn by children who are transported between insularised institutional settings (see i.e. Holt et al., 2008, Thomson and Philo, 2004): their ‘environmental literacy’ is similarly fragmented as Nicole’s seems to be.

Nicole had better suppositions for outdoor play than Michael. Her bodily composition did not restrict her outdoor play in her early life, although this aspect changed over time and seemed currently to be a major obstacle. However, her bodily capital was not the only constraining factor, her dispositions also limited her actualisation of affordances outdoors. It seemed she had embodied only one principle of the field of outdoor play as she disclosed her enjoyment in the participation of outdoor activities. Her capacities in acquiring knowledge of outdoor play had been curtailed by parental anxieties fuelled by their understanding of ‘good parenting’ practices. Her parents believed that supervised play indoors would bring social advantages as children are not exposed to the diverse dangers of the street (see Chapter 10). Although Nicole was aware of some potential affordances within and beyond her neighbourhood, she had difficulties in mastering the requirements of outdoor play in this suburb as well as Michael did. She was less environmentally literate (see Figure 11-7 and Figure 11-8).

She learned the ‘rules of the game’ in her family to stay indoors or to depend on someone to supervise her outdoor play. These parental beliefs buried Nicole’s desire for outdoor play over time. She embodied it in her dispositions. They generated her negative feelings towards

“I really need a picture of a bird...and I’ve got lots of photos of flowers, because they’re nature and our neighbourhood has a lot of nature” (Nicole, neighbourhood walk BH).
vigorous outdoor activities and influenced her logic of practice. Outdoor play became no alternative to indoor play in her eyes. She did not acquire the symbolic capital necessary for ruling the field of outdoor play. In her family, knowledge of outdoor play was not valued in the same way as it was by Michael’s family. Achievements in outdoor play were not rewarded with similar positive endorsements found in Michael’s family and staying close to home or indoors was regarded as positive. Nicole learned to prefer playing indoors, which simply felt natural. Her deportment corresponded to the expectations bestowed on her. She showed all signifiers for a ‘class’ valuing safety over the pleasures of independent play.

Making the most of the central city: stories of a sports ‘enthusiast’

Tim lived with his two older sisters and one younger brother in a two bedroom apartment in the heart of Auckland’s CBD. The apartment complex had a small outdoor pool, a BBQ area and a gym. His family moved to this complex four years ago to access better public schooling (see Chapter 6). His father was a single parent with basic schooling. At the time of this study he was on welfare benefits.

Tim is a quiet, thoughtful and reflective boy, who loves being physically active. His passion for being ‘out and about’ was comparable to Michael’s story in the suburb. Tim’s entire play was centred on casual or organised sports be it summer or winter. He enjoyed sporting activities so much as they carried the connotation of being ‘happy’. In Tim’s opinion the central city offered diverse affordances for these and other activities:

“I like living in the city…you can do stuff and walk to everywhere…no boring places like in a suburb.” (Tim, CC, summer)

Tim accessed the destinations independently and by foot. For example, in summer he went to a local park to “kick some balls and practice rugby”. He also participated in “tennis, touch and hockey, while in winter [he could] only choose between rugby and soccer”. Tim’s neighbourhood maps mirrored this passion for sports (see Figure 11-9 and Figure 11-10). Tim confidently and knowledgably talked about his outdoor playing practices often in relation to information important for competitions. Play for Tim was exercise in diverse forms. He did not distinguish between sports and play as illustrated by other children in this study or by MacDougall et al. (2004).
Struggles in the ‘field of play’: five insights

Figure 11: Nicole’s placed experiences
Tim embodied his passion for sports so deeply that even seeing his “mates from school [meant they] hang out and play touch and stuff”. His social capital consisted mostly of friends he acquired through his school rugby team or the sport clubs he participated in. Tim embodied this engagement in sports so deeply that even the games he creatively made up were influenced by his affinity to sports.

“Mini cricket nonstop, yeah. We bought these like little balls and you keep balling until you get the person out and you have to do it nonstop and you have to keep trying to hit them and stuff. Yeah, that’s how we do it.” (Tim, CC, winter)

He engaged in activities outdoors all-year-round and is familiar with the changing environment within and between seasons. Some aspects were simply annoying such as practice “when it’s pouring down”, but inclement weather was not a barrier for Tim. He simply put some extra clothes on and actualised the same affordances as in summer. Often he transformed the negative aspects of the rainy season into an advantage.

“I sometime get mad like when I drop the ball and stuff, coz it is hard to catch the ball in there. When I do get the ball and I try running I slip and that and it is hard to run and stuff. [But s]ometimes you get goals by sliding on the ground and stuff.” (Tim, CC, winter)

He learned to acknowledge the best of each season and to actualise affordances accordingly. Tim knows places affording ‘proper’ exercise or simply playful practice within a short walking distance to his home. He actualised many as shown on his GPS maps (see Figure 11-12).
Struggles in the ‘field of play’: five insights

Tim possessed the licence to independently walk to school and besides Chilly he was the only child in the central city who had this licence. He frequently met up with his friends before and after school to “shoot some hoops” in winter or to play “touch in summer”.\textsuperscript{155} His sisters usually accompanied him in the afternoons when they went out on expeditions to the library or Victoria Park. Tim’s father felt safer when the three of them went out together, but he also relied on the CCTV cameras installed around the central city. He granted his children the licence “to go out in a pack” as long as it is daylight, but Tim disclosed that he often outpaced his sisters as they were not as fit as he was. He met up with them at a later stage and was not frightened by the idea to be alone in the central city. He was accustomed to the rules of the central city (see also Cahill, 2000, Weller and Bruegel, 2009). A Melbourne based study comparing children from private and state-owned apartment complexes also found that children with parents in the lower income range have greater licences to utilise their neighbourhood environments (Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009).

As outlined in Chapter 10 Tim inherited preference for engaging in sports from his father. Participating in exercise simply felt natural in all seasons.

“[In winter it will be the cold. It will be the weather. Umm, winter you get to pack up extra, extra clothes. […] And when I was young I was very active. So my children are just active anyway. I remember in winter, I hated staying home. Anything that bored me was being home, because there is no activity. […] Gone hunting, look for birds. Look for something, catch something…So, that sort of growing up, lifestyle has, my children are carrying on in the city. And they’d go out for curiosity, look for something.” (Tim’s father, CC, winter)

Tim’s father passed this fearless engagement with the environment and season on to his children. They did not hunt wild animals in the city, but they were ‘out and about’ on expeditions to get to know their surroundings better. They found exercising spots and points of interest such as the waterfront and they enjoy the diversity of Queen Street’s buskers.

This aspect is also reflected in the places Tim took the Beach Haven children to. He knew places where they could engage in ‘free activities’ such as an exhibition, a temporary film set and the clock counting down the beginning of the Rugby World Cup. This aspect revealed not only his knowledge of, and familiarity with, the central city, but also that their financial capital excluded some activities such as the gaming zones Taesong took the Beach Haven children to.

Tim’s family struggled financially. Participation in diverse activities after school was more than a ‘fun’ diversion. They should prepare Tim and his siblings for a ‘better’ life. The library

\textsuperscript{155} Tim mostly actualised affordances outdoors. He owned a computer, which broke during this study. The computer was too old to be connected to the internet. Mostly, Tim walked to a nearby internet café to be online. Tim hardly spoke about gaming or playing on the computer. This aspect of play seemed unimportant in his world of sports. The only time he mentioned this pastime was during the winter interview, but he moved quickly on to the next topic. When it rained his school allowed them to play on the computer during breaks. Virtual worlds were not part of Tim’s everyday life.
and museum, which they frequently visited, are formal learning institutions besides school, but engaging in sports keeps the mind ‘fit’.

“You see with good education, you need a good mind, with a good mind, you have to a body that's fit and healthy. You know otherwise, you will get all the overweight children. They will have a good mind while being young, but as they get older, sickness and all these other things associated with illnesses soon keep in their mind and starts become clogged and they don’t advance.” (Tim’s father, CC, winter)

For this family academic success was important. They believed it was a way out of poverty (see Chapter 8). Living up to full potential and clearing one’s mind for remembering ‘all the stuff you learn in school’ required a balance between formal studying and exercising. A positive side effect is obesity prevention. As it seemed, Tim’s engagement in sports and enjoying going to school had paid off already. He was asked to apply for a school specialised in sports. Tim’s father spoke proudly of this achievement and the opportunities lying ahead of Tim. In the same breath he also revealed his family's financial struggles, which in turn also affected Tim's participation in formal sports and emphasised how important this scholarship was for him and his father’s aspirations.

“As a result of his entering in the [league], he is now being requested to apply for Dilworth. One of the top colleges in the country! So that's his priority in terms of his education….Yeah, so I was quite impressed. I spoke to the president of the organisation and said I was having major problems with securing him what I belief maybe his opportunity becoming a top sports or athlete for New Zealand…they’ll apply for a scholarship for him and there be no cost at all!” (Tim’s father, winter)

Outdoor play in this family’s eyes brought social advantages. Tim inherited and embodied the appreciation of playing outdoors all-year-round and had the bodily capital to his advantage. Participating in sports was embodied in his dispositions. He transforms all aspects of play into some kind of sport. His passion for sports structured his practices. The symbolic capital Tim possessed was instrumental in pursuing his type of outdoor play. He was knowledgeable of the places he could partake in outdoor sporting activities. His father endorsed outdoor play in the form of sports and valued and rewarded these practices both with his licences and attitudes. Tim successfully intertwined play and learning.

This family was not blind to the diverse affordances a central city environment offers. They were knowledgeable of the best places to actualise the affordances they value beyond the child-friendly settings normalised in the central city. This family’s dispositions overcame the common attitudes towards children playing outdoors in the central city. Tim and his siblings were not supervised constantly and could actualise diverse affordances on their own terms. Outdoor play in the forms of diverse sporting practices felt natural for them. This family clearly positioned themselves in the ‘class of outdoor play’.

“...You see with good education, you need a good mind, with a good mind, you have to a body that's fit and healthy. You know otherwise, you will get all the overweight children. They will have a good mind while being young, but as they get older, sickness and all these other things associated with illnesses soon keep in their mind and starts become clogged and they don’t advance.” (Tim’s father, CC, winter)
Figure 11-11: Tim’s placed experiences
Adjusting a passion for active play to the central city: stories of a gamer

McBeth is a playful, imaginative, bubbly boy, who loves to be active. He could hardly sit still during our time together and quickly moved from one diversion to the next. He excitedly presented his toys, (virtual and real) games and books. We laughed a lot during the interviews; played board games and read excerpts of his favourite comic book. It was less an interview than talking while playing together. His parents also described him as a very active boy.

“When he get out of this apartment he just run, he runs a lot. Even during the weekend if we go out and when we you know, he just put first feet out this building he just ran.”

(McBeth’s mother, CC, winter)

However, diverse norms, rules and structures within his family and in the central city complicated enjoying active play to its maximum as I outline below.

McBeth moved to New Zealand with his parents four years ago into a small one bedroom apartment located on a busy road and close to parks and playgrounds. His mother studied at a university and his father worked in a local café. With both parents receiving income and a stipend they scraped along, but car ownership was beyond reach.

With both parents working McBeth attended the afternoon school program at Youthtown all-year-round, when his father was rostered for an afternoon shift. McBeth described his afternoons spent indoors supervised by Youthtown staff and highlighted his pleasure in the craft work he and his friends are able to pursue there.

Christina: And after school? Do you play outdoors?

McBeth:  Nope. You go to Youthtown! They give you really cool stuff….Cool stuff,. making stuff like base paints [and designing board games].

For McBeth, attending an afternoon school program and being supervised when being active had been normalised. Youthtown was in his eyes the place for playing, meeting people and gaining social capital (see Chapter 9). Some of his class mates also participate in this afternoon programme. He embodied these rules of ‘playing’ in the city indicated through his emphasise that children “go to Youthtown” in the afternoons instead of meeting in parks or in front of their apartment complexes. This view contrasted Tim’s habits introduced above.

When McBeth occasionally went on a play date during the week, the boys (friends from school and Youthtown) also stayed inside and played “[game console], computers and Lego” independent of weather and season. Embodying that outdoor play was supervised, it was

156 The only child McBeth had also access to a game console, his father’s notebook and a bike.
often out of question and thus unquestioned. Outdoor play depended on parental commitment and time.

McBeth: Oh, play outside. We usually don’t go outside.

Christina: Why don’t you go outside?

McBeth: Mhm, my mum and dad can’t always, when we go outside we need mhm my parents can’t take us there.

McBeth’s parents influenced his friendship networks and the majority of his friends lived within walking distance. An underlying implication was that parents who also raised a child in the central city were more familiar with and understanding about the play situation in an apartment complex (see Chapter 10). The negative attitudes towards children and parents raising children in the central city had been inscribed in McBeth’s parents’ consciousness and structured their practical logic as a result.

McBeth described his play experiences with his typical metaphorical speech:

“[I meet sometimes my friend] at Myers Park. He has got a bike [too]. Yeah, oh wait, nobody will like mhm, mhm, yeah, motorbiking yeah grrrggr [making noise of a bike] motorbiking, it’s like the, it’s like, it’s like [very excited] we used to play on the playground with the little ones and wag each other, you can steal weapons when they have some, yeah! [pui, scheh, making noise of a laser weapon]” (McBeth, CC, summer)

“Sunday – TV. […] Shopping, food, bought food. It’s very tiring. I remember, my mom buys a lot of stuff and I have to wait a long time. Long, long, long time! [But in the shops on Queen Street, especially electronic shops] you get to see a lot of stuff, games and so, toy, toy toy. Huge.” (McBeth, CC, winter)

These trips, however, provided limited enjoyment for McBeth. The repetition of affordances especially in parks made it ‘boring’ along with the ‘lack of friends’ present in these settings (see Chapter 9). His father summed up “playing with a dad is less fun”.
Struggles in the ‘field of play’: five insights

Figure 11-12: McBeth’s neighbourhood map in summer

McBeth’s neighbourhood map in summer consists of fragmented places located all over Auckland, but clearly states that he is growing up in a vertical living environment. For example, he drew Rainbow’s End, an amusement park in South Auckland, besides play locations near his house: he included out- and indoor play locations such as his friend’s house, Youhtown and parks. In contrast to Nicole, he clearly exhibited his knowledge about the location of shops in relation to each other and distinguished between them. Although all these places (the shopping mile Queen Street, the park and his school) are not far apart he decided to focus on them separately, which may indicate his lack of knowledge on how these areas fit together. Similar maps are drawn by children who belong to the “backseat generation” (Holt et al., 2008), although he accompanies his parents by foot and public transport. This could be attributed to the fact that he is always supervised; his parents take him on ‘outdoor play expeditions’. McBeth seems less familiar with the way to the destination; he can rely on his parents. However, these snapshots indicate his in-depth knowledge of each area. He shows exactly, which aspects he likes and dislikes in each fragment. For example, in the park he enjoys spending time on the field, while he dislikes the playground. Similarly, for Queen Street he highlighted only electronic shops, which already hinted his passion for electronic entertainment, but it left unclear why he disliked one particular electronic shop.

On weekends his family went on supervised ‘expeditions’ to the park, shops and free cultural events. The destinations of this family hardly varied between seasons, but were influenced by financial capital. Activities requiring entrance fees were often not feasible as his parents also needed to account for the subscription to Youhtown. These activities, however, stuck in McBeth’s memory as his summer neighbourhood map revealed (see Figure 11-12). Interestingly, his summer and winter GPS maps also illustrated some similarities in his activity patterns (see Figure 11-14). On Saturdays they went on a trip outside their neighbourhood, while on Sunday they visited the shops downtown.

157 Interestingly, McBeth’s parents indicated in the survey that their parents and siblings also participated in similar activities when they had been children; they named shopping, watching TV and reading as the active diversions they had been engaged in.
Figure 11-13: McBeth’s placed experiences
McBeth’s winter map focused on two places which mainly represent indoor activities: his school and the street he lives in. It seems that his school offers him the only opportunity to engage in outdoor activities; he has only drawn grass, but not the playground or court. He also does not indicate whether he likes these places or not. In summer, he had also included the park and other outdoor locations, which may indicate his curtailed outdoor experiences during winter. He, however, impresses the viewer again with in-depth spatial mapping skills: he knows where he likes to play and when he plays there he is familiar with and knowledgeable about his surroundings.

His mother further indicated that they enjoyed spending time as a family on weekends given the limited time they had during the week. At the same time she also appreciated ‘quiet’ weekends as weeks were ‘packed’ with work and extra-curricular activities. Inclement weather during winter also played an important role in the non-actualisation of activities revealing how parental dispositions contributed to the evaluation of potential play affordances in a neighbourhood.

“It seems to me that it rains every weekend […] I feel quite sorry for my son because in winter we can’t give him a lot of fun things to do. Because in summer he said ‘Well mummy it’s sunny, let’s go out.’ But in winter if it rains then he knows that he will have to stay home, watch TV [and] I can have an excuse if I am tired and I just tell him, well it’s rain so maybe we just staying at home and relax.” (McBeth’s mother, CC, winter)

His mother frequently talked about feeling guilty for having only limited time for their son at their disposal due to their ‘busy’ jobs. Her guilt is closely connected to the discourse of ‘good parenting’ and the time it requires.

Following the ‘rules of the game’ of playing in the central city his parents learned to supervise their son’s play in- and outdoors (see Chapter 10) contrasting their own childhood experiences. They embodied the widely discussed ‘safety paradigm’ so deeply that they
discuss their playing practices and the licenses they were able to grant their son at present only in relation to ‘safe play’.

