

Growing up urban: children and youth geographies of the city

GGRC13

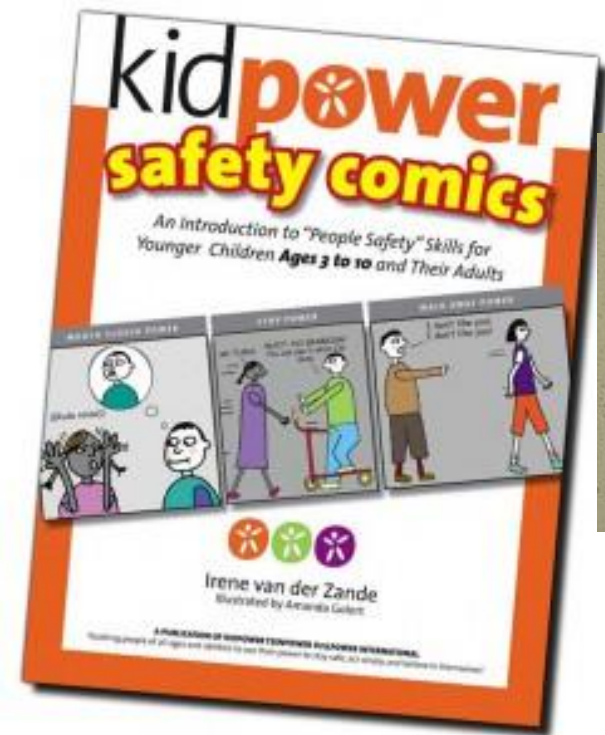


Questions for today

- What kinds of political geographies tend to transect the lives of **youth** and **children** in the city?
- If the city is supposed to be a place of freedom and autonomy, how free are children and youth?
- How can we connect some of the themes from previous lectures and readings to today's theme regarding securing space, being 'in' and 'out' of place, public and private space etc.?

Outline

- City as freedom, city as morally corrupt space
- Risk, children and the dark metropolis
- “Young people today” – Fears of social disorder, skateboarding and curfews
- ‘Play’ as a deeply subversive practice
- Your quizzes, assignment 1 etc...



Child abduction by strangers a major risk in Canadian cities?

- “Police statistics show 25 children of the 46,718 reported missing in 2011 listed as “abducted by stranger.” But that could be a family member, or a family friend.
- “Of the 90 stranger abduction missing child reports that had been entered into the national police database in 2000 and 2001, [researchers] found **just two** of those children had been abducted by someone other than a relative or a close family friend.”
- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/child-abductions-by-strangers-rare-in-canada-1.1335061>



AlaskaTravel.com



The securitization of sub/urban childhoods

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw6mpjIG86s>



Risk, children and urban space

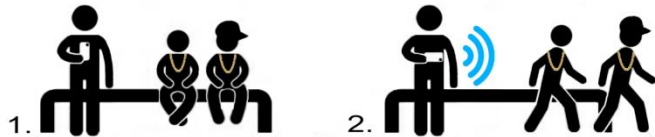


- The right to risky play:
“The Land”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEsgtVhOGq4>



Public space as adult space



PROBLEMS WITH LOITERING YOUTH?

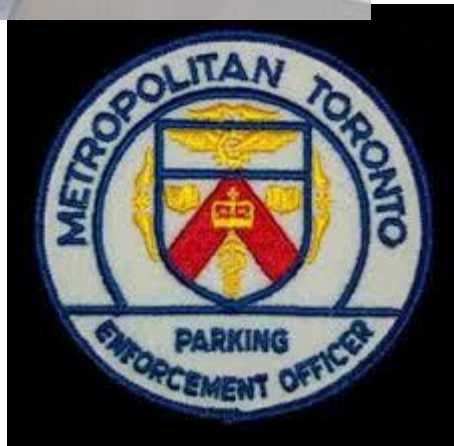
KNOWN FROM: POLICE, SCHOOLS & STATIONS

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Jinner-Anti-Loitering/dp/B00JBD9B7A>

Collins and Kearns argue:
“Against a backdrop of
widespread panic about
children’s safety and the
unruliness of teenagers,
efforts to remove youth
from public space are
becoming increasingly
pervasive”.

(P 289)

The city as a legal fabric



- Laws governing activities (commercial laws, traffic laws, public safety laws, environmental laws, parking laws, liability laws etc...)
- These kinds of laws tend to be constructed around “maintaining order”
- They also often dictate what we can and cannot do in urban space very specifically.

