YOUTH-SPACE, YOUTH-CULTURE:
REVISITING TABOOS AROUND YOUTH SEXUALITY THROUGH A CASE STUDY OF A SLEEPAWAY SUMMER CAMP

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Abstract

The present research is drawn from the hypothesis that summer camps (especially sleepaway ones) are potential scenes of sexual self-recognitions and play important role in the way children and young people develop their gender and sexual subjectivity. Through semi-structured interviews conducted with current and earlier youth leaders about the way they negotiate their own sexuality and gender performances among each other and in relation to campers and people higher up in the hierarchy, I will discuss the role of space and locality. I argue that in the temporary context of a summer camp the making of social (sexual / gender) norms are embedded in and particular to their spatial context and therefore it is useful to draw on cultural geography that has been increasingly embracing post-structuralist theories focusing on questions of 'affect', 'emotions', 'practice' and 'performativity' (Thrift 2007). I conclude that camps are important to sexual self-recognition simply because they allow more space and time for exploration as well as feelings of freedom associated with the camp space encourages experimentation. On the other hand this freedom is also repressive in a sense that sexuality (like in many other youth culture is seen as a definer of status symbol) is encouraged through peer pressure, which has been reinforced through games with sexual connotation (at least until these games were banned).

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1. Introduction

As a starting point my research is drawn from the hypothesis that summer camps (especially sleepaway ones) are potential scenes of sexual self-recognitions and play important role in the way children and young people develop their gender and sexual subjectivity. Through semi-structured interviews conducted with current and earlier youth leaders about the way they negotiate their own sexuality and gender performances among each other and in relation to campers and people higher up in the hierarchy, I will discuss the role of space and locality in these processes.

While there have been researches conducted both on summer camps, most often from a child development perspective, as well as youth sexuality has become an increasingly debated topic, there has not been literature that focused on sexuality and gender of children and young people within the context of summer camps. My thesis aims to fill this gap because of two reasons; on the one hand "every summer more than 10 million children attend day or resident [sleepaway] camps sponsored by churches, not-for-profit youth agencies, and independent operators" (Henderson et al. 2007, 987) internationally and tens of thousands of children in over 1000 camps in Hungary (gyerektabor-kereso.hu, 2015) and therefore it effects a great number. On the other hand observing summer camps gives a great opportunity to learn about children and youth culture in general by providing a sort of 'control zone' in relation to everyday places and practices.

In the following, the concept of 'youth culture' will be used to describe the youth culture of the present Summer Camp By youth culture I refer to the everyday practices and interactions between the campers as well as the youth leaders. So the youth culture discussed here, is particular to this Summer Camp and does not refer to youth culture in a general sense.

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I focused my research with the following research question:

- How gender and sexuality of children and young people are performed and understood in the Summer Camp?
- What is the role of space in the way youth culture, including youth sexuality is negotiated in the Summer Camp?

To address these research questions, this paper has been divided up into the following three analytical chapter: In the first analytical chapter ('*Youth Spaces: the Summer Camp as a control zone*'), I observe the camp as a spatial entity, not only as a physically distinctive space, but as a kind of mental escape from everyday life, creating a unique atmosphere, assumedly perceived as a safe space from ordinary hegemonic power structure / relations. I call this space of renegotiated power structure 'campscape' to refer to the geographical discourse on the cultural / social process of place making (Lefebvre 1975), the more recent literature on geographies of affect or emotions (Thrift 2007), and it's relation to landscape (Waterto 2013). In the second analytical chapter ('*Youth culture: "Everybody is looking forward to the camp"*'), I move on to discuss the literature concerning child developmental processes associated with and desired from summer camps (i.e. parents sending their children to gain certan knowledge, improve physical fitness etc.) to highlight the problematic nature of the normative idea of development by comparing and contrasting the motivations of parents and campers to attend summer camps. Finally, in the third analytical chapter ('*Child and youth sexuality: tabooisation and indoctrination*'), through the discussion of two games with sexual connotation played at the Summer Camp, and youth leader's perception on 'sex in the camp', I will highlight the ambiguities that arose in relation to the border between prohibiting and criminalizing on the one hand and encouragement and over sexualisation on the other.