“I mean I am from [Asian country], and we stayed in an apartment too. But actually it was designed differently from what we have here. So I would know the other families very well and we can play with friends...It’s not very wet like in Auckland so we still can play the same things...as in the summer. And I think we can be outside by ourselves...So we are very independent we can do a lot of games and we get dirty. Here I can’t see any closed playground here for him to do that with his friends.” (McBeth’s mother, CC, winter)

“I used to stay in the countryside area of [Asian country] which is even safer than New Zealand and very nice with a lot of trees and stuff and you can go out and play with friends and your parents don’t have to worry about where you play and when you would come home, you know. It is very safe.” (McBeth’s father, CC, summer)

Although his mother was also raised in an apartment complex, her dispositions denied her to see the same affordances she had experienced as a child in Auckland’s central city; her son’s life became more home centred (Bringolf-Isler et al., 2010, Prezza et al., 2001, Sibley, 1995). Consequently, this family discussed sedentary indoor activities as ‘appropriate’ pastimes, which was also reflected in McBeth’s neighbourhood map in which the built environment was especially prominent in winter (see Figure 11-14). Indoor play did not carry the similar negative connotation as discussed by Michael and his parents, although McBeth and his parents wished for some more active amusements. They valued different symbolic capitals than the families of Tim and Michael.

“They can watch TV, play Lego; the boys like Legos and also computer games or some electronics and that’s all they can play. And I mean it’s ok, they can talk to each other and share their interests you know habits but umm just that it is very boring they don’t have some sporty stuff to do.” (McBeth’s mother, CC, winter)

“It’s really funny when you meet and play with your friends [in school and the park]. When you get to do a little bit of activity.” (McBeth, CC, summer)

Play equaled in their eyes sedentary activities indoors and during summer supervised actualisation of affordances outdoors. Nonetheless, McBeth’s parents believed that children play more creatively unsupervised; they develop their own interpretation of play and transformations of affordances instead of simply copying expectations and parental attitudes. They believed children detect more than the ‘prescribed’ affordances playing autonomously.

“I mean for us we had more freedom, flexibility, more independence to do whatever we like without our parents being around which is more fun I guess, because if parents are around children, they are not they are not I think like naturally anymore. Because they looked for the parents’ attitudes so if just by themselves they can do everything, they can speak everything. I know we still need to know what they are talking, but if they are by themselves and they could be more freely to do whatever they want to express themselves with their friends I think.” (McBeth’s mother, CC, winter)

Although his parents did not grant him these pleasures, McBeth creatively mastered playing in the central city. He developed a genuine central city ‘environmental literacy’, which was
disclosed during the neighbourhood walks. He inventively generated a niche to enact his own agency within the structural limits of playing in the central city, which shed light on his habitual actualisation of affordances (see also Amit, 2003, McKendrick et al., 2000, Zeiher, 2003). McBeth took Dexter, who was also occasionally a passionate video console player, on a neighbourhood walk in the central city. He showed him an electronic store. In McBeth’s eyes the shop was a good place to play; he was able to utilise the latest video games and he did so without the urge to purchase anything (see e.g. Duff, 2011: on enabling places). It seemed within his capital endowments (a small family budget, limited child-friendly destinations in the city) McBeth found a way to make an environment, which had not been specifically designed for children or with children in mind, work for him. He turned the shop into a playground following his own logic of practices. Both children engaged with different video consoles, games and hardware and played games without being noticed or told off by staff by following the unspoken rules of ‘behaving’ properly in this environment. Both boys chatted about the latest games, perfect strikes or how to improve driving skills to finally beat the opponent. (The male field assistant who accompanies them seemed to have been forgotten.) At least for McBeth, playing videogames in a shop appeared as the most natural behaviour in a central city environment. A result of his exposure to, learning of and experiencing these affordances was connected to the joyful memories and positive rewards experienced in this setting. He was accustomed to shops as a playground and literate in their demands for utilising this setting; he acquired the necessary environmental and social skills (see also Cahill, 2000). This aspect may explain his desire to visit every single shop consisting mostly of takeaways, a post office and a ‘bargain’ empire, when he had been shown around in Beach Haven. He was disappointed when his ‘guides’ Michael and Josh refused to take him to the shops indicating that they were “boring and there is not much to see [besides buying] lollies”. While his guides could not understand his desire to see the shops, McBeth was puzzled that these shops did not carry the meaning of being a playground for the Beach Haven boys.

This family’s tastes and preferences clearly contrasted Tim and his family’s disposition, although both families had limited financial capital. In their disposition indoor or supervised outdoor play was normalised. This logic of practices formed the non-actualisation of potential affordances. McBeth and his parents were blinded to the diverse affordances of the wide sidewalks, landscaped entrances to buildings and parking lots (see also Tranter and Pawson, 2001: for learned practices not to utilise streets for play). The invisibility of children in these places in the central city helped normalise indoor or supervised play in this family’s view. McBeth and his parents learned and internalised that children belong indoors or supervised. Hence, they lacked the knowledge Tim acquired to detect and actualise the many potential
affordances these spaces offer. They did not creatively and imaginatively manipulate these environments for their needs. These environments do not carry any joyful memories or activities. However, by accepting that indoor or supervised play feels natural, McBeth creatively transformed an environment not traditionally labelled as a setting for children’s play. He detected the affordances shops offer for his taste and preference in virtual worlds. McBeth is not a constrained agent without any possibilities. Rather, he is able to actively transform and manipulate the environment to realise his tastes and preferences.

**Coming out of hibernation: the suburban paradox**

Juana was a child who loved all sorts of activities. She could immerse herself for hours in crafty tasks and transform a playground and park into a fairy tale world with her being the main character. She slipped one time into the role of a little princess and another time into that of a heroine.

The family relocated from Central America to New Zealand. Juana shared a two bedroom apartment in the central city with her parents and her younger sister. It was located on a busy intersection but was within a short distance to parks and playgrounds. Her parents moved to New Zealand to provide their girls with a childhood free from the ‘safety paradigm’ deeply embedded in their home society.

“One of the main reasons why we decided to come to New Zealand is because it’s like a safer place and the kids can have more of a normal childhood. [...] In our home country there are no parks to play at. And like everyone has this concept of safety like being hidden behind doors and you have to have a police officer or a guard outside with a huge gun to feel safe. [...] We wanted them to be able to walk in the streets and don’t fear as much as you do fear there.” (Juana’s mother, CC, summer)

The family was attracted by the clean-green image of New Zealand, which they associated with safety and an outdoor habitus. They sought what was, in their eyes, a synonym for ‘normal childhood’. Her parents’ childhood experiences resembled this ideal picture of New Zealand prevailing stories on freedom, independence and happiness. They especially emphasised their pleasure in imaginative aspects of play and their attraction of and preference for ‘non-prescribed’ affordances.

Juana’s father:   But we were not used to playgrounds at that age.

Juana’s mother:   Yeah, you’re right. I mean you didn’t need swings or monkey bars to have fun.

Recalling their childhood painted a picture of ‘always being out and about’ independent of weather or season. Juana’s parents roamed, explored and were adventurous in a setting they experienced and perceived as safe for independent play. Their childhood stories further unveiled a very privileged upbringing.
“It was a very nice place and it was kind of isolated from the city...we didn't have cable TV or telephones when everyone else had...You had to drive to get to a neighbour's house. But it was people that you could trust like 'please keep an eye on my kids for a while' [...] Or we could spend time on the streets you know...have lots of adventures with our friends so, yeah, I wish we could find a place similar to that for my kids where they could be out on the streets playing and I wouldn't have to worry who's going to be there or if they are safe or not.” (Juana's mother, CC, summer)

“We have almost summer all year long. I used to live near a [marshy meadow, ...] That's where we used to play. Yeah so we used to play outside every time. Exploring! Exploring with my friends. All sorts of adventures [laughs]. Summer was fun and winter even better, because you know the rain, the river grow and we didn’t have to stay at home all the time during the winter. [...] You bicycle or explor[e instead of] staying at someone’s house.” (Juana's father, CC, winter)

By moving to New Zealand they wanted to expose their daughters to a similar kind of play. The social and built environment of the central city prohibited their daughters a comparable childhood. Living in the central city complicated in their eyes this wish and they briefly moved after the GPS winter data collection to a suburban environment. Their preferences and tastes in outdoor play (a 'normal' childhood) could not be satisfied in the central city environment. In their beliefs, structured and unstructured play should go hand in hand to combine the best for children's development.

In the central city, they embodied the common norm to supervise their daughters in child-friendly places (e.g. parks, playgrounds) and to take them on 'expeditions' outdoors (e.g. festivals, beaches) (Den Besten, 2011, Prezza et al., 2001, Rissotto and Guiliani, 2006). Juana portrayed enjoyment spending time outdoors and especially in the playground of which she hardly got bored and drew in her maps (see Figure 11-16, Figure 11-17). She connected these settings mostly with positive memories. In this respect she distinguished herself from McBeth.

“...I play with my Barbie dolls and knit a bit and play Bingo, guess who. All sorts. And then watch [a movie], maybe just take off I mean tidy up our beds and then go out.” (Juana, CC, winter)

Nonetheless, her parents' dispositions towards outdoor play in the central city resembled McBeth's parents' principles and was attributed to the attitudes towards children in this business dominated environment (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 10). In summer, the family found it easier to profit from the diverse environment within and beyond their neighbourhood, but in winter they often felt, as McBeth's family, imprisoned in their apartment due to inclement weather. Despite their own outdoor play experiences in the 'rainy season' in their home country, Juana's parents were blinded to the potential outdoor play affordances in Auckland during winter. They followed the common practical logics to keep children indoors to avoid a distortion of their daughters' health capital. They fell back on diverse indoor activities and often visited friends close by, pretending an 'outing', as her mother disclosed.
“I mean it’s the same dangerous thing [like traffic as in summer] but I think in winter it gets even worse, because it gets dark earlier. The weather is not nice…It’s cold and it’s wet…If they get sick and I have no one to look after them and we have to go to work. […] During summer we would spend very long afternoons in the park, you know. It would be 9pm, Argh! You need to go to bed, because they have school tomorrow and we are still playing at the park. Yeah, so in winter you have early nights and so it’s less time to play…I’ve seen from my friends, the ones that have boys, they really suffer during winter. Girls, you can keep them happy drawing or colouring or cooking….But boys, they have so much more energy.” (Juana’s mother, CC, winter)

Although these experiences of Juana’s family were unique in their particular content, they were shared in terms of their structure with McBeth’s family and others residing in the central city. These families have similar dispositions, tastes and preferences; hence, they belong to a similar social class (see also Lareau, 2000: on the distinction of middle and working class families in the US). During her time in the central city Juana represented a curtailed outdoor habitus in hibernation contrasting the all-year-round outdoor habitus signified by people like Tim and his family. The class Juana belonged to often took their children on ‘outdoor expeditions’ during summer and mainly kept them indoors in winter. The later speaks to the hibernation of the outdoor habitus during winter, while the former is associated with constant supervision of outdoor play curtailing children’s outdoor play experience. However, after Juana and her family moved to the suburb, this picture painted about Juana’s outdoor playing practices changed immediately. Bourdieu (1999b: 128) said in this respect that people can inhabit environments without really making full use of them, ”if the occupant does not dispose of the tacitly required means of occupation, starting with a certain habitus”. Although Juana’s parents followed the unspoken rules in the central city to supervise children’s outdoor play and adjusted their habitus to this environment, their aspired practices did not seem to match with their living environment and triggered their move. In other word’s they did not dispose the tacitly required means, as Tim’s family did for examples; to make central city living work as it would be a suburban environment. Meeting Juana after her move to the suburb showed me how curtailed and hibernated her outdoor habitus was when they lived in the central city. Indeed she began to play outdoors in winter and her parents granted her a previously unknown licence to independent outdoor play.
Juana clearly indicates her passion for playing outdoors on a playground during summer. All children in the picture are smiling and participating in diverse affordances a playground offers such as sliding. Especially prominent is the flying fox. The drawing also indicates that she is playing with other children during the time she spends in these locations. Interestingly, she has only drawn one play space she likes in contrast to the majority of children in this study. It could hint that she has only this one type of play setting in the central city suiting her play needs. However, from the picture it cannot be told where she is growing up, but she has drawn an ‘institutionalised’ play space adults expect children to like no matter where they live.

Juana disclosed in her winter map that she still enjoys going to the playground. However, this time she only pictured one child, which may indicate that she meets less children than in summer when she goes to this play space. The clouds could also mean that the weather is different in winter. In summer she drew a bright blue sky. While she did not indicate any unacceptable place during summer, she introduced one in her winter map: teenagers smoking in front of a warehouse. Although she is growing up in the central city, the house she has drawn looks like a suburban one. This may hint how deeply children embodied that the suburb is the ‘right place’ for children to grow up.

We arranged the interviews for a late Sunday afternoon in July. On my drive to their home it drizzled from time to time. When I pulled into the cul-de-sac the family had moved to, Juana welcomed me on her scooter, which she previously used to scoot up and down the hall of their apartment complex. Her outdoor habitus had come out of hibernation. She independently explored her surroundings within the safe boundaries of their new street. She entertained herself. During the interview with her parents Juana and her younger sister easily moved between playing in- and outdoors rather independent of the weather situation. They actualised affordances in their new backyard, played on the street or could be seen on the neighbours’ front lawn. They scooted, cycled and played with a ball. When they were too cold or too bored of the affordance they actualised at present, they moved on to the next one or came back inside and sought diversion in their playroom. They confidently entertained themselves without the persistent parental supervision they were so used to in the central city. They organised their own leisure time and needed less to rely on their parents to take them to places. Her play situation had changed tremendously and seemed to resemble more the free and independent childhood her parents idealised in previous interviews. She and her sister were able to enjoy the pleasures of unsupervised play and un-prescribed affordances, whichJuana especially appreciated.
Christina: And how do you feel about when you go outside and play [around your new home]?

Juana: I feel free; I feel free, coz I don’t have two people... careful with that, careful with that, careful with that, don’t touch it, don’t you dare leave that there. I can be free!

Being unsupervised in public spaces such as a local street offers children the opportunity to escape from adult endorsed rules and regulations, socialise on their own terms and develop and construct their dispositions beyond the parental influence and independent of their gaze (Malone, 2002, Matthews, 2003).

This family’s habitus and the new environment matched (see also Chapter 8 and Chapter 10). Their set of symbolic capital got enlarged by the new parental licence and seemed easily transposable to the new suburban environment. Juana’s parents sent a more relaxed message regarding their daughters’ independent outdoor play than they conveyed in the central city: their children’s playing and independent mobility license increased with their move. They even seemed comfortable with the cold and rainy weather. They saw it less as an obstacle than in the city; their children could quickly seek shelter at home when it started to rain. Her mother even told me proudly about Juana’s expanding licences. She confidently and satisfactorily negotiated this new setting. The family developed a flexible spatial arrangement to expand her children’s spatial mobilities within this neighbourhood: Juana’s mother led both children through a ‘tricky’ intersection and then they walked independently home. This graduation from the safe haven of parental ‘tailgating’ to making independent decisions is called by Kullman (2010) ‘transitional mobilities’.

“Juana can walk to school you know. She’s been begging me, I don’t know if she’s told you. She wants to walk back from school. But she has to cross the streets and they are tricky streets to cross, because they are like in a curve. And I think Juana is ready. Each time that we cross together, she tells me now is the right time to cross and she usually makes good choices, but I think it’s too much responsibility to ask her to take [her younger sister] with her. So what we are doing is that, since I have a car because I’m coming from work, so I go to their school, I pick them up, I make sure that they cross the two streets and then they walk home. And I come back in the car. [laughs]” (Juana’s mother, CC, winter)

Interesting in Juana’s case is, however, the move to a different environment granted her a greater licence to independence. Her seasonal play experience is a placed experience. While the same procedures would have been possible in the central city, they were never practiced. The practical logic of her parents made it impossible to provide her daughters with the same trust as they do in the suburb. Their dispositions and learned experiences blinded

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158 However, I argue that children always bring the already learned dispositions with them into a play situation. But their habitus is still in the formations stage so that experiences of peer socialisation and exposure to diverse dispositions are also influential for the formation of children’s habitus.
them for seeing the affordances of the central city through a similar lens as they view the suburban environment.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has unpacked some of the ‘symbolic’ struggles in the ‘field of play’. I took economic and a selection of symbolic capitals (e.g. bodily capital, ‘environmental literacy’) into account structuring this field and informing the detection and actualisation of affordances. The chapter illustrated why some playing practices simply feel more natural and comfortable than others by taking into account the knowledge required to master these tasks. These diverse sets of capital found expression in the respective outdoor habitus of the five children introduced in this chapter through their attitudes and dispositions and their embodied knowledge of the ‘rules of the game’. They realised these rules in their logics of practice for playing outdoors. Indeed, the chapter revealed the struggles members with certain patterns of outdoor play face to distinguish themselves within and between ‘play’ classes. Each introduced family provided insights from their point of view. They revealed the complexities around norms and rules that influenced their evaluation of availability, accessibility and quality of play spaces.