Fearing youth and fearing **for** youth

“For the past 150 years, young people in public space – especially male working class youth – have been associated with a lack of discipline, disorder, immorality, and crime, leading to a definition of ‘youth as trouble’” (Carr 993).

- Yet as scholars like Rachel Pain points out young people between the ages of 16-24 are much more likely to be victims of crime.



Carr's first claims

- “Scholars from a variety of disciplines have explored the long Western tradition of associating young people’s presence with crime and disorder...” (Carr, p. 989)

YET

- There has been “... a tendency to overlook these same people’s agency in dealing with, responding to, or even appropriating the logics of the law.” (ibid. 989).

Private property and young people's geographies

- Carr asks: how have young people's material realities engaged with and developed in reaction to complicated regimes of property?
- The laws around public space “engages in a constant process of mutual development with those it regulates”.

Producing 'outlaw' subjects



- Skateboarding got its start in the 1960s/70s in the USA
- Because most private property owners would not give permission to skateboarders to use their property (including pools)
- The development of skateboarding was by its nature illicit.

Cities as a places of freedom and danger



Youth asserting and testing the boundaries of their freedom, however, has often been subject to harsh crackdowns by police, particularly where such activities deviate from “conventional consumption and production” (Carr 993)



Private property, and ‘propertyscapes’



- Carr argues that skateboarding in Seattle has been not just about the struggle to find places to skate
- It has more fundamentally been “an effort to claim space free from the logics of property”. (Carr 997)

‘Play’ as radical urban practice?



Architecture is intended for the production of things – either... commodities....knowledge... information..... – skateboarding, however, offers no such contribution, consuming the building while not engaging with its productive activity.” Carr p.

Youth claiming space, establishing presence



- Skateboarding has always been in part as a subversive urban practice – which has been inseparable from **using urban space in ways that it was never intended for.**

Youth & civil disobedience



Skate-proofing architecture: defensive architecture as passive regulation

- “There is almost nothing like that anymore where you have a good ledge with a clear runway. Almost all street spots have disappeared. By the end of the 1990s street was pretty much bust and skateproofed. In fact, most big cities are almost unskatable now.” (Carr 996).





- Carr argues, though, that it would be an error to assume that youth skateboarders have simply been ‘displaced’ by architectural, policing, and regulatory practices.
- In fact, youth exercise their agency to adapt to and even use laws to their advantage.

Agency

- **Agency** is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices, even when there might be significant constraints on which choices are available to them, and the extent to which they can enact change.
- Campaigning for a skate park in Ireland
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JAzXJiLD0w>

Invisibilizing youth by criminalizing their use of public space

CURFEW VIOLATIONS
PHILADELPHIA CODE §10-300

IF YOU ARE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE

SUNDAY - THURSDAY: 10:30 PM - 6:00 AM
FRIDAY & SATURDAY: 12:00 MIDNIGHT - 6:00 AM

IF YOU ARE UNDER 13 YEARS OF AGE

SUNDAY - THURSDAY: 9:00 PM - 6:00 AM (9:30 PM DURING SUMMER)
FRIDAY & SATURDAY: 10:00 PM - 6:00 AM (YEAR ROUND)

PENALTIES

JUVENILES & BUSINESS OPERATORS - \$250.00 TO \$350.00 PARENTS - \$150.00 TO \$200.00

PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPARTMENT :: www.ppdonline.org



- Collins and Kearns, meanwhile, argue that curfews are “inherently geographical” (p 390), and they see curfews on youth (in NZ) as a clear part of a “broader trend... to “cleanse the streets of undesirables” and restore social order to public space (p 391)