In conclusion, I argue that space has an important role in the way sexualities are performed in the camp because of the feelings of freedom and protection it evokes. Camps are important to sexual self-recognition simply because they allow more space / time for exploration as well as feeling of freedom encourages experimentation. On the other hand this freedom is also repressive in a sense that sexuality (like in other youth culture is associated with 'coolness') is encouraged though peer pressure that has even more space in the camp as well as games with sexual implication may reinforce this idea of sexual activity being seen as a status symbol.

1.1. A short introduction to the relevant literature and to the main concepts

Foucault (1980) in the History of Sexuality discusses the way tabooisation of childhood and adolescent sexuality was a result of socio-political change as regulatory and policing technique as part of a new regulatory system he refers to as governmentality. Foucault highlights the particularity of the way children are seen in Western (middle-class) context as sexually innocent and passive and argues that this naïveté is a manifestation of conscious strategy closely linked to national, political goals. That is to say such biopolitcs, as it is used by Foucault, is a mean to regulate people through their sexuality and thus to define normalcy and morality attached to nations and borders (and subcultures).

Following Foucault, Epstein (2001, 129) adds that "despite many constraints and silence, schools and universities have spaces where sexualities are not only permitted but even required in either formal or informal contexts". This may include "fantasies of heterosexual families" at a younger age and "desirable popstars" starting from elementary school and later on at the prom and at the school disco (Myers and Raymond 2010; Epstein et al. 2001, 132). According to Epstein et al. (2001, 132). In such contexts students are expected to perform masculinity, femininity and thus heterosexuality in an exaggerated manner.

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Peer pressure plays an important role of performing sexualities and the in the way these sexualities are performed and as Selikow et al. (2009) highlight that in fact sexuality and sexual activity shapes power structure and determines status within the youth culture. But as Maxwell and Chase (2008) point it out the way peer pressure is constructed is complex in terms of the impacts of the wider social context in which the group is placed, and thus the norms of a given peer group are also shaped by outer forces (may the dominant discourse of the group be conforming or rejective of those wider norms), defining the 'expectations' from its members.

In the following I will argue that in the temporary context of a summer camp the making of these norms are embedded in and particular to their spatial context and therefore it is useful to draw on cultural geography that has been increasingly embracing post-structuralist theories focusing on questions of 'affect', 'emotions', 'practice' and 'performativity'. Non-representational theory (Thrift 2007) or non-representational theories (Anderson and Harrison 2006) aim to move beyond the obsession with representation and seek to understand how "social is emplaced within the materiality of the world" (Latham 2003, 35). By drawing on Thrift, Waterton (2013, 66) argues that "this turn to non-representation' within specifically landscape-focused research seems to have been triggered by a growing tension towards the dominant – and somewhat obdurate – notion that landscape can somehow be captured and understood as things that are seen and gazed upon". Non-representational theories, by drawing on new materialism argue that experiencing landscape involves a "full range of sensory experiences: it is not only, visual, but textures to the touch and resonating with smells, touch, sounds [and] tastes" (Waterton 2013, 69). In this sense landscape is not a passive entity and a result of our understanding, but landscape "force us to think", it "affect", "provokes" and "stimulate" (Waterton 2013). Following this path, I use the concept of 'campscape' to conceptualise the way youth culture is unique to its space and to highlight its important role in the way youth sexuality is performed in the Summer Camp.

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Finally, I shall mention two body of existing literature that could have been also beneficial to the present case study, but due to the scope of my research I decided not to incorporate them, but to mention them here to point out further implication and potentials in relation to camp studies in the field of gender studies and sexuality. First, in social psychology camps have been researched to study intergroup and intragroup behaviour and processes (Sherif et al. 1955). Second, 'camp studies' also grew as a sub-field within geography and geopolitics, but focusing on "concentration, detention, transit, identification, refugee, military and training camps" (Minca 2015, 74).