Michael and Nicole grew up in the same suburban environment, but belong to different ‘play classes’. Playing outdoors is still held high in the environment both children are living in. The exposure to this habitat cultivated a positive attitude towards outdoor play in both children, but they hardly share the same experiences or emotional responses to a place and its affordances. How their play preferences are realised is distinct and based on their practical logics; their embodied ‘rules of the game’. Michael exhibited himself to be environmentally literate. He confidently engaged with his surroundings. He easily mastered the requirements of outdoor play, which was supported by his parental license. He creatively actualised and manipulated affordances in summer and winter to pursue his desire of playing outdoors. It felt natural and comfortable for him to actualise affordances all-year-round. He mastered the norms, rules and structures of actualising diverse affordances all-year-round. In contrast, Nicole was less knowledgeable of playing outdoors and even persuaded her friends to engage in sedentary activities indoors so that her tentativeness could be hidden to some extent. Her bodily composition is not the only constraint; she is more familiar with indoor activities such as playing on game consoles than actualising affordances outdoors. Indoor play provides her with immediate positive rewards: actualisation of affordances is closely related to the emotions experienced during an activity and based on the memory of an activity; succeeding in indoor activities provides her with positive feedback; hence she continuously reduces the actualisation of affordances outdoors. This aspect contributes to
the creation of an ‘obesogenic landscape’ for her: she lacks the symbolic capitals for outdoor play that Michael possesses. Her dispositions generated positive perceptions, appreciations and attitudes towards indoor play. The symbolic values of outdoor play were replaced in Nicole’s family by safety concerns. Likewise, Den Besten (2011) argues that for understanding the spatial freedoms of children within families it is important to unpack the extreme and often subconscious anxieties behind parental practices. Structured by her curtailed outdoor habitus Nicole is structuring her outdoor playing practices accordingly; she follows the unwritten rule of sometimes playing supervised outdoors during summer and to stay indoors in winter in the ‘times of illness’, which leads predominantly in her case to the non-actualisation of affordances.

Tim contrasts Juana and McBeth and they are distinguished from each other in their preferences, tastes and dispositions of outdoor play. Tim belongs to the same ‘play class’ as Michael. His and Michael’s outdoor play show similar patterns in their judgement and mastering the actualisation of affordances. After their move to a suburb Juana moved closer to this class indicating the complexities within ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Her disposition had been calculated to be transposable to a suburban environment and she easily mastered the transition from being supervised in child-friendly places to independently actualise affordances outdoors. The evaluation of the suburban place contrasting the parental attitudes in the central city environment was instrumental in this respect to her awakened outdoor habitus. Their point of view of the world forced her parents to evaluate the same potential affordances in both settings differently. In contrast to Tim, Juana’s parents followed in the central city their internalised logic of practice to supervise children outdoors in summer and to confine them indoors in winter. However, they creatively manipulated indoor environments and the limited affordances they detected outdoors, which positively influenced Juana’s transition. Juana easily adjusted from the ‘rules of the game’ in the central city to a new set of rules in a suburban environment. Juana was able to transpose her positive memories of actualising supervised affordances outdoors to utilising affordances independently. She effectively transposed her symbolic capitals acquired in the central city to the suburban environment. Her parents endorsed this switch through new licences. This family’s dispositions contributed to placed experiences.

McBeth showed similar patterns to Nicole in the actualisation of affordances, although the environments they inhabit are contrasting. They have comparable licences and favour sedentary indoor activities with electronic equipment. Their outdoor habitus is curtailed and they hardly find the same pleasures in outdoor activities than indoor activities. They are both less confident in negotiating the outdoor environments than Tim, Michael and Juana. Instead indoor play became second nature. While Nicole is confined to her home for actualising
these affordances, McBeth distinguishes himself further. He actualises not only affordances within his home environment, but also transforms the commercial space into an affordance, although it is considered an adult space, an unfriendly child space. His confidence and dispositions allow him to negotiate this play affordance successfully. He easily mastered the ‘rules of the game’ in this commercial setting to actualise his desired affordance. McBeth demonstrates that actualisation of affordances creatively is not limited to traditional outdoor spaces. This aspect is possible as his disposition includes the knowledge of the rules of ‘adult spaces’, which he acquired through the visit of his after-school-care.

These children’s examples mapped the complexities of ‘obesogenic landscapes’: their shaping cannot simply be viewed as the absence of activities, but needs to be seen as a result of families’ dispositions within the wider societal context. Children negotiate their play through their habitus; through embodied skills, knowledge and preferences. They develop a certain consciousness through a systematic process of inculcation over time so that it achieves a lasting transformation resulting in a coherent and integrated set of principles in playing practices. Certain ways of playing outdoors (or indoors) become natural, unconsciousness and comfortable as these activities are connected with positive rewards and memories.

This thesis has integrated Bourdieu’s triad of field, habitus and capital to provide an analysis of the evaluation of play in the reproduction of social inequalities under the umbrella of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. I examined play evaluations from diverse perspectives and scales. They ranged from the historical processes informing current struggles to the negotiations of seasonal outdoor play in the everyday context. The next chapter concludes the thesis by reviewing the key findings and reflecting on their implications for understanding the complexities and struggles contributing to locality and seasonality specific practical logics of outdoor play.
Chapter 12 Closing, refurbishing and re-opening the ‘play grounds’ of ‘obesogenic landscapes’

This thesis emerged from the major public health concerns connected to the so-called ‘obesity epidemic’. Many New Zealand children’s independent mobility and physical activity were declining in unison with the time spent engaged in sedentary indoor activities increasing. My investigation grew out of a concern for developing healthy urban environments for and with children, which led ultimately to my focus on an improved understanding of the nature of and influences on children’s play in intensifying environments.

I have been driven by a desire to view any space as a potential adventure playground for children instead of believing that children are best placed in settings designed for them. Indeed, to turn children’s ‘obesogenic landscapes’ into ‘playful landscapes’ we need to rethink the contemporary relationships between places and play as well as the prevailing attitudes towards children, play settings and their play practices. However, such an ambition is only possible when we understand the historical struggles that underlie the structures, norms and rules of contemporary outdoor play. In this thesis, I compared the seasonal play practices of families living in Auckland’s central city with those of families in the coastal suburb of Beach Haven. The investigation revealed the processes leading to the localised and seasonal beliefs in children’s ‘appropriate’ outdoor play. Many children in both neighbourhoods have to retreat to child-specific places and supervised activities when they want to spend time outdoors; often they play indoors because ‘safe’ outdoor alternatives are lacking, especially during winter. These in-depth insights into and understandings of seasonal play were, however, only made possible through the degree and style of participation that families exhibited throughout the research process.

The thesis offered a Bourdieusian framework as a novel way in which to conceptualise and unpack children’s ‘obesogenic landscapes’ of play. It offered a way to simultaneously view the practices and experiences of playing outdoors and the role of their underlying historical, physical and societal structures in the constitution of contemporary children’s ‘play grounds’. In this final chapter I draw together the diverse and occasionally contradicting themes that have emerged in the thesis. I begin by re-playing the major findings before moving on to ‘play around’ with the implications such findings have for (re)thinking children’s seasonal outdoor play. I ‘refurbish’ the ‘play ground’ of my thesis by discussing the ‘bigger picture’. I conclude this chapter with re-opening the ‘play grounds’ of children’s ‘obesogenic landscapes’ by noting some future directions for research in this area.
Closing and refurbishing the thesis’ ‘play grounds’ of ‘obesogenic landscapes’

Examining children’s play environments has become popular for its potential to reveal ‘obesogenic environments’ with researchers focusing on the availability, accessibility and quality of play settings in neighbourhoods. Equipment such as accelerometers and GPS loggers are used to reveal relationships between environments and (in)activity and frequently children are asked to fill out surveys and draw maps. Despite the characteristics of ‘obesogenic environments’ being well known (Giles-Corti et al., 2009, Hume et al., 2005, Lake et al., 2010, Saelens et al., 2012) children, as the potential beneficiaries of such research, tend to be curiously absent in this obese body of literature. Instead, their bodies and voices are invariably hidden behind numbers, columns and graphs. One of the key aims of this thesis was to introduce a child-centred perspective on their ‘obesogenic landscapes’. I attempted to overcome the overly reductive renderings of children and families that have been common to date. In place of these accounts I filtered children’s voices through a Bourdieusian lens to present them and their families as people with their own play histories and current play practices. I presented their ‘practical mastery’ of the ‘game’ of seasonally-specific play. However, I also highlighted the importance of embedding their particular stories into a ‘bigger picture’. I have argued that families’ play experiences and practices are shared with others of the same ‘play class’ and each ‘play class’ values their type of play; it simply feels natural. The detection, evaluation and actualisation of potential affordances in each neighbourhood were closely related to how suitable parents and children found their neighbourhood for their play needs. Children have more freedom to play independently outdoors when the family’s play habitus matches the environment.

I further showed that three distinct types of play habitus evolved over time in Auckland that are shaped by the structure-agency interplay of specific locality, seasonality and play histories. Children have either an ‘outdoor’, ‘curtailed’ or ‘hibernating’ habitus. They tended to inherit this habitus from their parents, but it was shown to be adapted to contemporary struggles in the ‘field of play’ to fit present circumstances, competencies and tastes. These habitus, and the necessary capital endowments to ‘naturally’ engage in the ‘field of play’, are diverse and cannot be attributed to environmental factors alone - as researchers in the ‘obesogenic environments’ literature suggest. Rather, the thesis has shown that determinants of seasonal outdoor play in Auckland transcend modifiable barriers such as traffic and unsuitable play spaces as well as the inevitable issue of inclement weather. They have to be viewed under the particular place-based, seasonal and historical conditions that shape, and are shaped by, in-place evolving play practices.
Achieving the ideal of outdoor play is often described as the business of childhood (Karsten, 2005). However, I have shown that the distinctions between and among ‘play classes’ means that play is better understood as a distinct response to a diverse range of contexts, interests and pressures. To summarise and ‘refurbish’ the findings I focus on three intertwined themes that arose within and across the different chapters: locality, seasonality and history. I close this section with a discussion of Bourdieu’s theoretical and methodological principles and their merits for understanding outdoor play.

Sustainable living ideologies: necessarily ‘obesogenic landscapes’ for children?

Obesity, peak oil and the environmental impact of sprawling cities are only some examples why compact, sustainable living arrangements as part of the impetus of new urbanism have become, as detailed in Chapter 2, more popular among some city-dwellers and increasingly favoured by policy-makers (Crane, 2000, Frank et al., 2003, Talen, 1999). Auckland planners, for example, are questioning the city’s sprawl into the hinterland (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999). Consequently, it is likely that with population growth the city will become increasingly intensified (see Chapter 6). Such compaction of the urban environment may result in a more sustainable and healthier lifestyle for adults, based for example on active transport (Badland et al., 2008, Frank et al., 2007b). However, this thesis has shown that uncritical implementations of intensification strategies can negatively affect children’s play practices and experiences; it can create, more so than for adults, ‘obesogenic landscapes’, if both children and their parents’ needs are not considered and implemented during the intensification process.

The thesis provided some insights into families’ needs in a city which has already begun to intensify. Families told numerous stories as to why they chose to move to Beach Haven or the central city. Familiarity, convenience and affordability were common incentives. The ones moving from the suburbs to the central city, for example, looked for more familiarity and convenience. Some families found similar or even better affordances than in the suburb, while others arranged children’s outdoor play around the dominant norm to supervise children. They accepted and did not challenge this view. In these cases children mainly detected affordances in settings designed for them. Families moving to the suburbs pictured the ideal of a suburban childhood of being ‘out and about’ that has dominated the image of childhood for a very long time. However, with the intensification of Auckland there may well be fewer places left to retreat to for families aspiring quiet and ‘free range’ suburban living. This tension between imagined childhood and the reality can be overcome when the ‘ideal’ environment for play changes; when places currently regarded as ‘inappropriate’ for
Conclusion

Children’s play turn into accepted and enabling places for play. Children find plenty of potential affordances in any environment, even those that are not designed with children in mind.

In Beach Haven children actualised affordances in adult-designed and natural settings. They played on the playgrounds and courts, rode their bikes around or met their friends in cul-de-sacs to play ‘tiggy’. They also explored the parks which offered enough flexibility to detect and actualise unexpected affordances while exploring the environment. Families believed that the neighbourliness in their suburb contributed to the fact that many children often play outside unsupervised, although fear of traffic accidents and abductions were evident even in this quiet suburb. Children and parents nonetheless trusted the potential for an outlook of *in loco parentis*. Children’s main business in Beach Haven after school was playing outside and they tended to feel safe when doing so. In the course of this activity children had the opportunity to develop their social capital largely independently of parents.

Although central city children’s main business was playing after school, their style of play contrasted with that of the suburban children. Inside, they played video games, watched TV or read books. Many children in the central city went to an after-school programme (Youthtown) where they participated in sports, literacy and numeracy clubs or did their homework. For them, meeting and playing with friends equated with going to Youthtown. Central city children developed their social capital while being supervised during school hours or in extra-curricular-activities. When parents did not work full-time they sometimes brought their children to parks or playgrounds. Supervised play was normalised in contrast to Beach Haven. It felt natural and safe for central city families. The main reasons for this were reportedly high traffic volumes, stranger-danger and that the public open spaces within walking distance did not meet parental expectations. One consequence was that neither the children nor their parents detected affordances in their neighbourhood as did the Beach Haven children. Central city children mainly utilised the affordances adults expected children to enjoy. Thus, many children were bored and did not feel the same excitement as the suburban children about going to the park or playground. It was always the same for them, especially as they were dependent on their parents to be taken places. Spending time outside needed to be planned ahead and depended on parental schedules and willingness. Compared to the suburban children, central city kids’ spontaneous encounters or creative actualisation of affordances were limited and they were often bored when they did not spend time in front of a screen.

The findings from Beach Haven and the central city showed on first sight that there were neighbourhood environments that were not considered as ‘appropriate’ for children to
independently explore. However, in both of these highly walkable areas children spent time outside independently, while others needed to retreat indoors to supervised pastimes. Even in a setting like Beach Haven where the availability, accessibility and quality of play spaces is high some children could not enjoy the pleasures of independent outdoor play to increase their ‘environmental literacy’. These findings transcend the implicit environmental determinism of many studies of ‘obesogenic environments’. For tackling the obesity epidemic a move beyond the environmental determinism is required to understand the logic of (play) practice. To understand why, even in a suitable environment, some children cannot enjoy independent outdoor play or why children detect and actualise many affordances in an environment that is labelled ‘inappropriate’ for children such as the central city, it seems helpful to integrate and pair the structural and agential dimensions with a placed-focus on neighbourhoods. I have shown in this thesis that the (non)actualisation of potential affordances was linked to families’ dispositions, tastes and competencies. If their habitus really fitted with their neighbourhood children played independently outside all-year-round independently of location.

This thesis has shown that inequalities in experiencing independent outdoor play exist within and across neighbourhoods. These inequalities further impact on children’s ‘environmental literacy’. The children who frequently played outdoors on their own enjoyed a higher literacy in outdoor environments than the ones who tended to be ‘plugged in’. While many studies highlight that these inequalities arise due to material or environmental differences between neighbourhoods (Day and Wagner, 2010, Potestio et al., 2009, Tandy, 1999), I indicated why these inequalities developed from a different perspective. Through the Bourdieusian lens I was able to combine notions of physical and social space to show that children experience the same neighbourhood environment differently depending on their capital and habitus. Indoor lifestyles, as well as being ‘out and about’ exploring, are not limited to the best or worst physical neighbourhood environment respectively. However, what should be recognised is that ‘environmental literacy’ is not only important for children’s current life, but also that these learned skills are taken forward with them into adulthood potentially contributing to further inequalities (Day and Wagner, 2010, Malone, 2007). The question remains as to what kinds of inequalities are created between the children who are environmentally literate in the outdoors compared to children who develop skills in relation to electronic equipment.
Seasonality: transcending localities

Seasonality and the experience of weather played an important role in the lives of children considered in this thesis. This importance was demonstrated not withstanding that Auckland has a temperate climate. This finding may be surprising as the climatic conditions between seasons differ less than, for example, in continental Europe or Canada. Nonetheless, while the seasonal influence on outdoor play practices is widely disregarded as unimportant in temperate climates (see for example Badland et al. (2011a)), I have shown that play patterns and the evaluation of affordances change within and across seasons even in a relatively benign and temperate climate. Participation in (healthy) life-long year-round activities is more complex than simply the availability of favourable climatic conditions per se. In other words, while in studies of ‘obesogenic environments’ climatic and weather conditions are viewed as an external factor, by following the ‘new geographies of climatic accommodation’ this thesis revealed that the experience of seasonality is grounded in everyday experiences and is closely related to the habitus that families possess. Depending on their habitus families developed different logics of practice in summer and winter that influence their (non)participation and, more importantly, contribute to their (non)appreciation and enjoyment of playing outdoors. While the ‘natural’ conditions of temperature, precipitation and humidity built the arena for possible outdoor play patterns for example, the logic of practice developed by families structured how diverse seasonally-specific activities and affordances in Auckland are subjectively perceived and evaluated. Contrary to the dominant belief that Kiwis are an outdoor people, this thesis showed that this only held true for those who embodied an ‘outdoor habitus’.

Children who had an ‘outdoor habitus’ played outside all-year-round. They were environmentally literate and found plenty of affordances in summer and winter. They skilfully incorporated the seasons into their play and enjoyed spending time outside. Being ‘out and about’ was in their eyes a synonym for avoiding boredom. Children frequently sought this amusement and their parents endorsed such pastimes. Similarly, to the families who possess a ‘hibernating outdoor habitus’, summer carried the connotation of a long play time for kids. Children spent their afternoons and weekends playing in backyards, parks and beaches. They played with their parents and siblings, relatives and friends. However, play was regarded differently in winter in this ‘play class’. Their practical logic was that winter was the time to stay indoors, to relax and protect children from illnesses. These families both in the central city and suburb followed the dominant, but unspoken, rule in the ‘field of play’ to mainly stay indoors even in a mild winter climate as is encountered in the Auckland region.
Although the availability of destinations did not change between summer and winter, participating families detected fewer noteworthy affordances in their neighbourhood during the latter season. They generally stayed inside. During summer, some children who possessed a ‘hibernating outdoor habitus’ experienced the pleasures of independently playing outdoors. In this season they developed ‘environmental literacy’ and creatively actualised affordances in their neighbourhood, but they could not find similar pleasures outdoors during winter. They did not feel competent enough to participate in outdoor play during winter. In contrast, the situation was further exacerbated in families with a ‘curtailed outdoor habitus’. Children were not only confined to the indoors (e.g. Youthtown, home) during winter and occasionally went on trips to the park, cinema or zoo when occasionally the weather seemed ‘appropriate’, but they were also accompanied by their parents and attended many extra-curricular activities all-year-round. These children showed ‘environmental literacy’ with respect to only a few selected play spaces. However, in these spaces they could actualise and transform affordances as they knew their parents were within safe reach.