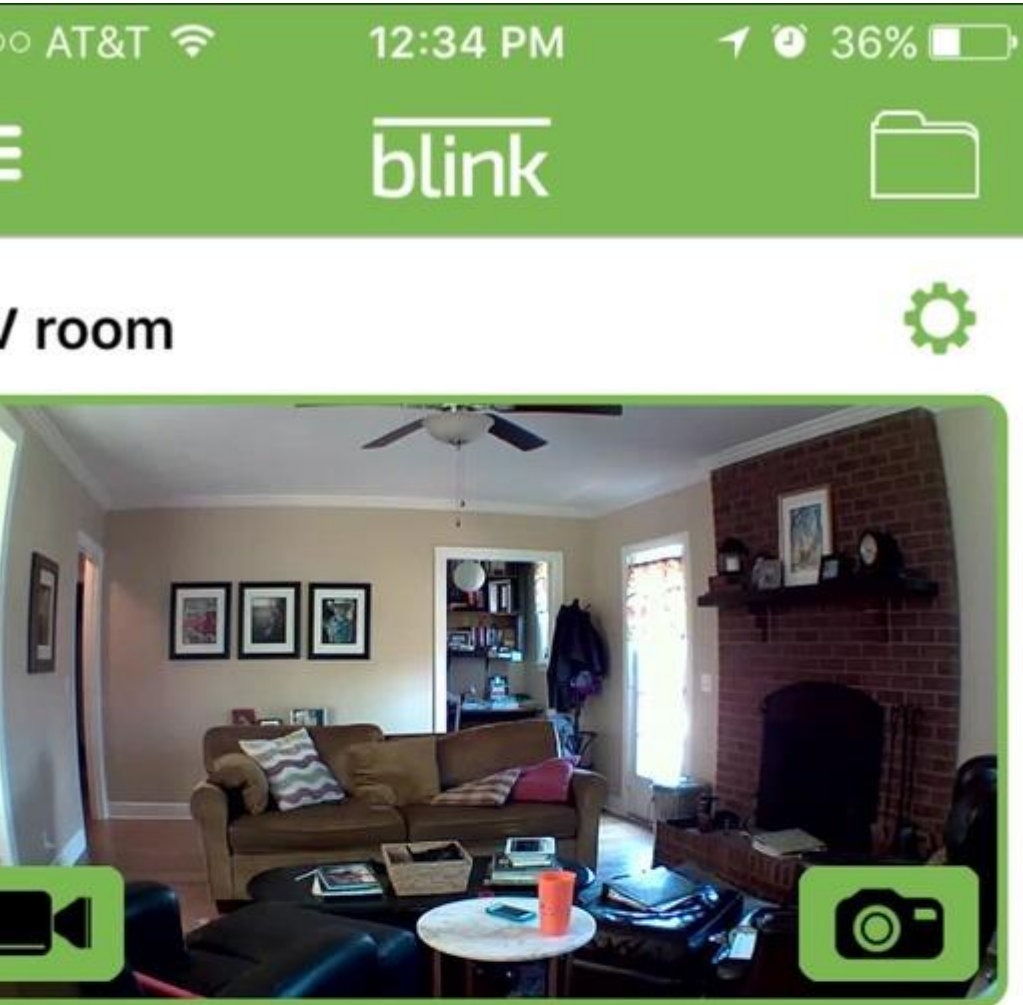
Safe from harm and away from trouble?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrBgPoxgy1Q>

- There is also evidence to suggest that curfews affect crime and victimization less by reducing overall offending than by displacing it in time and space.

The home as a space of surveillance



“...one could suggest that curfews are disciplinary mechanisms which encourage families to restrict the spatio-temporal freedoms... of children in accordance with the wishes of local authorities.” (Collins and Kearns 2001: 397)

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND CITY STUDIES

Dear Human Geography and City Studies students:

Please join your fellow Human Geography and City Studies students and your professors in an informal conversation about the Trump administration, the recent order on immigration and travel to the United States, and issues of Islamophobia, racism, and social injustice that affect us.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH, 2017
1:30-2:30 PM
MW 324**



This is an inclusive, caring, and supportive community space for a meaningful conversation about these issues
- to share and listen to thoughts, concerns and experiences and to suggest ideas for how we might address these issues and concerns as a department.

**PLEASE DROP IN AND BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH!
TEA, COFFEE, JUICE, AND COOKIES WILL BE AVAILABLE**

*Co-organized by the
Geography and City Studies Student Association (GCSA) and
Human Geography and City Studies Faculty Members*

Some takeaways

- Moral panics about youth and children on the street have long been a part of the legal and social regulation of public spaces.
- Youth in particular have often been constructed as potential victims and victimizers.
- Youth and children often face very different socio-spatial forms of surveillance
- Play and idleness in public space have often been seen as threatening, morally problematic but play itself is a political act, whether to challenge the need to be 'purposeful' in public space, or to subvert the unwritten rules which inflect specific urban spaces.