1.2. The Summer Camp

The present case study is based on a non-religious[1] Jewish sleepaway summer camp organised in the Hungarian countryside, for both Jewish and non-Jewish youth, from Hungary and from abroad, who are interested in (or willing to learn about) Jewish culture. The camp has four, twelve days sessions each summer and hosts approximately $400 - 500$ campers in each session. The youth leaders may have any background; there is no religious or any kind of discrimination. Usually those, who attended the camp as campers are those, who later become the youth leaders. Before they can actually work at the camp they have to attend a two years long training, including theoretical and practical sessions, ending with an examination. The training also involve self-reflectivity and discussions on identity, also touching up on questions sexuality as it has been noted by some on the interviews as well. The more senior member of the camp (the age group leaders and the camp leaders) make the final decision who gets to work in the camp; and with a mutual agreement with which age group and also with whom, as group leaders always work in pairs. The youth leaders are approximately between the ages of 18-22 and they

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[1] While the camp provides space and facilities for religious practices (including that the Summer Camp is kosher), it does not require campers to follow religious rules, apart from wearing kippah in the dining hall or other minor obligations that are considered as "respect" to the traditions.

are led by age group leader, who are usually between 21-26 years old, but there are no upper age limit.

There are four age group, for children and young people between the ages of 6-18. The camp is an international summer camp, meaning that children arrive from several countries both from the region and from other parts of the world. However there are only one or a few groups that are international, for those campers, who chose to be in these groups and language is not a barrier for them. During the camp they live in houses of different sizes in gender and age segregated rooms for twelve days. There are bigger programs, where the whole camp is present and smaller ones where only the age group or only the age group of a given country or all the age groups of the given country is present. However the very basic unit of the camp is a group of approximately 12 campers with two youth leaders.

Everyday programs include singing, dancing, sport, pool-time, games lead by the group leaders and informal, interactive learning about the yearly changing theme of the Summer Camp that is always somehow linked to Judaism, but also to a wider social, cultural and/or environmental questions.

It is important to reflect on how religion may affect the research and to deconstruct "Jewishness" in the very unique context of the Hungarian Jewish "subculture". I call it a subculture because it is not based on religious beliefs and it cannot be defined by one being born as Jewish as most marriages are mixed and many young people who were born / started to socialise after the 1989 transition happened to grew up within this subculture regardless of their no prior / familial connection to Judaism and many may identify Jewish just as much (or just as little) as those, who would be considered Jewish according to religious definitions – for instance one of my respondents do fall under this category. Therefore while I think it is important to reflect on the processes discussed in the camp from this perspective as well, due

to the complexity of the category "Jewish" and the focus of my paper I will briefly mention this, where I find it appropriate. For instance, it is important to the history of the Summer Camp as well as to the history of the Hungarian Jewish community, and more precisely to its revival after the 1989 transition. I believe the camp had an important role in the way the Jewish community redefined itself in post-1989 Hungary, including the centrality of basic principles of 'left liberalism' and 'social sensitivity'[2] also arisen from a reflection on Holocaust that often aims to go beyond an ethnocentric grief, pointing towards 'tolerance' and social inclusivism in general. This attitude is potentially also reflected in the way sexuality and gender is approached in the summer camp as it will be pointed out in the analysis.

Therefore, the Summer Camp has its own particularities, like every thematic or ideology based summer camps effecting the way youth culture and gender and sexuality is constructed and normalised within, and thus peer pressure is applied. However my goal with this research is not to claim general truths about summer camps, rather to highlight the potentials of researches conducted in summer camps and to reflect on the way youth sexuality is understood by using an alternative context.

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[2] Left-liberalism in Hungarian context, after the transition was broadly understood and interpreted as a political orientation that value both equality and freedom, strives social inclusivism and perhaps could be most typically defined the principles of "negative liberty": "one man's freedom ends where another's starts"

2. Methods, data and positionality

The present research method is based on self-ethnography as far as it was conducted in a summer camp that I have visited every summer for 14 years both as camper and as a youth leader. It was inspired by personal experiences and the endless stories and memories from the camp, including discussions and often heated debates about moralities and the way the camp should deal with questions of sexuality. However while the interview questions were influenced by these memories, as I will detail it later on in this chapter, I aim to step back, in terms of using the stories, memories and experiences of my respondents instead of my own.