Actualising affordances without parents present was regarded warily. Children often reported feeling scared when outside alone. Parents spoke of making a conscious effort in summer to bring children to outdoor play settings. They followed the unspoken rule that summer is the time when children should spend their time outdoors playing. In winter parents followed the same practical logic as families with a ‘hibernating outdoor habitus’. In a time of perceived risk of illness they confined children to supervised indoor settings and did not make a conscious effort to afford children time outside.

Understanding the rationales of families and their logic of practice for (non)participation in outdoor play in both seasons shed light on the complexities of ‘obesogenic landscapes’. Such landscapes are not simply formed through the absence of play destinations. Rather outdoor play was not deemed ‘appropriate’ year-round for all groups. A contribution to tackling the obesity epidemic will be acknowledging the cultural practices associated with seasonality so that parents as well as children might see outdoor play as a valuable alternative to indoor play all-year-round. This issue cannot be addressed simply by offering more suitable play spaces within walking distance; rather families’ taste for what is convenient and feels natural accumulates over time and needs, in some cases, to be challenged.
Historical conditions: the passing on of the habitus

Children’s increasing retreat to indoor play is not an isolated phenomenon, although it is often treated as such in the literature around ‘obesogenic environments’. Rather, I have shown in the thesis that contemporary play practices are the outcome of past struggles in the ‘field of play’, which are inherited from parents and adapted to current conditions. Contemporary children’s declining independent mobility is inextricably linked to societal norms and rules around ‘appropriate’ play based on the fear of stranger-danger, high traffic volume and a belief in fostering children’s development through extra-curricular activities. In short, contemporary struggles are at first sight linked to the downsides of a car-reliant, highly mobile urban environment and its economy that has evolved over time. The resulting ‘safety paradigm’ many parents in this study acquiesce to is, however, no recent development. Rather it has slowly inscribed itself into parenting practices over past decades. The picture of children and childhood has changed, but the idea of ‘protecting’ children still rules the ‘field of play’.

Today, beliefs about play have begun to shift again. Some parents I spoke with consciously decided against children attending extra-curricular activities. They offered them the opportunity to enjoy the freedom of playing outdoors. In contrast to the dominant belief that children learn more in structured settings, these parents strongly valued the opportunities independent outdoor play offered children to develop their own social capital and to learn their own boundaries; they believed their children became streetwise when playing outdoors independently. These children were also the ones with the highest ‘environmental literacy’ independent of location. Often their parents had enjoyed the pleasures of year-round independent adventures as children. They passed this learned passion for being ‘out and about’ on to their children and found potential for it in any environment. In contrast, many central city parents viewed extra-curricular activities as ‘appropriate’ for children to increase their numeracy or literacy, but also an ‘appropriate’ setting in which to spend time with other children. Sending children to Youhttown was, however, more guided by the constraints they believed living in the central city imposed on them; the rule that raising children in the city demanded constant supervision of. Similarly, in the suburb some parents preferred that their children stay within the safety of their own, friends’ or relatives’ backyards. Although there were suitable play spaces within walking distances, these parents ostensibly feared for the safety of their children and this manifested in traffic and abduction fears when children would walk independently. However, the rationales are rooted more deeply; there was a quest to symbolise to others that they were a ‘good parent’. In this ‘play class’, ‘safe’ play within a small defined boundary was the norm. Central city parents particularly complained about the
lack of playgrounds on the premises of their apartment complex. While they desired for their children to develop their own independent play within the safety of their complex (as suburban parents do), they could not let children meet on the wide sidewalks as was common around the turn of the last century in the central city. The rarity of children playing unsupervised outdoors normalised supervised indoor play and reduced families’ opportunities to see outdoor play as an alternative to interior or supervised pastimes. Many of these children had a low ‘environmental literacy’ and felt more comfortable when supervised. Often their parents themselves grew up in a suburban environment and could not find the affordances they experienced as children in the central city or they had grown up supervised themselves. It simply felt natural to do the same with their child. Nonetheless, all parents still pictured the ideal of a ‘free’ independent childhood for their children and children themselves often demanded more independence and freedom to be able to spontaneously play outdoors for fleeing boredom.

When ‘obesogenic landscapes’ are transformed into ‘playful landscapes’ all children should at least be given the opportunity, even in a central city environment, to independently play outdoors all-year round. For this to occur the symbolic values of supervised play need to compete with, and ultimately replace, what is currently on offer through the current discourse and practice for the ‘protection’ of children. A shift in the evaluation of independent all-year-round outdoor play is required. Whether children play outdoors or not is not simply the result of available destinations, but rather (indoor or outdoor) play is a tool that positions children for their future. Such an understanding enables the movement beyond the questions of availability, accessibility and quality of destinations or stranger-danger and allows us to rethink how the same social ends of children’s development can be achieved through outdoor play.

**Working with, against and beyond Bourdieu: methodological and theoretical ‘play grounds’**

Bourdieu encourages his readers to extend his work theoretically, practically and methodologically by utilising it in new research questions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007). His ‘theoretical and methodological principles’ proved to be useful for unpacking, understanding and explaining the social and environmental determinants of children’s seasonal outdoor play when combined with affordance theory. Such an approach allowed me to define and theorise the interactions between structure, ‘play class’ relations, ‘profits’ of localisation, play practices and the actualisation of positive and avoidance of negative experiences respectively. However, it also allowed a creativity in the choice of methods used to reveal the various complexities around children’s seasonal outdoor play. Bourdieu’s
framework provided theoretical guidance on analysing in-depth and layered sets of data and for presenting the findings in a coherent story. I ‘played around’ with the findings gained through the theoretical application of my Bourdieusian approach and by moving beyond the traditional methods Bourdieu applied in his works.

The research method of near and distant participatory ethnography was my way to address Bourdieu’s call to amend the canon of methods he applied (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007). Aiming to reveal the structure and agency complexity in children’s play through using his triad of field, capital and habitus suggested utilising different ‘data sets’. I applied methods that seemed appropriate for, and which corresponded to, my desire to reveal patterns of activity and possible explanation. Listening to children’s stories and beliefs as well as observing their embodied play practices during the neighbourhood walks allowed me to put myself in their place without taking their place (Bourdieu, 1996b).

To understand the complexities around outdoor play licences I deemed more than one method necessary for families to fully explain themselves. This decision was, on the one hand, guided by my desire to provide children with the opportunity to choose the methods they think are fun and correspond to their taste. On the other hand, the complexities of outdoor play could only be shared and revealed through in-depth encounters with families and the resultant growing trust and engagement over the course of this study and attributed also to the seasonal component I was interested in. However, I also needed to see their struggles from a necessary distance. In this respect, Bourdieu’s theory was helpful to allow me to be reflexive about the possible biases generated by my own positionality and the positionality of my discipline when engaging with the struggles presented by participating families.

Through creating a safe and affirmative context, in which children felt their understandings were valued, children’s innate creativity was released both during the main data collection stage and the follow up meeting. In turn, this expression of creativity affected the research process. Children acted less as participants and more as collaborators, especially in the second stage of the project (involving neighbourhood walks and the ‘Amazing Race’ game). For example, they requested an additional component of data collection. I labelled this phase ‘beyond passive participation’ to indicate the children’s involvement in the design, collection and analysis of data. They wanted to explore their experience in relation to other participants’ experiences of play both within and across neighbourhoods and season. Thus, children’s engagement and interest in this study is a particular methodological strength of this study.
Although the conceptualisation and design of the different components of the project was researcher-led, children played an important part in how the project was carried out. I cannot say the project was totally mine nor was it fully the project of the children. Indeed, we were always working together. Over the course of the numerous encounters with children and their families, we became collaborators and not simply adult researcher and child participant, where children passively offered to share their expertise and details of their own lives so that I could understand what influenced their outdoor play. This cumulative set of encounters offered the possibility of developing rapport over time and as a result I gained richer insights as familiarity and trust deepened. Genuinely child-centred knowledge was revealed to co-child and adult researchers during the following up meeting for example. By cooperating with children I could gain a deeper understanding about complex neighbourhood experiences, the social struggles children are caught up in and what they see in their own data. This aspect allowed drawing inferences about their points of view in the world. It provided me with the opportunity to understand and see the role of play and their play practices in a different light. Some of these experiences and points of view were either not mentioned or were hidden among other aspects during the main data collection period and only subsequently came to the fore. For example, observing children during the neighbourhood walks and analysing which places they showed and how they utilised affordances revealed their embodied play habitus explicitly. The on-going connections with children were therefore crucial for unpacking, understanding and explaining the social and environmental determinants of seasonal outdoor.

While my theoretical vantage point allowed me a particular interpretation of the data, children also gained from their experience in collaborating in this research project. Speculatively children may ultimately trust more in their own capabilities and build resilience to cope with the adult world should they encounter experiences such as this project offered. The project allowed them to see that adults beside their parents value their knowledge and their specific view on the world. Cooperatively, we can highlight the environments and aspects they regard as important for playing outdoors and indicate the constraining social and physical elements. They revealed choices and constraints on the ground, the ‘nitty gritty’ aspects of their reality of play, while I could relate their experiences to the wider structures shaping these experiences. Creating an environment on these accounts which is safe and comfortable for children to explore independently can also contribute to fostering a healthy environment for adults (e.g. active transport, safe public places, reduced crime) as children are still the least powerful part in society (Carver et al., 2008, Christensen, 2004b, Freeman and Quigg, 2009a).
Although researchers have shifted from allowing the invisibility of children in geography to a position of giving them voice, we still need to improve our research designs. Otherwise, we run the risk of simply confirming our assumptions without taking children’s expertise fully into account. Therefore, I propose we be more courageous and creative in working with children to reduce the risk that they are simply passive participants in our research processes (Ergler, 2011a, 2011b). To achieve this, we need to tackle our own fears over giving up power in the research process and trust in the potential fruits: children acting less as participants and more as collaborators.

The multiple methods I have outlined also have their drawbacks. They are demanding on parents, children and the researcher. While my challenge was to contend with the diversity of data gathered, families also had challenges; they contributed their time and expertise to this project not only once, but three times. In my opinion, the time commitment was the most constraining factor as their lives were not as centred around the project as mine was. For example, children needed to think about charging and putting the GPS tracker on every morning. Although the GPS logger demanded little maintenance time as such, children still felt responsible for using it correctly. It was an additional ‘thing’ to think about alongside all the other chores such as homework and housework, a demand that was further exacerbated by my request to fill out a travel diary daily. Despite the complexity of the travel diary children could not see the immediate value and found this task ‘boring’, which is reflected in their poor response to this task. They, however, loved to do the elicited drawings. Many children spent hours colouring in their favourite and least favourite neighbourhood places. Once we got to know each other better, the interviews were also fun and children were more relaxed. They often told me excitedly about their play experiences, but given the diversity of aspects I attempted to cover, they also took a very long time. Children further committed two Saturdays to the follow up study; days on which they could not participate in other play activities. Likewise, parents not only needed to fill out the survey, but also shared their experiences twice during the data collection. On top of that they were also present when I visited for distributing and collecting the ‘equipment’ and when I interviewed children. On average I visited families eight times. (In Appendix 26 I summarise the merits and weaknesses of the chosen methods plotted against the time commitment both of families and myself. This table provides an overview on the benefits I discussed earlier and the problematic aspects revealed during the collection of data and analysis by highlighting the time commitment of participants and myself.)
Future playgrounds for researching ‘obesogenic landscapes’

This thesis raised a number of new or additional ‘playgrounds’ in which researchers interested in children’s ‘obesogenic landscapes’ could advance or complement the research findings. In the remainder of this chapter I focus on three such possibilities.

Firstly, for understanding the complexities around ‘appropriate’ seasonal outdoor play more fully in a mixed-ethnic society such as in Auckland, it would be beneficial to design a larger scale study. This study should not only include the interplay of place and play activities by stratifying the neighbourhood environments (high-low walkable) and including an objective activity measure (e.g. via accelerometers), but also a focus on the cultural aspects of ‘appropriate’ outdoor play which should be paired with more involvement of participants in the analysis stage of the project. Which beliefs, norms and rules structure ethnicity specific practices of outdoor play and how migrants deal with the complexities of expected play licences by New Zealand society and culturally demanded play practices are two questions worthy of consideration. Moreover, it is likely that the line between those who are growing up affluent and poor also warrants different types of seasonal outdoor play, an aspect of further work which could reveal existing inequalities in play experiences. Collins and Kearns (2010) have alluded to this problem in the Auckland region by revealing the discrepancies between the availability of walking school buses and school deciles. In affluent areas children have more possibilities to participate in a walking school bus and walk actively to school. There is, therefore, still important research to be done that explores the cultural and socio-economic aspects paired with a placed-focus on the structure-agency interplay in children’s seasonal outdoor playing practices.

Secondly, children also spend a considerable amount of their play time in school. It appears that significant work could be done related to how the norms and rules around playing outdoors in school and teachers’ approaches towards ‘safe’ outdoor play inscribe themselves into children’s play practices in the afternoons and vice versa. For instance, children who play mainly indoors and on the computer may make up games on the playground influenced by their experiences that differ from children who spend their afternoons ‘out and about’. Children’s play dispositions differ, but are they also influenced by their peers and school environment? A possible question could be how children’s outdoor play is structured by, and structures, children’s play in schools? Further, health and nutrition campaigns are in many schools nationwide, but they are very likely delivered differently depending on the type of ‘outdoor habitus’ teachers embody, rules around ‘safe’ play (e.g. not allowed to climb a tree) and schools’ accountability in general. Similarly, it would be
interesting to explore in-depth how these messages, along with the messages teachers unconsciously send, structure and transform children’s approaches to play in the afternoon. Bell (2011), for example, highlighted the resistance such messages trigger in children’s play behaviour as a way to cope with the increasing mobility in children’s lives. Therefore, a study that integrates the home and school environment is well positioned to shed further light on children’s ‘obesogenic landscapes’.

Thirdly, in Auckland, and other locales where water plays a prominent role in the local identity, it would be beneficial to additionally focus on ‘bluescapes’ to explicitly reveal how the closeness to water shapes playing practices as this thesis suggested. Children loved to go to the beach of wharf to ‘cool down’ during summer. The reasons for this preference are often attributed to three aspects; the restorative, recreational and emotional aspects of aquatic elements. The term ‘bluescape’ has recently been introduced to embrace all visible surface water spaces and is increasingly receiving attention to distinguish between health benefits gained from ‘water spaces’ and ‘green spaces’ as a recent review explains (Völker and Kistemann, 2011). Water plays an important role in determining people’s positive experiences of place and attention is paid to the psychological dimensions of perception of these environments and recreational activities (Herzog, 1985, Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989, Korpela et al., 2010, Waite, 2009, White et al., 2010). The majority of studies in this context however focus on adults and are primarily interested in features such as ponds, lakes, rivers or beaches. Following the affordance theory, I purpose that a broader focus is warranted for researching aspects of waterscapes in relation to children’s play geographies. Research focusing on bluescapes should not only include traditional, natural and built water elements, but also the “constructed and composed” affordances arising out of “diverse social, affective and material resources” (Duff, 2011: 155). Children find affordances of water spaces in diverse environments, settings and objects depending on their creativity, imagination and licenses. This has been mostly neglected in research around ‘bluescapes’, physical activity and children’s geographies and provides an interesting avenue to explore.

**Concluding remarks**

This thesis has presented new ways in thinking about children’s seasonal and placed outdoor play. It critically examined current understandings of children’s ‘obesogenic landscapes’ and suggested to ‘play around’ with traditional ways of thinking about children’s outdoor play. Instead of following an environmental determinist perspective and calling for an improvement in the number and quality of play spaces, this thesis argued that all environments can become ‘enabling spaces’ for playing outdoors; each environment is filled with many potential affordances children can detect and actualise. However, children need to be given
the freedom to independently explore their environment; they need to become visible and accepted in all environments. Suburban and central city environments should become what Lynch (1979) once defined as part of a ‘good city’. This ‘enabling city’ is then the “one in which children can grow and develop to the extent of their powers, where they can build their confidence and become actively engaged in the world, yet be autonomous and capable of managing their own affairs” (Lynch, 1979: 115). This research unpacked the complexities of why children in Auckland at the beginning of the 21st century still do not live in the ‘good city’ Lynch proposed. Providing children with destinations is not enough, there also needs to be an atmosphere in society such that even the youngest children feel safe and independent play is ‘appropriate’. By shifting the focus back to the needs, desires and wishes of children and their parents in the context of outdoor play, this thesis is an attempt to ‘play around’ the ongoing and uncritical reproductions of children’s indoor lives in intensifying environments. To foster a healthier and sustainable present and future for children, cities needs to become one big adventure playground in which independent outdoor play is ‘appropriate’ and desirable. How might we create such an environment? I agree with Freeman and Tranter (2011: 252): “it’s child’s play”.

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Appendices
### Appendix 1: Selected studies utilising GPS and other methods for understanding children’s activities

**Notes:** “C.” = Children; “E.” = Environments

<table>
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<th>Study name</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<th>Methods</th>
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<tr>
<td>The CAPABLE Project</td>
<td>1073 C. aged 8-12 years and 486 parents</td>
<td>United Kingdom (UK), Hertfordshire County, London Borough of Lewisham</td>
<td>Accelerometer (200 C.) 4 days GPS (200 C.) Travel diaries (200 C.) Survey (486 parents and 1073 C.) Mapping exercise Photo-voice on special places</td>
<td>Focus more on C’s spatial awareness less focus on C’s attitudes towards their local E. focus on favourite places and spatial range focus on semi-and suburban E. conducted from October to March</td>
<td>Brown et al., 2008, Gong and Mackett, 2009, Mackett et al., 2007a, Mackett et al., 2007b, Mackett and Paskins, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEACH Project</td>
<td>longitudinal study: 2007/2008: 1307 C. 953 agreed to follow up</td>
<td>United Kingdom, Bristol</td>
<td>Accelerometer 4 days GPS Travel diary Food diary Computerised questionnaire for C. and parents</td>
<td>Computerised questionnaire on physical activity, attitudes to physical activity, local area, development and behaviour leaves hardly any room for C. to explain themselves Less focus on intensification of urban E. Seasonality not intended, but recruitment between September 2006 and July 2008</td>
<td>Brockman et al., 2011, Cooper et al., 2010, Lachowycz et al., 2012, Page et al., 2010, Page et al., 2009, Wheeler et al., 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.’s activity in diverse E.</td>
<td>Subsample of SPEEDY study, 100 C. aged 9-10 years</td>
<td>United Kingdom, Norfolk, urban, suburban, semi-urban and rural</td>
<td>4 days GPS Accelerometer Travel diary</td>
<td>This study neglected the ‘lived experiences’ of families Study conducted outside the school term time between July and October No room for C. to explain their GPS data</td>
<td>Jones et al., 2009a</td>
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<tr>
<td>C’s independent mobility in rural and urban E.</td>
<td>40 C. aged 10-13 years old</td>
<td>Denmark, suburban and rural environment</td>
<td>7 days GPS (32) Phone-based short survey (12) Child focus group (12) Neighbourhood walk (16) Interview with parents (29) Ethnographic observations</td>
<td>No room for C. to explain their GPS data Not all C. participated in all tasks Diversity within urban and rural setting neglected (e.g. high/low walkable) Although the qualitative components were designed to cover seasonal aspects, the GPS component was only ‘piloted’ without any specific season in mind</td>
<td>Christensen et al., 2011, Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009</td>
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<td>Healthy PLACES</td>
<td>Longitudinal family intervention study (One parent and one child) with C. aged 8-14 years, 386 child participants in total</td>
<td>USA, smart growth community The Preserve in Chino, California and nearby low-density conventional communities</td>
<td>Accelerometer GPS Parental survey Normalised difference vegetation index (NDVI)</td>
<td>This study neglected the ‘lived experiences’ of families No room for C. to explain their GPS data But the study compared new urbanist neighbourhoods with traditional surburbs Seasonality not intended, but recruitment between March 2009 and 2010 and data adjusted to seasonal effects</td>
<td>Almanza et al., 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Study name | Participants | Setting | Methods | Limitations | Selected publications
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
ENACT (E., Nutrition and Activity study) | 380 Youth aged 12-16 years old | Canada Halifax | GPS Accelerometer Dietary survey Behavioural survey Family interviews Youth focus groups Design charrettes with youth Focus groups with planners and policy-makers | Study at school level Schools included to cover urban, suburban and rural E. No room for C. to explain their GPS data Publications focused so far mainly on the objective measures and adult perspectives of policy-makers No summer data included as sampling only during school year | Grant and Manuel, 2011, Rainham et al., 2012, Rainham et al., 2008, Rainham et al., 2010
Vertical living kids | 40 C. (18 from public and 22 from privately owned high-rise complexes) aged 8-12 and | Australia, Melbourne, high-rise apartment complexes | Accelerometer (36) 4 days GPS (n.a.) Travel diaries (27) Parental survey (28; 20 from privately owned apartment complexes) Photo-voice and collage (39 C.) Policy analysis | Participants drawn from diverse suburbs so that a neighbourhood analysis of favourite and least favourite places and activities is limited Data quality to the limited time children wore the GPS units and accelerometers and filled out travel diaries No room for C. to explain their GPS data Data only collected from March to September 2009 | Whitzman and Mizrachi, 2009, Whitzman et al., 2010b
Community playground intervention | 184 C. aged 5-10 years | New Zealand | Accelerometers 8 days GPS Parental survey | No possibility for C. to explain themselves and their GPS data Focus on summer: data collected from October-December 2007 and 2008 | Quigg, 2010, Quigg et al., 2010, Quigg et al., 2012
Kids in the city | na | New Zealand, high-rise apartment complexes and suburban settings (high/low walkable) | Accelerometer 7 days GPS Travel diaries Parental survey Parental Focus Groups Elicited drawings combined with photo-voice | Publications so far limited to methodological issues No room for C. to explain their GPS data | Mavoa et al., 2011, Oliver et al., 2011
Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet Child

Participant Information Sheet

Research title: Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children's geographies – the power of feelings

To: Child participant

Hi! My name is Christina Engler.

I came all the way from Germany to study at The University of Auckland. I grew up in a small village in Germany. When I was a child we often played outside on the street or in the bushes, because there was no traffic around my house, but a huge forest.

I am interested in how you play in your neighbourhood. Therefore, I invite you to help me understand your experiences: both in the summer and winter.

Playing in your neighbourhood

Do you like to play in your neighbourhood alone, with friends or your parents?

Do you like to draw pictures?

Would you like to get a map of all the places you have been to for a period of four days in the summer and four days in the winter?

What I want to do for you, and other young people from the school, is to draw a map of all the places you like and dislike for playing in your neighbourhood in the summer and winter.

I am asking you to wear a small GPS (Global Positioning System) device, which will record all the places you visit and how much time you spend in them.

Getting Started

Before you start, your parents have to say that it is OK for you to participate in my project.

After that, I will come and talk to you and your parents and help you to get started.

I will give you a GPS device and a plain paper.

A few days later, after you have drawn all the places you like and dislike for playing in your neighbourhood and you have worn the GPS device for four days, I will come back and collect the GPS device and your picture.

By the way, you can spend as much as you want for the drawing.

In a couple of weeks later, I will come back and talk to you again about your picture and your experiences playing in your neighbourhood.

I will talk to you for no more than an hour.

If you like, there will be another adult you know present during the interview, so that we all feel comfortable.

If it is okay with you and your parents, I will use my tape recorder to record what you say about your picture and your experiences playing in your neighbourhood.

Six months later, I will come back and ask you to wear the GPS device again for four days and also draw a picture. A couple of weeks later, we will have another chat about all the places you like and dislike for playing in your neighbourhood.

All in all, I ask you to wear the GPS device for eight days and fill out a travel diary for these days. I ask you to draw two pictures and invite you to chat with me for two hours.

What will happen to your pictures and the maps I will create from all the places you visited during the four days in the summer and winter?

I will use your pictures to see which places you like for playing in the summer and winter.

I will use the maps which I create from all the places you have been to during the eight days to compare where you spend time in the summer and winter.

I will store your pictures, the tapes and the GPS data (including your maps) in a locked cabinet at the University of Auckland and destroy all the material after 6 years.

I will write a report that may help to improve your neighbourhood for playing.

Do I have to participate?

Here are some things that are okay for you to do:

- You don't have to take part. Taking part in my project is entirely voluntary. In fact your parent or caregiver needs to say it's OK before you take part.
- If you decide after we start that you don't want to do this work anymore, don't worry. That's OK. Just get your mum and dad to give me a ring.
- If you don't want me to know a specific place you go to just leave the GPS device at home or switch it off.
- If you see me using a tape recorder when I'm talking to you, you can tell me to turn it off at any time without giving a reason.
- You can ask me questions at anytime.
- You can ask me for a copy of any of the maps I create from your GPS data.
- You can ask me for a copy of anything I have written about your work.

Want to know more?

Thank you very much for your assistance in this study. If you or your parents have any questions or want to know more about my study, get your mum or dad to call or email me.

Christina Engler
School of Environment, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland.
Tel: (09) 373 7599 ext. **** or Email: *****@auckland.ac.nz
Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet Parents

Participant Information Sheet

Research title:
Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

To: Parent/ Guardian of child participant

My name is Christina Ergler. I am a student at The University of Auckland carrying out research for a PhD thesis in Geography. My research concerns people’s feelings about the possibilities and constraints of being physical active within two neighbourhoods (Auckland Central and Beachhaven) due to seasonality. I am interested in this topic because of the growing awareness of the need for physical activity and the possible impacts a neighbourhood has on this matter. My project is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

A. I invite your child to assist me in this research. This will include three parts.

First, your child will be given a GPS (Global Positioning System) tracking device, which should be worn all the time during waking hours for 4 days (two weekdays followed by two weekend days) at two times in the year (summer and winter) to compare seasonal changes in your child’s movement. The GPS unit used in this project will be a small, lightweight GPS device comparable to a memory stick that your child can easily carry. The unit is run by a rechargeable Lithium battery. The charger will be provided. Throughout the four days periods, all spatial locations of your child during outdoor activities will be automatically recorded by the GPS unit. The QStarz-BTQ-1000X technology allows recording the exact route, stop times, speed and direction of the person carrying the device.

The researcher will collect the QStarz-BTQ-1000X after the four days measurement periods and download the gathered information to a computer via a transmitting cable. The researcher will integrate the data into a GIS (Geographical Information System) database containing built environment information for the proposed study sites.

I also invite your child to fill out a travelling diary for these days. All in all, your child will have to wear the device for 8 days. If you or your child wishes to receive a documentation of his or her movements during these 8 days, two maps will be made available to you: one for the summer and one for the winter. I guarantee that all the information collected and places visited will be handled with respect as well as the anonymity of your child. During anytime of the data collection the GPS device can be switched off or left at home if the collected data is going to be of sensitive nature.

Second, my research will involve your child drawing a mental map. Your child will be asked to draw places where he/she likes and dislikes playing and being physically active in your neighbourhood. This drawing exercise will also be carried out in the summer and winter. Your child can spend as much time on the drawing as he or she likes to do so.

Third, I wish to interview your child after each map drawing exercise. The interview will take a maximum of 50-60 minutes. If wished the interview may be supervised by yourself or another adult whom your child picks, to guarantee the child is in safe hands, feels good and the encounter is ethically sound. I would like to audiotape the interview with your and your child’s permission. At any stage of the interview the tape recorder can be switched off without providing any explanations.

The transcription will be carried out by an assistant who has signed a confidentiality agreement and you and your child can edit or withdraw any information up to one month after the transcript is send to you, if you wish to receive one. Further, I guarantee your child’s anonymity in this study and that all information given by your child will be handled with respect.

After transcription, tapes and notes as well as the assent forms, consent forms, drawn maps and the GPS data and the travel diaries will be stored in a locked cabinet in the School Environment (SoE) and destroyed after 6 years.

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Tel.: 64 9 373 7599 ext. 85923
Email: ses@auckland.ac.nz
I also invite your participation as a parent/guardian of a child participant in this research project.

This part of the project will involve filling out a pen and paper questionnaire on demographic information on your family and your child’s physical activity habits in the summer and winter. Filling out the questionnaire will take between 10-20 minutes. You will be asked to fill out the questionnaire twice: once in the summer and once in the winter. The information provided will be handled confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the project. I will transfer that data to digital format myself. You have the right to withdraw any information up to one month after you fill out the questionnaire. I will keep the questionnaire in a locked cabinet at the SGGES building. All the material will be destroyed after 6 years.

Further, it will involve meeting with a group of parents on a weekday evening at a time that suits your schedule. I will conduct a focus group of 6-8 parents and invite you all to share your experiences about: What do you like best about your neighbourhood for kids to be physically active? In which way does the neighbourhood constrain your child to be physically active? How do you feel about your kids being physically active in your neighbourhood? The focus group will take place at a mutually convenient place and will last between one and one and half hours. It will be repeated approximately half a year later.

If all participants agree I would like to record the focus group discussion. I would prefer to record the focus group discussion to facilitate note-taking. The recorder cannot be turned off at any stage of the discussion if the majority of the participants have agreed that the discussion will be audiotaped. I am going to transcribe the focus group discussion by myself.

At the focus group discussion, I will be accompanied by an assistant to ease the procedure of note taking. Due to the nature of a focus group it is not possible for you to edit or withdraw any information given during the discussion. That means anything you say cannot be deleted or removed, but you do have the right not to answer questions or leave the discussion at any time. Further, I might not be able to sustain confidentiality during the discussion, but I will make any attempt to maintain your anonymity in all other parts of the project. All information collected during the focus group discussion will be treated with respect. I will keep the tapes along with the transcripts and consent forms in a locked cabinet in the SGGES and destroy all the material after 6 years.

To carry out my field work, I need your consent for your and your child’s participation. Neither you nor your child has to participate in my research project. Participating in my research project is entirely voluntary for you and your child. If you agree to let your child participate in my research project, please circle the appropriate wording and sign the consent form. If you agree to participate in my research project, please tick the right box on the consent form and sign it.

All in all, you and your child would have the right to withdraw from the research project up to one month after the data collection is finished without giving reasons. My supervisors and I will be the only people allowed to access the information collected during this research process. Further, I assure the anonymity of all participants during any documentation of the results in this research.

Should you be interested in the results of this research, a copy of the thesis summary will be made available to you.

Thank you very much for your time and support in making this study possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more please phone me at +64 9 3737599 ext: *****. You can also write to me at the address given above, or email me at *******@auckland.ac.nz.

My supervisors are:
Professor Robin Kearns
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: (09) 373 7599 extn. *******

Associate Professor Karen Witten
The Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SHORE)
Massey University
PO Box 6137
Wellesley Street, Auckland

The Director of School is:
Professor Glenn McGregor
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: (09) 373 7599 extn. ******

For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:
The Chair
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
The University of Auckland
### Appendix 4: List of contacted organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Put up flyer on notice boards in most apartment complexes, asked maintenance or concierge for permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put up flyers on traffic lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put up flyers in churches (St Matthews, St Benedikt, St Paul, St Benedikt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put up flyer in supermarkets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put up flyers in Youth Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted project at Pick&amp; Mix (active movement workshop The Edge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Newsletter University of Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emailed YMCA inner city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked to be included in staff newsletter University of Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email to Property Union Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emailed Alumni University of Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted project at Youth Town and approached parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted project around apartment complexes after 4:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approached children on the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited Day Care centres to ask if hand information could be forwarded to parents with older children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted in Church Newsletter St Matthews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted at the Auckland City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met with children’s group coordinator at St Patrick’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time in library to approach children who pick books from the right age shelf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time during story time, active movement lessons at the public library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left flyers at the Auckland down town farmer’s market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emailed Living Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called list of building managers which I received on the 19th of August 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted cinemas to hand out flyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted study at shopping centres, at the central public transport hub and in parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted schools to forward information to teachers and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parnell Trust Programmes for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Mills Kids club, Sport clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted Kindergardens and daycares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote to newspapers, Auckland scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacting walking school bus promoters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time with children in class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5: Advertisement in newsletters and via email lists

Study of Physical Activity among Central City Children

To introduce myself, I am Christina Ergler, a doctoral student in the School of Environment at Auckland University. I moved from Germany to New Zealand in 2008 and since then I have been living in the inner city of Auckland and enjoyed it very much. When I am not reading in the parks and spending time on the water front I am working on my PhD which is funded by the NZ Health Research Council. My project is seeking to understand seasonal differences in children's experiences of playing outdoors in their neighbourhood, the inner city. I aim to understand the central city in terms of constraints to, or support for, physical activity from the perspective of children. I hope to find out how we can make the inner city more attractive for children through considering their own views, expectations and wishes.

Interested in my study?

I am seeking the participation of children who are 8 - 10 years old and live in a high rise apartment in the central city and their parents.

What happens when we participate?

Once you and your child agreed to participate, I ask your child to draw a picture or map of all the places they enjoy and dislike playing in while spending time outdoors. Then, I would like to interview your child to better understand the places he or she has drawn. The interview will take about half an hour, I will also invite your child to wear a GPS (Global Positioning System) for four days. It is a small unit you can wear on a belt, which records all the places you spend time in during the course of a day. It only records outdoor places. It is very easy to handle. You simply switch it on in the morning and switch it off at night. All my pilot study participants told me you forget about it once you put it on. I also invite you as a parent to meet with other parents for an hour to discuss your experiences raising a child in the inner city.

I am asking you to be part of this study in the summer (February - Mid March) and winter (June-July) of 2010. This means I would like to invite your child again in the winter to take part in the second part of my study, which will also include drawing a picture, being interviewed for half an hour and wearing the GPS unit for four days. My study is approved by the Human Ethics Committee of the University of Auckland. I will remove all names or identification so that no one will know that you participated unless you wish otherwise.

Who should I contact if I want further information or if I want to participate?

If you and your child are interested in participating, please contact me, Christina, either via email or call me no later than the end of February. I am happy to call you back and explain my study in more detail. If you feel more comfortable in talking in your own language, two of my friends have agreed to act as translators. They speak Korean and Chinese. My contact details are:

Christina Ergler  
School of Environment  
The University of Auckland | Te Whare Wananga o Tamaki Makaurau  
Phone: 3737599 ext. *****  
Email: *****@auckland.ac.nz
Appendix 6: Poster: advertisement of project in central city

URBAN Study – Children’s Neighbourhood Experiences – URBAN Study

Is your child 8, 9 or 10 years old?