2.1. Collection and analysis of the data

In the present research a qualitative case study is used to address the following research questions: How gender and sexuality of children and young people are performed and understood in the Summer Camp? What is the role of space in the way youth culture, including youth sexuality is negotiated in the Summer Camp?

I conducted seven semi-structured interviews with either current or earlier attendants of the Summer Camp, all of them started as campers and after participating in the two years long training program were accepted to work as youth leaders. All of them have worked with various age groups and one out of the seven is now an age group leader, and two of them are no longer visiting the camp. All of my interviewees are either university graduates or currently pursuing a university degree, and thus all of them were above 18 (between the ages of 19-27); and belong to middle-class families. None of them consider themselves 'particularly' religious. One consider herself non-Jewish at all, having the only connection with Judaism is this Summer Camp. The rest of them has more complicated relation to Judaism, including keeping some of

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the traditions, but not practicing on a daily basis or celebrating only (few of) the bigger holidays (such as Passover, Hanukah or Jom Kipur), but 'socially' or 'culturally' associating with the Jewish community. Four of the respondents were female and three of them male, all defining themselves heterosexual, although some would add 'not strictly' or 'more or less'.

As Diamond points it out, it is important to note that during the interview the participants also make sense to their own sexual self. As Diamond writes

> [s]exual self-concept is, to some degree, a creative work in progress that takes shape during the sexual identity interview as the individual organizes and coordinates his or her autobiographical memories with respect to his or her own goals and presumed goals of the researcher. (Diamond 2006, 481)

The narratives constructed by the interviewees are therefore not only informed by their experiences in the camp, both as campers and a youth leaders, but also by their experiences since they last visited the camp. Their understanding of their sexuality as well as the changes in them and their contextual (sexual) value system influences the way they understand the events of the past, their beliefs and 'morals' about youth sexuality and the way they tell those stories. For instance one of the respondents reflected on the lack of experience and immaturity of youth leaders due to their age and saw these as obstacles of responsible group leading:

> *"most of them were below the age of 25, and the youth leaders they are nearly all below 22 for that we can't really say that it is a mature ... I don't know ... pedagogical age." (Lili, earlier youth leader 27)*

With this argument she may imply a variety of points; she may take some of the responsibility off from the shoulders of those youth leaders, protecting them from certain consequences or perhaps she question their capabilities, and at the same time she distance herself from the immaturity she assigns to them.

I see these interviews with the youth leader as an alternative to directly giving voice to children as I believe that the narratives of the youth leaders incorporate their own experiences as campers

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as well as their experiences as youth leaders. It is limited in terms of having interviewed only 'pro-camp' campers, as perhaps only those would want to become youth leaders, who particularly enjoyed attending, it as well as it is limited in a sense that they now see the camp though the lens of a youth leader. However, interviewees, especially those (four), who are in their early stage of their 'youth leader carrier', with only one or two years of experience are still very much embedded in their own camper experiences. That is to say interviewing youth leaders instead of campers have its own limitations as it does not the direct, unmediated experience of campers, but on the other hand their stories gives a narrative incorporating their self-reflexivity and interpretations.

2.2. Positionality: The "peer researcher"

Self-ethnography, like in this case often brings that the researcher is conducting interviews with acquaintances, which has its both positive and negative effects, but definitely requires a detailed reflexivity and deep analysis of positionality. As Turner writes, we need an "objective relation to our own subject" (Turner 1996 in Abrams 2010, 58). By this she means that we need to reflect on our own presence in the interview (and though the whole research) as there is no neutral position. In a broad sense, in my case, it also means to reflect on the fact that I am observing 'from within', which also may have positive as well as negative consequences.