Are you and your child interested in participating in a research project which is exploring the experiences of playing in your neighbourhood from the perspective of children?

My name is Christina Ergler, a PhD Candidate at the University of Auckland. I moved to New Zealand from Germany last year and now live in the inner city of Auckland. My research aims to understand the opportunities and constraints of physical activity for children aged 8-10 years living in the inner city. I am exploring not only where children are physically active in the summer and winter, but also how the experiences and emotions around physical activity are linked to seasonality from the perspective of children and their parents. Through a range of methods (e.g. interviews, drawings) I aim to understand the central city in terms of constraints to, or support for, physical activity. If you are interested to participate in this study or want to know more, please feel free contact me.

Interested?
And you live in an apartment in the CBD?
Please contact me either via phone
Tel.: 64 9 373 7599 ext. *****
or email: *****@auckland.ac.nz

Neighbourhood Study: Christina Ergler
Phone: 64 9 373 7599 ext. *****
Email: *****@auckland.ac.nz
Appendices

Appendix 7: Advertisement: Flyer for central city

Is your child 8, 9 or 10 years old?

Are you and your child interested in participating in a research project which is exploring the experiences of playing in your neighbourhood from the perspective of children?

My name is Christina Ergler, a PhD Candidate at the University of Auckland. I moved to New Zealand from Germany last year and now live in the inner city of Auckland. My research aims to understand the opportunities and constraints of physical activity for children aged 8-10 years living in the inner city. I am exploring not only where children are physically active in the summer and winter, but also how the experiences and emotions around physical activity are linked to seasonality from the perspective of children and their parents. Through a range of methods (e.g. interviews, drawings) I aim to understand the central city in terms of constraints to, or support for, physical activity. If you are interested to participate in this study or want to know more, please feel free to contact me.

Interested?

And you live in a high rising apartment complex in the inner city of Auckland?

Please contact me either via phone
Tel.: 64 9 373 7599 ext. *****
or email: *****@auckland.ac.nz
Appendix 8: Consent form parents

Consent Form

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Title: Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

To: Parent/ Guardian

Researcher: Christina Rebekka Ergler, PhD Candidate

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research and why I and my child have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

Child participation

- I understand that my child’s participation in this research is entirely voluntary and non-participation will have no negative effects.
- I understand that I may withdraw my child’s participation or any information he or she has offered at any time up to one month from the time of the data collection (or from the date of receiving a transcript should I request one) without giving a reason.
- I understand that this research project is funded by the Health Research Council, New Zealand.
- I understand that my child will have to carry the GPS device for four days in the summer and for four days in the winter and that the device can be switched off or left at home at any time.
- I understand that my child is asked to fill out a travel diary for four days in the summer and for four days in the winter.
- I understand that my child will be asked to draw one map in the summer and one map in the winter and that he or she can spend as much time on the drawing as he or she likes to do.
- I understand that my child will be interviewed for approximately 50 minutes in the summer and for 50 minutes in the winter and will be audio recorded.
- I understand that the tape can be turned off at any time during the discussion without giving a reason.
- I understand that an assistant who has signed a confidentiality agreement will transcribe the tapes.
- I agree / do not agree that my child will be interviewed.
- I agree / do not agree that my child will be audiotaped.
- I wish / do not wish to have my child’s tapes returned to me.
- I agree / do not agree for my child to participate in the drawing exercise.
- I agree / do not agree for my child to fill out the travel diary.
- I agree / do not agree for my child to participate in the GPS tracking.
- I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of the findings.
- I wish / do not wish to receive two maps of my child’s movement.

My participation as a parent/ guardian

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and non-participation will have no negative effects.
- I understand that due to the nature of Focus Group discussion, I am not able to withdraw any information once provided, but I may decide not to answer a question or leave the discussion.
- I understand that the Focus Group discussion will be audiotaped and that a research assistant will attend the discussion group.
- I agree to not disclose anything discussed in the focus group.
- I understand that data will be handled with respect and that no identifiable information will be used in any documents arising from this research.
- I understand that an assistant who has signed a confidentiality agreement will transcribe the tapes.
- I understand that I can decline to answer questions and withdraw any data traceable to me up to one month from the time I fill out the questionnaire.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.

Signed: __________________________________________
Name: __________________________________________
(Please print clearly) __________________________________________
Date: __________________________________________
Appendices

Appendix 9: Assent form children

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

Assent Form

THIS ASSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Title: Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

To: Child participant

Researcher: Christina Rebekka Ergler, PhD Candidate

Somebody explained this research project to me. I had time to ask all the questions I wanted to ask and got them answered.

I agree to take part in this research project.

I know that I don’t have to participate in this project – I am taking part because I want to.

I know that I will wear a GPS device, which records all the places I visit for eight days (four days in the summer and four days in the winter).

I know that I can switch off the GPS device at any time.

I know that I am asked to fill out a travel diary for the time I carry the GPS device.

I know that I will draw two maps: one in the summer and one in the winter.

I know that I can take as much time as I like to draw the pictures.

I know that the researcher will interview me twice: once in the summer and once in the winter for about an hour.

I know that the interview will be recorded and that the voice recorder can be switched off at any time during the talk without any explanation.

I know that I can contact the researcher through my parent/guardian and tell her that I don’t want to participate in the project anymore or that she no longer keeps my opinions, maps and GPS tracking data.

I know that I may withdraw any information provided up to one month after the data collection is finished.

I know that someone other than the researcher will transcribe the tapes. The person agreed that he or she will not talk to anyone about the things I told the researcher.

I agree / I do not agree to be interviewed.

I agree / I do not agree to be audiotaped.

I agree / I do not agree to draw two pictures.

I agree / I do not agree to fill out the travel diary.

I agree / I do not agree to wear a GPS device for eight days.

I wish / I do not wish to receive the summary of the findings.

I wish / I do not wish to receive two maps of my movement.

Signed: ______________________________

Name: ______________________________

(Please print clearly) ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

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Appendix 10: Participant Information Sheet Principal

Participant Information Sheet

Research title:
Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

To: Principal

My name is Christina Ergler. I am a student at The University of Auckland carrying out research for a PhD thesis in Geography. My research concerns people’s feelings about the possibilities and constraints of being physically active within two neighbourhoods (Auckland Central and Beachhaven) due to seasonality. I am interested in this topic because of the growing awareness of the need for physical activity and the possible impacts a neighbourhood has on this matter. My project is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

I seek permission to invite some of your students to assist me in this research. This will include three parts which will be carried out twice: once in the summer and once in the winter, but only the last task will have a minor effect, if at all, on the school attendance of your pupils.

1. Drawing exercise: some of your students are asked to draw a map of all the places they like and dislike for playing in their neighbourhood. This exercise will take place outside school hours.

2. Interview: I am going to talk to your students about their experiences playing in their neighbourhood. This interview will also be carried out outside school hours.

3. GPS tracking. Your student will be given a GPS tracking device, which should be worn all the time during waking hours for 4 days (two weekdays followed by two weekend days) at two times in the year (summer and winter) to compare seasonal changes in your student’s movement. The GPS device used in this project will be a small, lightweight GPS device comparable to a USB stick that the student can easily transport. Throughout the four day periods, all spatial locations of your student during outdoor activities will be automatically recorded by the GPS unit. The QStarz-BTQ-1000X technology allows recording the exact route, stop times, speed and direction of the person carrying the device with a degree of horizontal accuracy of 2.5 m. The researcher will collect the QStarz-BTQ-1000X after the four day measurement period and download the gathered information to a computer via the GPS’ USB port. The researcher will integrate the data into a GIS database (ArcView, ESRI, Redlands, CA) containing built environment information for the proposed study sites. As the GPS tracking unit records the spatial position automatically and no maintenance is required for the device, there won’t be any effect on the student’s ability to participate in the class curriculum. Further, no disturbance of the class will occur as the only requirement of the student is to carry the USB stick on his or herself.
I assure that all the information collected and places visited will be handled with respect and that the anonymity of your class, school and student will be provided.

After transcription, tapes and notes as well as the assent forms, consent forms, drawn maps and the GPS data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the School of Environment (SoE) and destroyed after 6 years.

To carry out my field work, I need your permission that your students are allowed to wear the GPS device during school hours. Neither you nor your students have to participate in my research project. Participating in my research project is entirely voluntary for your school and your students. In fact the parents or caregivers need to give their consent before your student take part in my project.

If you agree to let your students participate in my research project, please tick the right boxes and sign the consent form.

Together with my supervisors I will be the only person allowed to access the information collected during this research process. Further, I assure the anonymity of all participants during any documentation that results in this research. Should you be interested in the results of this research, a copy of the thesis summary will be made available to you.

Thank you very much for your time and support in making this study possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more please phone me at +64 9 3737599 extn. *****. You can also write to me at the address given above, or email me at *****@auckland.ac.nz.

My supervisors are:
Professor Robin Kearns
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: (09) 373 7599 extn. ********

Associate Professor Karen Witten
The Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SHORE)
Massey University
PO Box 6137
Wellesley Street, Auckland
Tel.: (09) ********

The Director of School is:
Professor Glenn McGregor
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: (09) 373 7599 extn. *****

For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:
The Chair
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
The University of Auckland
Office of the Vice Chancellor
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: 373-7999 extn *****
Appendix 11: Participant Information Sheet Teacher

Participant Information Sheet

Research title:
Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

To: Teacher

My name is Christina Ergler. I am a student at The University of Auckland carrying out research for a PhD thesis in Geography. My research concerns people’s feelings about the possibilities and constraints of being physical active within two neighbourhoods (Auckland Central and Beachhaven) due to seasonality. I am interested in this topic because of the growing awareness of the need for physical activity and the possible impacts a neighbourhood has on this matter. My project is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

I seek permission to invite some of your students to assist me in this research. This will include three parts which will be carried out twice: once in the summer and once in the winter, but only the last one will have a minor effect on your class if at all.

1. **Drawing exercise**: your students are asked to draw a map of all the places they like and dislike for playing in their neighbourhood. This exercise will take place outside school hours.

2. **Interview**: I am going to talk to your students about their experiences playing in their neighbourhood. This interview will also be carried out outside school hours.

3. **GPS tracking**: Your student will be given a GPS tracking device, which should be worn all the time during waking hours for 4 days (two weekdays followed by two weekend days) at two times in the year (summer and winter) to compare seasonal changes in your student's movement. The GPS device used in this project will be a small light-weight GPS device comparable to a USB stick so that the student can easily carry it around.

Throughout the four days periods, all spatial locations of your student during outdoor activities will be automatically recorded by the GPS unit. The QStarz-BTQ-1000X technology allows recording the exact route, stop times, speed and direction of the person carrying the device with a degree of horizontal accuracy of 2.5 m.

The researcher will collect the QStarz-BTQ-1000X after the four day measurement period and download the gathered information to a computer via the QStarz-BTQ-1000X's USB port. The researcher will integrate the data into a GIS database (ArcView, ESRI, Redlands, CA) containing built environment information for the proposed study sites. As the GPS tracking unit records the spatial position automatically and no maintenance is required for the device, there won't be any effect on the student's ability to participate in the class curriculum.

I assure that all the information collected and places visited will be handled with respect and that the anonymity of your class, school and student will be provided.
After transcription, tapes and notes as well as the assent forms, consent forms, drawn maps and the GPS data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the School of Environment (SoE) and destroyed after 6 years.

To carry out my field work, I need your permission that your students are allowed to wear the GPS device during class time. Neither you nor your students have to participate in my research project. Participating in my research project is entirely voluntary for you and your students. In fact the parents or caregivers need to give their consent before your students take part in my project. If you agree to let your students participate in my research project, please tick the right boxes and sign the consent form.

Together with my supervisors I will be the only persons allowed to access the information collected during this research process. Further, I assure the anonymity of all participants during any documentation that results in this research. Should you be interested in the results of this research, a copy of the thesis summary will be made available to you.

Thank you very much for your time and support in making this study possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more please phone me at +64 9 3737599 ext: 82924. You can also write to me at the address given above, or email me at c.ergler@auckland.ac.nz.

Appendix: Consent Form Principal

My supervisors are:
Professor Robin Kearns
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: (09) 373 7599 extrn. ********

Associate Professor Karen Witten
The Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SHORE)
Massey University
PO Box 6137
Wellesley Street, Auckland
Tel.: (09) ********

The Director of School is:
Professor Glenn McGregor
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: (09) 373 7599 extrn. ****

Associate Professor Karen Witten
The Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SHORE)
Massey University
PO Box 6137
Wellesley Street, Auckland
Tel.: (09) ********

For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:
The Chair
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
The University of Auckland
Office of the Vice Chancellor
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: 373-7999 extrn ****
Appendix 12: Consent Form Principal

Consent Form

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Title: Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

To: Principal

Researcher: Christina Rebekka Ergler, PhD Candidate

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research and why my school has been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I agree that some of my students take part in this research.
I understand that this project is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.
I understand that my students’ participation in this research is entirely voluntary and non-participation will have no negative effects.
I understand that some of my students will wear a GPS device during class time for 2 days in the summer and for 2 days in the winter. This could possibly cause some minor distraction during class time, but this is unlikely.
I understand that the anonymity of my students and the school will be assured in any documentation that results from this research project.
I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of the findings.

Signed: ____________________________________________

Name: ____________________________________________
(Please print clearly) __________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________
Appendix 13: Consent Form Teacher

Consent Form

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Title: Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

To: Teacher

Researcher: Christina Rebekka Ergler, PhD Candidate

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research and why my class has been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I agree that some of my students take part in this research.
I understand that this project is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.
I understand that my students’ participation in this research is entirely voluntary and non-participation will have no negative effects.
I understand that some of my students will wear a GPS device during class time for 2 days in the summer and for 2 days in the winter. This could possibly cause some minor distraction during class time, but this is unlikely.
I understand that the anonymity of my students and the school will be assured in any documentation that results from this research project.
I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of the findings.

Signed: ________________________________

Name: ________________________________
(Please print clearly)

Date: ________________________________
Appendix 14: Parental survey summer

Parent/ Guardian Questionnaire

| Parent Name: | __________________________ |
| Child Name:  | __________________________ |
| Today's date: | ____ / ____ / ______ |

**General Section**

SC1. What is your relationship to the child?
1. O Mother
2. O Father
6. O Other (please specify) __________
888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC2. Where is your primary residence located (e.g. name of suburb)? __________________________

SC3. How long have you lived here? __________________________

**Technology Section**

“I am interested in what types of technology your child has access to at this dwelling”.

SC4. How many nights did your child do homework in the last 7 days?
(please specify nights and hours) __________

SC5. Does Your child have access to a … in the dwelling?
1. Television  O Yes  O No  O Prefer not to answer/don’t know
2. Television in the bedroom  O Yes  O No  O Prefer not to answer/don’t know
3. Games Console (e.g. Play station, Xbox)  O Yes  O No  O Prefer not to answer/don’t know
4. Computer  O Yes  O No  O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC6. In the past 7 days on average how many hours would your child have spent using a television a games console a computer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekdays</th>
<th>Weekend days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“How often do you restrict or apply rules about the amount of time your child spends on the following activities”…

SC7. Watching television, video, or DVD?
1. O Never
2. O Sometimes
3. O Often
4. O Not applicable
888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC8. Playing with game consoles?
1. O Never
2. O Sometimes
3. O Often
4. O Not applicable
888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC9. Playing on the computer?
1. O Never
2. O Sometimes
3. O Often
4. O Not applicable
888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know
**Physical Activity Section**

SC10. Do you have a pet in your family? Please specify... __________________

SC11. In the last seven days, how many hours do you think your child plays or practises organised sport outside of school hours? (please specify)

SC12. In the last seven days, did you encourage your child to be physically active (e.g., verbal encouragement, role modelling, take child to sports practice)?
   1. O Yes
   2. O No
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC13. In the last seven days, did you participate in physical activities and sports with your child (e.g., play at the park together, go for a walk together)?
   1. O Yes
   2. O No
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC14. Is it important to me that my child is physically active?
   1. O Strongly disagree
   2. O Disagree
   3. O Agree
   4. O Strongly agree
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC15. Same it is important to me that we are physically active as a family?
   1. O Strongly disagree
   2. O Disagree
   3. O Agree
   4. O Strongly agree
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC16. In the last seven days, how many hours do you think you have been physically active? (please specify)

SC17. In which physical activities are other family members involved? Please specify....

SC17b. In which physical activities had you and your family members been involved on a weekly basis when you were 15 years old? Please specify....

SC18. Do you think your child enjoys participating in physical activity and sports?
   1. O Yes
   2. O No
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

**Places for your Child to be Active Section**

SC20. Has your child visited the following destinations in the last 7 days? How many times and with whom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>How many times...</th>
<th>Accompanied by whom... (e.g. parent, relative, friend (older, same age))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Shops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park or Playground</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Field/ Facility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation/ Arts (e.g. guides, scouts, care program/dance, music lesson)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised visits (cinema, zoo, museum etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Spot (beach, lake, creek)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Worship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SC20. How would you rank the general safety of your neighbourhood at this time of the year?

- Low risk
- High Risk
### SC21. How often is your child active at indoor recreation or exercise facilities (public or private, including schools) at this time of the year?

1. O Never
2. O Once a month
3. O Once a fortnight
4. O Once a week or more
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC22. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?

1. O Yes
2. O No
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC23. How often is your child active at the beach, lake, river, or creek at this time of the year?

1. O Never
2. O Once a month
3. O Once a fortnight
4. O Once a week or more
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC24. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?

1. O Yes
2. O No
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC25. How often is your child active at playing fields or courts at this time of the year?

1. O Never
2. O Once a month
3. O Once a fortnight
4. O Once a week or more
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC26. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?