I draw on Abrams' concept of "peer researcher" to reflect on such positionality. As Abrams points it out "one of the reasons we undertake (…) interviews is to reach 'another place' " that is in Abrams case is the past and in this case is the Summer Camps

> [i]n this situation, distance between the parties, whether it be in terms of age or gender or experience, may be advantageous in the sense that a respondent may be more willing to explain and to describe in detail to a stranger than to a peer. (Abrams 2010, 63)

Being a 'peer' thus requires thought though reflexivity and consciousness in terms of meanings and interpretations. I would like to highlight three stages, when my positionality as a "peer

researcher" had to be reflected on through the process; the preparation, the interview and the analysis. In preparation for the interview I constructed my questions as an interviewer, who uses knowledge 'from within'. For instance I used 'buzz-words' that I thought may trigger memories of the past based on my memories. While on the one hand this seemed to work and created a great space for storytelling, I have to be aware of the limitations of this method too. In particular that these 'buzz-words' are very much informed by my own (selective) memory.

Perhaps, the most telling example from the interview is when I asked the following question:

"*And there is this game called the kiss-fight (harci-pusz). What do you think about that?*"

This question seemed to bring up interesting and relevant memories of the interviewees. For instance one of the interviewees highlighted the complex micro-politics of the camp: "*I think that is a divisive problem among the youth leaders*" and she also talked about sexual identity, body perception, and potential differences among campers and different age groups: "*until a certain age, it is really possible to see it without any sexual connotation*", "*I was a teenager, I didn't feel comfortable in my body*"; as well as the issue of peer-pressure: "*and yes I did feel like I was pressured, because it would have been embarrassing to leave*". [3]

However, I have to understand her answer in a very 'contextual sense'. As Abrams notes, the researcher is "likely display traits of his or her subjective self" that may "contribute to the way interviewer construct and perform their story" (Abrams 2010, 60). Drawing on Mead, Abrams highlight the usefulness of symbolic interaction theory that I believe is particularly helpful in such case, as it helps to understand the particularity of the stories told to the particular event of the interview; it is a "version of the past created within a specific context and for a specific purpose" (Abrams 2010, 58-9). That is to say, my interviewees' response should be understood

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[3] I will return to these significant points made by the interviewee later on in the analysis.

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as a performance informed by her knowledge about and interpretation of my research as well as my personhood, including "moralities" one may or assumed to associate with me.

Finally, as a peer-researcher I have to face further interpretive dilemmas that arise from the shared language and symbolic system with my interviewee, or even its assumed presence. This links back the above quote from Abrams, which suggests that telling to a stranger, with whom the narrator does not share a common ground, inclines to be more expressive. In terms of analysis the peer-researcher is pressured into a situation to use her own interpretation of the (assumed) common language to present it to the wider public. With these in mind, I move on to analyse these interviews in the following three chapters in conjunction with the existing literature.

3. Youth Spaces: the Summer Camp as a control zone

The camp is a unique environment that is different from the everyday spaces (home, school, public space) of children and young people. As I will highlight it through my interviewees comparisons there are certain shared features with each of the everyday spaces, but my interviewees saw the camp as a unique space that contains the "best [characteristics] of all". However, neither the summer camps should be understood outside of their socio-economic system, meaning their primary goal is to provide a solution for parents during the summer in the form of organised childcare.

While youth geography has gained an increasing interest among researchers the currently existing literature have focused on home, school, and streets (urban or rural, including semi-public spaces, such as – commercialised – playgrounds). Following Holloway and Valentine (2000) I will keep on referring to these as "everyday spaces". In this Chapter, first I will conceptualise the 'special' space of the summer camp in relation to the triangle of everyday spaces of home, school and streets through my interviewees' comparative interpretation of these spaces in which (their) youth culture is formed and negotiated. After setting up the scene of the summer camp in relation to everyday spaces, I will further explore the way campers negotiate and relate to what I refer to as the 'campscape'. Non-representational theories (Thrift 2007, Anderson and Harrison 2006) and the geography of affect have given a particularly helpful theoretical frame to do so.

That is to say in a broader sense my aim in this Chapter is to highlight the importance of physical space in understanding child cultures and the way children actively and reciprocally form and formed by their environment, the space they inhabit (Gramsci 1985, Lefebvre 2007). In addition

I would like to note the very similarities between youth geography and feminist geography in terms the thematic fields each encounter: most importantly perhaps (in this case) the rhetoric of safety and the attached ideas on who can and should access certain places, drawing on the dichotomies of private (feminine) – public (masculine) spaces (Bondi and Damaris 2003).