1. O Yes
2. O No
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC27. How often is your child active at a swimming pool at this time of the year?

1. O Never
2. O Once a month
3. O Once a fortnight
4. O Once a week or more
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC28. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?

1. O Yes
2. O No
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC29. How often is your child active at a friend's house at this time of the year?

1. O Never
2. O Once a month
3. O Once a fortnight
4. O Once a week or more
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC30. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?

1. O Yes
2. O No
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

### SC31. How often is your child active at a friend's house at this time of the year?

1. O Never
2. O Once a month
3. O Once a fortnight
4. O Once a week or more
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know
Appendices

SC32. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?
1. O Yes
2. O No
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

SC33. How often is your child active in your back/front yard at this time of the year?
1. O Never
2. O Once a month
3. O Once a fortnight
4. O Once a week or more
5. O Not applicable
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

SC34. How often is your child active in neighbourhood streets at this time of the year?
1. O Never
2. O Once a month
3. O Once a fortnight
4. O Once a week or more
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

SC35. What kind of place do you live in?
1. O Separate House # of stories ________
2. O Flat/ Unit # of stories ________
3. O Townhouse/ Joint House # of stories ________
4. O Apartment # of stories ________
7. O Other (please specify) __________
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

SC36. Do you ...
1. O own this place outright?
2. O have a mortgage on this place?
3. O rent this place?
4. O Other (please specify) __________
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

SC37. Do you have a garden or other outdoor space?
1. O Yes
2. O No
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

SC38. How many people live with you in this dwelling? (Please indicate the relationship to the child and age)
___________________________________________________________________

SC39. How many children do you have? Please indicate age and sex
___________________________________________________________

SC40. Do any of the children living here have more than one home? Please indicate ....
___________________________________________________________________

SC41. Please indicate your family structure?
1. O Single Parent
2. O Married
3. O Other, please specify _________________
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

SC42. Please indicate your own age approximately ________________

SC43. What is the highest qualification you have?
1. O No Qualification
2. O Secondary School Qualification
3. O Tertiary School Qualification
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

SC43b. What is the highest qualification you received? Which institution?
___________________________________________________________________

SC44. Which school is your child attending?
___________________________________________________________________
Appendices

SC44a. What type of primary school did you mostly attend?
1. O Public  Please specify _________________________
2. O Private  Please specify _________________________
888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC44a. What type of secondary school did you mostly attend?
1. O Public  Please specify _________________________
2. O Private  Please specify _________________________
888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC45. What’s your family’s main type of income? _________________________

SC46. What is your current occupation? _________________________

SC47. How many hours do you usually work a week on this job, including paid and unpaid overtime?
____________________

SC48. What was the occupation of the main breadwinner in your family when you were growing up (at the age of 15)?
____________________

SC49. What’s approximately your total household income? _______________

SC50. How many cars are there in your household? _______________

SC51. How many bicycles are there in your household? _______________

SC52. To what ethnic group(s) does your child belong to? _______________

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire!
Appendix 15: Parental survey winter

Parent/ Guardian Questionnaire

Parent Name: ___________________
Child Name: ___________________
Today's date: __________/________/________

**General Section**

SC1. What is your relationship to the child?
   1. O Mother
   2. O Father
   6. O Other (please specify) __________
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

**Technology Section**

"I am interested in what types of technology your child has access to at this dwelling”.

SC4. How many hours did your child do homework in the last 7 days?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of homework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SC6. In the past 7 days on average per day how many hours would your child have spent using

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours spent using</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SC7. Watching television, video, or DVD?

1. O Never
2. O Sometimes
3. O Often
4. O Not applicable
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC8. Playing with game consoles?

1. O Never
2. O Sometimes
3. O Often
4. O Not applicable
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

SC9. Playing on the computer?

1. O Never
2. O Sometimes
3. O Often
4. O Not applicable
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know

"How often do you restrict or apply rules about the amount of time your child spends on the following activities”...

SC7. Watching television, video, or DVD?

1. O Never
2. O Sometimes
3. O Often
4. O Not applicable
   888. O Prefer not to answer/don’t know
### Physical Activity Section

**SC10.** Do you have a pet in your family? If so, please specify.... __________________

**SC11.** In the last seven days, how many hours do you think your child plays or practises organised sport outside of school hours?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of sport</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SC12.** In the last seven days, did you encourage your child to be physically active (e.g., verbal encouragement, role modelling, take child to sports practice)?

1. O Yes
2. O No
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

**SC13.** In the last seven days, did you participate in physical activities and sports with your child (e.g., play at the park together, go for a walk together)?

1. O Yes
2. O No
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

**SC14.** It is important to me that my child is physically active?

1. O Strongly disagree
2. O Disagree
3. O Agree
4. O Strongly agree
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

**SC15.** Same It is important to me that we are physically active as a family?

1. O Strongly disagree
2. O Disagree
3. O Agree
4. O Strongly agree
888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know

**SC16.** In the last seven days, how many hours do you think you have been physically active?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SC17.** In which physical activities are other family members involved? Please specify....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family member (e.g. mother, sibling, ...)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SC17b.** In which physical activities had you and your family members been involved on a weekly basis when you were 15 years old?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Family members (e.g. father, sibling, mother)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your spouse's/partner's family members (e.g. father, sibling, mother)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Places for your Child to be Active Section

**SC20. Has your child visited the following destinations in the last 7 days? How many times and with whom?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Alone</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Sibling</th>
<th>Friend same age</th>
<th>Other (Please specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Shops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park or Playground</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Field/Facility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation/Arts (e.g. scouts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping mall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised visits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Spot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Worship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How many times...Accompanied by whom... (e.g. parent, relative, friend [older, same age])**

**SC20. How would you rank the general safety of your neighbourhood at this time of the year?**

- [ ] Low risk
- [ ] High Risk

**SC21. How often is your child active at indoor recreation or exercise facilities (public or private, including schools) at this time of the year?**

1. [ ] Never
2. [ ] Once a month
3. [ ] Once a fortnight
4. [ ] Once a week or more
888. [ ] Prefer not to answer/don’t know

**SC22. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?**

1. [ ] Yes
2. [ ] No
888. [ ] Prefer not to answer/don’t know

**SC23. How often is your child active at the beach, lake, river, or creek at this time of the year?**

1. [ ] Never
2. [ ] Once a month
3. [ ] Once a fortnight
4. [ ] Once a week or more
888. [ ] Prefer not to answer/don’t know

**SC24. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?**

1. [ ] Yes
2. [ ] No
888. [ ] Prefer not to answer/don’t know

**SC25. How often is your child active at playing fields or courts at this time of the year?**

1. [ ] Never
2. [ ] Once a month
3. [ ] Once a fortnight
4. [ ] Once a week or more
888. [ ] Prefer not to answer/don’t know

**SC26. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?**

1. [ ] Yes
2. [ ] No
888. [ ] Prefer not to answer/don’t know

**SC27. How often is your child active at a swimming pool at this time of the year?**

1. [ ] Never
2. [ ] Once a month
3. [ ] Once a fortnight
4. [ ] Once a week or more
888. [ ] Prefer not to answer/don’t know
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC28. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B88. Prefer not to answer/don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC29. How often is your child active at a public park or open space at this time of the year?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Once a fortnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Once a week or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B88. Prefer not to answer/don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC30. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B88. Prefer not to answer/don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC31. How often is your child active at a friend’s house at this time of the year?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Once a fortnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Once a week or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B88. Prefer not to answer/don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC32. Does your child usually walk or cycle to get to or from there at this time of the year?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B88. Prefer not to answer/don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC33. How often is your child active in your back/front yard at this time of the year?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Once a fortnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Once a week or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B88. Prefer not to answer/don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC34. How often is your child active in neighbourhood streets at this time of the year?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Once a fortnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Once a week or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B88. Prefer not to answer/don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Parental Licence

#### SC.PL1a At what age did you allow your child to travel without an adult? Please circle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Age 6</th>
<th>Age 7</th>
<th>Age 8</th>
<th>Age 9</th>
<th>Age 10</th>
<th>Age 11</th>
<th>Age 12</th>
<th>Age 13+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To school</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From school</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a friend’s house</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a park</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a playground</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a beach, creek, lake</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a sports field / facility</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation/Arts</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised visits</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a shop or shopping centre</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On public transport</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a place of worship</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SC.PL1b Is there any difference between summer and winter? Please specify.

#### SC.PL2 At what age may you allow your child to travel without an adult? Please circle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Age 6</th>
<th>Age 7</th>
<th>Age 8</th>
<th>Age 9</th>
<th>Age 10</th>
<th>Age 11</th>
<th>Age 12</th>
<th>Age 13+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To school</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From school</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a friend’s house</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a park</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a playground</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a beach, creek, lake</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a sports field / facility</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation/Arts</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised visits</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a shop or shopping centre</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On public transport</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a bicycle on public streets</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a place of worship</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SC.PL2b Is there any difference between summer and winter? Please specify.

#### SC.PL 3 At what age have you and your spouse/partner been allowed to travel without an adult? Please indicate with letters: you: “A” and your partner/spouse: “B”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Age 6</th>
<th>Age 7</th>
<th>Age 8</th>
<th>Age 9</th>
<th>Age 10</th>
<th>Age 11</th>
<th>Age 12</th>
<th>Age 13+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To school</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From school</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a friend’s house</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a park</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a playground</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a beach, creek, lake</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a sports field / facility</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Not allowed</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a shop or shopping centre</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>On a bicycle on public streets</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a place of worship</td>
<td>Not allowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SC.PL3b Has there been any difference between summer and winter? Please specify.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC.PL 4. I believe that my child who plays outside in our neighbourhood can:</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>Not very likely</th>
<th>Unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet and/or play with other children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be exposed to the risk of road accidents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops skills to travel alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encounter ill-intentioned adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn his/her way around</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come into contact with drugs or alcohol</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See things that may frighten him/her</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become more responsible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find someone willing to help him/her in case of trouble</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel disoriented in the area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be exposed to risks of injury e.g. bees, dogs, sun burn...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC. Has there been any difference between summer and winter? Please specify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____________________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC.PL 5 Please indicate the farthest distance where your child is allowed to play outside your property...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>By himself/herself</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer</strong> Before sunset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With peers (same age) but without adult supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With siblings but without adult supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC.PL 5 Please indicate the farthest distance where you (same age as your child now) were allowed to play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>By yourself</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer</strong> Before sunset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With peers (same age) but without adult supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With siblings but without adult supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Your spouse/partner**                                                                                   |
| **Summer** Before sunset | **Summer** after sunset | **Winter** Before sunset | **Winter** after sunset |
| With peers (same age) but without adult supervision |                                          |                          |                          |
| With siblings but without adult supervision |                                           |                          |                          |

### Basic Demographic Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC41. Please indicate your family structure?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. O Single Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. O Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. O Other, please specify __________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>888. O Prefer not to answer/don't know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC46. What is your current occupation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You __________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your spouse/partner ____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC47. How many hours do you usually work a week on this job, including paid and unpaid overtime?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You ..................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your spouse/partner .....................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC48. What was the occupation of the main breadwinner in the family when you were growing up (at the age of 15)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your mother .........................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your father .........................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your spouse's/partner's mother .........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your spouse's/partner's father .........................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire.
Appendices

Appendix 16: Interview guide - parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Schedule – (Focus Groups) and semi-structured interviews with parents (summer/winter)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe Study</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive experiences of parents that children are active in their neighbourhood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are some of your good feelings and experiences about children’s physical activity in ______ over the summer/winter months?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you like best about your neighbourhood for kids to be physically active?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are other positive elements of the neighbourhood that enable children to be physically active at this time of the year in your neighbourhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative experiences of parents that children are active in their neighbourhood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are some of your negative feelings and experiences about children’s physical activity in ______ over the summer/winter months?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there any feature in your neighbourhood which discourage children to be physically active over the summer/winter months?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What constrains your children from being physically active in your neighbourhood over the summer/winter months?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotions, Feelings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about this neighbourhood as a place for your child to be active in summer/winter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where would you prefer to live in town if you had the ability to move anywhere you wished? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place attachment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any places in your neighbourhood your child considers his/her own? What does she/he do there? Are people allowed to join her/him?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any places in your neighbourhood your child is especially attached to, or which are precious to him/her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you change your neighbourhood so that it is more attractive for children to be physically active at this time of the year?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where would you most like to live in town if you had the ability to move anywhere you wished? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historical Change:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare Parents as children with their own children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you compare your child’s freedom to roam around with your own when you have been this age, what’s the difference?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning of neighbourhood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the term neighbourhood mean to you? (And what about you____?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there other meanings of neighbourhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which places are important for you in your neighbourhood and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ranking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you please write down constraining features and enabling features in your neighbourhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group exercise</strong>: Please rank the enabling and constraining features in your neighbourhood according to importance, the top one is the most important one and the most constraining one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrap up</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there things we haven’t covered that you think are important to children’s play and activity in winter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you very much for your participation!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I began the day at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhere else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I woke up at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I put my GPS on at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did the weather look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What else did you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel? Why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 17: Travel Diary**

**Name:** _____________________________________________________

**Date:** ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Morning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I began the day at</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did the weather look like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What else did you do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 17: Travel Diary**

**Name:** _____________________________________________________

**Date:** ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I began the day at</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>How do you feel? Why?</td>
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**Name:** _____________________________________________________

**Date:** ____________

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<thead>
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<td>What else did you do?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you feel? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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**Name:** _____________________________________________________

**Date:** ____________

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
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**Name:** _____________________________________________________

**Date:** ____________

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<td>What else did you do?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you feel? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 17: Travel Diary**

**Name:** _____________________________________________________

**Date:** ____________

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<tr>
<td>I woke up at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I put my GPS on at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did the weather look like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What else did you do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 17: Travel Diary**

**Name:** _____________________________________________________

**Date:** ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Morning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I began the day at</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhere else</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I woke up at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I put my GPS on at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did the weather look like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What else did you do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 17: Travel Diary**

**Name:** _____________________________________________________

**Date:** ____________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Afternoon</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>I got there at</th>
<th>What did I do there?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>____<em><strong><strong><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></strong></strong></em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What did the weather look like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>__________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Icons</td>
<td>tick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>____<em><strong><strong><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></strong></strong></em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I travelled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>by car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With an adult</td>
<td>by bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With other</td>
<td>I walked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>I cycled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What else did you do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>__________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How do you feel? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>__________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I left at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Afternoon</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>I got there at</th>
<th>What did I do there?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>____<em><strong><strong><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></strong></strong></em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What did the weather look like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>__________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Icons</td>
<td>tick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>____<em><strong><strong><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></strong></strong></em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I travelled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>by car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With an adult</td>
<td>by bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With other</td>
<td>I walked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>I cycled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What else did you do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>__________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How do you feel? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>__________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I left at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>I got there at</td>
<td>What did I do there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Then I went to</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________</td>
<td>_<em><strong><strong><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></strong></strong></em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I travelled
  - Alone
  - With an adult
  - With other
  - Children
  - by car
  - by bus
  - I walked
  - I cycled

- I left at __________:_____________
## Night

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>What did I do there?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I ended the day at</td>
<td>I went to bed at <strong><strong><strong>:</strong></strong></strong>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhere else</td>
<td>I put my GPS off at <strong><strong>:</strong></strong>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What did the weather look like? ____________________________

What else did you do? ____________________________

How do you feel? Why? ____________________________

### Comments:

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix 18: Brief manual for GPS unit

How to use the GPS? – Instructions

The GPS unit will use satellite signals to track where you go over the next four days (for example it will show us on a map the route that you took to walk to and from school).

- The GPS unit is to be worn on your belt during the day (not at night).
- Each morning when you wake up switch button to LOG
- Please turn the unit off at night, by setting the switch to “off”
- Please charge the GPS unit every night

1. What to do when you leave the house for the first time on a day?
   - Switch the BTX on by switching the button on the side to LOG
   - Wait for 15 – 30 seconds in front of your house so that the BTX (GPS unit) can map its position (orange = trying to find the satellite; orange flashing = GPS position acquired)

2. Charging the battery
   - Low battery will be announced by a red battery sign
   - Plug AC adaptor into unit and then charge the GPS unit for about 3 hours (each battery charge will last for about approximately 17 hours) ➔ battery sign will turn green (indicates charging)

3. What do the different coloured lights mean?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LED Status</th>
<th>Flash Notes</th>
<th>ON Notes</th>
<th>OFF Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power (Red/Green)</td>
<td>[Recharging (Green)</td>
<td>Low Power (Red)]</td>
<td>Fully charged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluetooth (Blue)</td>
<td>Flash per 2 sec. Bluetooth connected and transmitting Mode</td>
<td>Not connected / Pairing</td>
<td>GPS not powered / Log Mode is on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS (Orange)</td>
<td>GPS position is fixed, Navigation</td>
<td>Detecting Satellite, GPS position not fix</td>
<td>GPS not powered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note:
- GPS will only receive the signal under the open sky (when you are in a car it is recommended to place it under the windshield)
- Appears the GPS signal in red, call me immediately: memory is full

If you have any questions or want to contact me, please feel free to call or email me!

Christina Ergler – PhD Candidate
T: +64 9 3737999 ext: ****
M: 021********
E: *****@auckland.ac.nz
Appendix 19: Semi-structured interviews with children (compressed form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Schedule – Children aged 8-10 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You know that we are going to talk about your experiences wearing the GPS units and which places you like and don’t like to be physically active or play in your neighbourhood in the summer. Before we start I would like to know if you can tell me …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning of neighbourhood, play, PA &amp; summer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What does summer mean for you? How does this time of the year feel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What does “playing” mean for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What means “being physical active” for you? (Prompt: being able to move around)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What does the word “neighbourhood” mean for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Neighbourhood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you imagine another child moving in next door and asks you about how it is living here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is it like to live here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where would you tell her/him to go to play, where not? (good, bad) → summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ Talk about the map…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good Places</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is your favourite place in the summer and why? How do you feel when you spend time there? → Show wheel if necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does it change when you are there alone/friends/siblings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you tell me more about the places you have drawn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you like about them? What not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do you feel when you spend time there? → Show wheel if necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do the places change when you are on your own/ with friends/ with family? → Show wheel if necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is there anything which stops you from playing there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bad Places</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What places don’t like and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• (Still play sometimes there? Is there anything you like there?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How does the place change for you when you are with friends/ siblings or your parents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What would you change so that you may enjoy playing there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Playing outdoors independently</strong> → show their GPS map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Please tell me where you are allowed to go/play by yourself. How do you feel about this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If you like we can use the map as a help?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you tell me where you are allowed to go with friends and siblings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any difference by walking, bicycle, bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Habits in the summer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you usually do on a weekday…how do you feel…(after school!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Please describe a usual weekend day for me (what’s the difference between Saturday/ Sunday)…What do you usually do on a weekend day…how do you feel…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place Attachment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you consider any place as your own?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where do you prefer to play (indoor /outdoor)? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where do you like to go when you want to be left alone? How do you feel about this place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whom do you allow to see this place? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendations/ Improvements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What would be the perfect neighbourhood be for you? (Places, free activities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If you could change your neighbourhood, what would you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you have any ideas how could that be done? (Empower children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrap up</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there things we haven’t talked about that you think is important for you to tell me?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you very much for your participation!

Reminder:
What am I interested in?
• Neighbourhood effects (friends, family living nearby, pets) |
• Seasonal effects |
• Enabling elements |
• Constraining elements |
• Improvement possibilities
Appendix 20: Child Participant Information Sheet follow up meeting

**Participant Information Sheet**

**Research title:**
Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

**To:** Child participant

Hi! My name is Christina Ergler. You already know me from the GPS study you participated in. As some of you expressed interest in the drawings and GPS data of the other participants, I like to invite you for a follow up.

**The follow up meeting**

If you are interested to meet other participants and share your drawings and your GPS maps, we will meet two times. One time in Beachhaven and the other time in the city. The meeting includes sharing your drawings and GPS maps with the other participants and a walk during which you show the other participants your favourite places in your neighbourhood.

**Getting Started**

Before we start, your parents have to say that it is ok for you to participate in this follow up. After that, we will meet one afternoon in the city and one afternoon in Beachhaven. First, you are invited to share your drawing and GPS maps with the other children. Then, we will go for a walk. You can show the inner city/Beachhaven children fun places to play in your neighbourhood. If you like you can get a camera to take pictures of these places, too. A few days later, you are invited to come along for another meeting in which the other participants show you their maps and then you can explore their neighbourhood with them.

If it is okay with you and your parents, I will use my tape recorder to record the meetings. All in all, I ask you to come along for two meetings and two walks, which will take the whole afternoon. I will make sure there are enough refreshments available.

**What will happen to the recordings and pictures?**

I will use your pictures to complement your drawings and maps. I will store the tapes in a locket cabinet at the University of Auckland and destroy all the material after 6 years. As you know, I will write a report that may help to improve your neighbourhood for playing.

**Do I have to participate?**

- You don’t have to take part. Taking part in this follow up project is entirely voluntary. In fact your parent or caregiver needs to say it’s OK before you take part.
- If you decide after the first meeting that you don’t want to do this work anymore, don’t worry, that’s ok. Just get your mum and dad to give me a ring.
- You can ask me questions at anytime.
- I’m not allowed to use your real name when I’m writing, or talking, about your work.
- You can ask me for a copy of anything I have written about your work.

**Want to know more?**

Thank you very much for your assistance in this study. If you or your parents have any questions or want to know more about the follow up, get your mum or dad to call or email me:

Christina Ergler  
School of Environment, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland.  
Tel: (09) 373 7599 extn. ***** or Email: *****@auckland.ac.nz
**Appendix 21: Parental Participant Information Sheet follow up meeting**

**Participant Information Sheet**

**Research title:**
Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

My name is Christina Ergler. You already know me for the GPS study you and your child participated in. As some of my child participants expressed interest to see the drawings and GPS maps of the other participants, I decided to do a follow up meeting with the children, in which they can share their experiences in participating, their drawings and maps.

I invite your child to participate in two follow up meetings. Each meeting will include two parts. First, we will meet in a room suitable for our purpose. The room will be located in an easy accessible area in Beachhaven and the city. First the children will explain their drawings to each other. For example, why they decided to draw specific places or what difference they experience between summer and winter. This will not take longer than an hour. Second, I invite each participant to show the city/Beachhaven children their favourite places. We will go for a walk, which is lead by each child for a specific time. The children will be given a camera to take pictures of their favourite places or anything else they see as important in their neighbourhood for playing outside. This may also entail disabling features. We will also carry a GPS along to track the route we walk and geo-reference the pictures the children are going to take. Our group will be accompanied by enough assistants to ensure the safety of the children. The assistants will also take notes about the children’s use of their neighbourhood and they will take pictures along our walk. The walk will take up to three hours as the children will be given time to experience the favourite and less favourite places each time. I guarantee that all the information collected and places visited will be handled with respect as well as the anonymity of your child.

Third, when we will be back from our walk, I will project their GPS maps on a wall and each child can show their summer and winter movements.

Fourth, the meeting will be repeated a week or two later so that all participants get the chance to show their neighbourhood as one meeting will take place in the city and one in Beachhaven. When the meeting takes place in Beachhaven, I ask the Beachhaven children to meet directly in the room, whereas the inner city children will meet earlier at a central place so that we can catch public transport together to Beachhaven and vice versa.

I would like to audiotape the meeting and the walk with your and your child’s permission. Due to the nature of a ‘focus group’ it is not possible for your child to edit or withdraw any information given during the discussion. That means anything your child says cannot be deleted or removed, but your child has the right not to answer questions. Further, I might not be able to sustain confidentiality during the meeting, but I will make any attempt to maintain your anonymity in all other parts of the project. All information collected during the focus group discussion will be treated with respect. I will keep the tapes along with the transcripts and consent forms in a locked cabinet in the School of environment and destroy all the material after 6 years.

The transcription will be carried out by an assistant who has signed a confidentiality agreement and you and your child can edit or withdraw any information up to one month after the transcript is sent to you, if you wish to receive one. Further, I guarantee your child’s anonymity in this study and that all information given by your child will be handled with respect. After transcription, tapes and notes as well as the assent forms, consent forms, GPS data and the pictures will be stored in a locked cabinet in the School Environment (SoE) and destroyed after 6 years.

To carry out the follow up meeting, I need your consent for your child’s participation. Your child has not to participate in these follow up meetings. Participating in these meetings is entirely voluntary for your child. If you agree to let your child participate in these follow up meetings, please circle the appropriate wording and sign the consent form.

All in all, your child would have the right to withdraw from the research project up to one month after the data collection is finished without giving reasons.

My supervisors and I will be the only people allowed to access the information collected during the whole research process. Further, I assure the anonymity of all participants during any documentation of the results in this research. Should you be interested in the results of this research, a copy of the thesis summary will be made available to you.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:

**The Director of School is:**
Professor Glenn McGregor
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: (09) 373 7599 extn. *****

**For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:**

The Chair
The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
The University of Auckland
Office of the Vice Chancellor
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Tel.: 373-7599 extn *****
Appendix 22: Assent Form Child Participant follow up meeting

Assent Form

THIS ASSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Title: Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

To: Child participant

Researcher: Christina Rebekka Ergler, PhD Candidate

Somebody explained this research project to me. I had time to ask all the questions I wanted to ask and got them answered.

I agree to take part in the follow up meetings.
I know that I don’t have to participate in the meetings – I am taking part because I want to.
I know that I will share my drawings and GPS movements with the other participants.
I know that we will go for a walk and that I can show all the fun places to play to the inner city/Beachhaven children.
I know that on the walk, I can take pictures of the places I like to play at.
I know that someone will also take photos of me during the walk.
I know that we will meet two times. One time in Beachhaven and one time in the inner city.
I know that at one time we will take the bus to get to the meeting place.
I know that the meetings and walks will be recorded and that the voice recorder cannot be switched off once the majority gave permission to use a tape recorder.
I know that I can contact the researcher through my parent/guardian and tell her that I don’t want to participate in the follow up meetings anymore.
I know that I may withdraw any information provided up to one month after the data collection is finished.
I know that someone other than the researcher will transcribe the tapes. The person agreed that he or she will not talk to anyone about the things I told the researcher.
I agree / do not agree to share my drawings.
I agree / do not agree to share my GPS maps.
I agree / do not agree to audiotaped.
I agree / do not agree to show the other participants good places to play in my neighbourhood.
I agree / do not agree to take pictures along the walks.

Signed: ___________________________________
Name: ___________________________________
(Please print clearly) ___________________________________
Date: ___________________________________
## Appendix 23: Confidentiality agreement transcriber

![Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement](image)

**Project Title:**
Understanding the Relationships between Activity and Neighbourhoods in children’s geographies – the power of feelings

**Researcher:** Christina R. Ergler

**Supervisors:** Robin Koams and Karen Witten

**Transcriber:** Pratichi S. Shah

I agree to transcribe the audiotapes/videos for the above research project. I understand that the information contained within them is confidential and must not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone other than the researcher and his/her supervisor(s).

**Name:** Pratichi S. Shah

**Signature:** [Signature]

**Date:** 22nd February 2010

---

## Appendix 24: Climate statistics for Auckland Airport (1971-2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Annually</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rainfall (mm)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wet days</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative humidity (% 9 am)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Mean 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum (°C)</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>Mean 18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (°C)</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>Mean 15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum (°C)</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>Mean 11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of frost</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine (hours)</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

adapted from (Gosai et al., 2009)
Appendix 25: Description of the walkability index and neighbourhood destination accessibility index

The walkability index

The walkability index has been constructed by the wider project this PhD research is embedded in: the URBAN study (Badland et al., 2009, Mavoa et al., 2009). It replicates the methodology described by Leslie et al. (Leslie et al., 2007) combining four built environment variables:

- street connectivity
- dwelling density
- land use
- retail floor area ratio

The walkability index was calculated by URBAN team members on a mesh-block level for North Shore City and Auckland City\textsuperscript{159}. The highest score possible is 40. A high walkability (score of 29-40) indicates high street connectivity which is associated with shorter distances between destinations and increased choice of route, while a higher dwelling density is associated with sustainable living ideologies and increases in service provision. In turn this aspect is closely related to the belief that the more diverse an area is in terms of land use, the more diverse and appealing the area may be for walking to various destinations where goods and services may be used or purchased for example (retail area ratio) (Brown et al., 2009, Frank et al., 2006, Frumkin et al., 2004). The walkability index is based on the sustainable living ideology which contends that the more compact and intermixed an areas is, the shorter the distances between destinations. This in turn affects active transport positively contributing to less carbon dioxide emissions and an increased habitual activity. Although this index has been developed with adults in mind, I see a value in integrating it in my research. Two assumptions guided my choice.

First, the term land use encompasses not only commercial, residential and industrial zoning, but also open spaces. Children can meet at one of the parks falling under the category of open spaces or integrate visits to shops into their play (e.g. buying some ‘lollies’ with pocket money, visiting the DVD store around the corner). The closer these destinations are to their house the more likely parents are to allow children independent access (e.g. for play-dates or to run errands) (Potestio et al., 2009, Timperio et al., 2004, Veitch et al., 2007). While the latter may influence their physical health and ‘environmental literacy’ positively, the former

\textsuperscript{159} Statistics New Zealand collects statistical data on various geographical scales. A mesh-block is the smallest geographical entity available, but they can vary from a small city block to large blocks in rural areas.
may allow children to explore the environment independently when accessing these destinations within walking distance; hence they autonomously learn the requirements of the street. Second, a higher dwelling density may indicate the possibility of finding play mates within walking distance. This aspect may be used as a proxy: children are more likely allowed to visit friends on their own when distances to be traversed are shorter.

**The neighbourhood destination accessibility index (NDAI)**

The neighbourhood destination accessibility index is an area-level measure of the availability of a variety of destinations within a 800m road network buffer. The index has to be seen as spatial information on the varying levels of access residents have within walking distance of their home across a city. This index has been developed by the ‘Neighbourhoods and Health’ project, a Health Research Council funded project associated with URBAN (Mavoa et al., 2009, Witten et al., 2003a, Witten et al., 2011b).

Destinations are divided into eight community resource domains among which education, recreation and social and cultural matters are of particular interest (see table below). Amenities which encourage physical activity were allocated a higher weighting than amenities less likely visited as often as the former (e.g. a general practitioner). The index also takes into account the diversity of destinations people can choose from. For example, it incorporates that access to more than one park or sports club may improve the likelihood to engage in physical activity; people may find a place or facility suiting their needs close by. By way of example, children can choose in which destinations they want to actualise affordances and the higher the diversity of possible destinations the more likely they are to not get bored; they can move on to a different affordance of their choosing if there is more than one destination available. The amenity (destination) diversity can range from 0 indicating low amenity diversity to 31 indicating the highest level possible within the index.

The index scores for Beach Haven and Auckland Central, which have been calculated by research team staff, shows that residents in both areas have a higher amenity diversity (Beach Haven) and the highest one (Auckland Central) compared to other neighbourhoods in their respective cities. Hypothetically, residents in both areas have a good variety of destinations to which they can walk.

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160 Taking this view on diversity of destinations implies to focus on ‘institutionalised’ play settings for children and neglecting that they creatively can transform any environment to their needs. However, I hypothesised if these play spaces are lacking, children may be less likely allowed outdoors independently as adults mainly associate suitable play spaces for children with parks and playgrounds.
## Neighbourhood destination accessible index domains and subdomains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Sub-domain – amenity type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Preschool (e.g. kindergarten, day care, kohanga), school (primary, intermediate, secondary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Bus stop, train station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>Accessible green space, sports facility, beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and cultural</td>
<td>Museum/art gallery, public library, church, cinema, community hall, marae, café and restaurant, alcohol outlet (hotel, tavern, club, bottle store)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food retail</td>
<td>Supermarket, conveniences store/ dairy, petrol station, fast food outlet, butcher and fishmonger, bakery, greengrocer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Banks, credit unions, ATMs, post offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>General practitioner, pharmacy, plunket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other retail</td>
<td>Shopping centre/mall, video shop, retail-op shop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Mavoa et al., 2009, p. 13)

The walkability index and NDAI cannot provide any verification of the assumptions which guided my selection of neighbourhoods as outlined earlier. They can, however, provide an overview on the areas in question in terms of general neighbourhood walkability and the diversity of possible destinations families generally utilise.
### Appendix 26: Methodological strength and weaknesses plotted against time commitment of participants and researcher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Time Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Thick description of everyday experiences, Collaborators’ own reflections and explanations</td>
<td>Snap shots of experiences, No systematic and accurate exploration of play behaviour</td>
<td>Interviews lasted from 20 minutes to 3 hours with the average of an hour, Interviews with parents were longer in summer whereas child interviews took longer in winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood walks (researcher)</td>
<td>Familiarisation with study sites</td>
<td>Only able to observe snapshot behaviour in each neighbourhood at a time and not full behaviour</td>
<td>Varying, but essential to be familiar with locations collaborators talk about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicited drawings of places liked and disliked</td>
<td>Child centered, Enabling children’s creativity, Revealing of places important to child collaborators, Revealing children’s place understanding, Guiding semi-structures interviews</td>
<td>Some children feel more confident drawing than other, Like and dislike of places often not explicitly highlighted</td>
<td>Depending on child, some children spent hours drawing others preferred to sketch only liked and disliked places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel diary</td>
<td>Revealing where, when, with whom time has been spent, Possibility to note feelings in a specific place, Exploring mode of transport</td>
<td>Complex data, Varying validity</td>
<td>High burden on children to fill out diary daily based on the design of the diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental rating</td>
<td>Summary of important elements, Contrast sometimes interview data, Reveal new elements</td>
<td>Snapshot of own understanding, Being comfortable with rating varies</td>
<td>Quick as it happened at the end of interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Detailed accounts of social and material background, Detailed account of play and activity behaviour</td>
<td>Biased as self-rated behaviour, No meaning and experiences revealed, Parents report on children’s’ activities denying their expertise</td>
<td>Parents reported filling out the pen-and paper survey took between 15 and 45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS Tracking</td>
<td>Overview of children’s movement, Overview of space and time use, Representation of mobility patterns via maps</td>
<td>Weak in collecting indoor movements, Meaning and experiences of and in places not revealed, No information on socio-economic context</td>
<td>Worn for 4 consecutive days, Once clipped on belt no additional procedures required until turning it off in the evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-Child neighbourhood walk</td>
<td>Thick description of everyday experiences, Collaborators’ own reflections and explanations, Child centered as children show children neighbourhood, Collaboration of children as researchers</td>
<td>High commitment needed from children, Only able to show a limited area in neighbourhood, Need to provide each child with camera, recorder and GPS when aim to document walk, Need to train field assistants, Possible difficulties in providing a safe and secure environment for all children</td>
<td>High time commitment for child and adult researchers, Meetings took place an entire day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Ethnography</td>
<td>Child Analyst</td>
<td>Child researchers’ understanding of data, Ground truth of children’s’ experiences</td>
<td>Varying capabilities and commitment from child researchers affects analysis, Need to train children in analysing data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>