3.1. The role of locality and (the built) environment

Holloway and Valentine (2000) gave an extensive overview of the role and presence of spatiality in the life and 'development' of children in their edited book *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living, Learning*. The book as a whole, having chapters from different parts of the world, gives a great insight into the socially constructed nature of *childhood* and the category of *child* in general. While my focus is of local, micro scale (just like the individual chapters in the book of Holloway and Valentine), as a pre-note on tabooisation, to be discussed in Chapter 5, I shall mention the way spatiality and children's geography helps to understand the particularity of such categories. As Holloway and Valentine (2000) writes these categories and the way these categories are dealt with make sense only within their context and therefore should not be seen as universal truths:

> Though there are important questions to be asked about the global distribution of resources (…), which means that some children must work to ensure household survival whilst others can over-consume, we need to balance our concerns for the rights of children with a recognition that 'universal' rights are often based on ethnocentric definitions of childhood. (Holloway and Valentine 2000, 8)

This is an important point that sums up conspicuously the role of locality and environment that I will look at in more detail on a local level in the rest of this chapter.

The built environment just as much as the attached discourses are saturated with disciplining strategies, determining who have access to certain spaces (Valentine 1997). Starting from the very direct legally defined rules, such as people under the age of 18, in Hungary are not allowed

to access tobacco shops[4] until more hidden scripts suggesting that (young) women should not walk alone at night or that children should be accompanied by adults in public spaces. Discussion on the triangle of home-school-streets in relation to children, highlights such disciplining strategies.

Home, as Sibley (1995 in Holloway and Valentine, 2000, 11) writes, is a "locus of power relations" and "a space which is constituted through familial rules and regulations which demarcate appropriate ways for children to behave". Such understanding of home arose following the industrial revolution, when home and work place have separated, and "home came to contextualise familial experiences" (Christensen and James 2000, 123). Children have become increasingly dependent upon their families and their home; and their separation and independence have been marked by physical relocation of their home (i.e. moving out the parental home) (Christensen and Jame 2000, 123). Therefore, home is both the space of security and vulnerability.

School, as Aitken (1994, 90) points it out, are "institutional spaces through which adults attempt to control children, and through which differences between children are reinscribed" .

> A major purpose of school control is to socialize children with regard to their roles in life and their places in society. It serves the larger stratified society by inculcating compliant citizens and productive workers who will be prepared to assume roles considered appropriate to the pretension of their race, class and gender identities. (Aitken 1994:90)

Public space and primarily the public space of the city has been discussed as spaces, where the imagination of children serves in "turning aspects of the everyday landscape from ornamental ponds to walls into skateboard runs" (Aitken and Ginsberg 1988 in Holloway and Valentine, 2000, 14). Others, highlighted that non-purpose built, non-formally-designated playgrounds "such as waste ground and open space" are preferred places for children to play (Ward 1978

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[4] Hungarian legal act 2012. CXXXIV.

and Sibley 1991 in Holloway and Valentine, 2000, 13). There is also an increasing tendency among more recent researches on children's presence in public space that focuses on safety and dangerous public spaces on the one hand and the vulnerability of children on the other. This literature particularly resonates and often overlaps with feminist geography and the geography of fear, where for instance discourse around vulnerability is used to discipline, women, children (or other subordinated or marginalised groups) to justify certain discipling strategies (see for instance Kern 2010, Pain 2001). Such discourses are also often distinguish between vulnerable children, who are at risk in public space from those, who are part of the risk usually associated with lower socio-economic status (Holloway and Valentine, 2000). In an earlier study of Valentine (1997 in Holloway and Valentine, 2000) discuss the way parents and children "conceive of and negotiate these risks in socioeconomically mixed urban and rural areas, emphasising both the importance of local parenting cultures and children's agency in the construction and contestation of family rules about use of the street".

I asked my interviewees to compare this triangle of everyday spaces with the space of the summer camp and most of them summed up their perceptions of the camp as if it is a combination of all, but neither. More precisely many of them saw it as a space that contains *"the best of all"*. However, the above notes on "everyday spaces" are not only subject to context, but also subject to debate therefore, also the descriptions of my interviewees will be relative to the way they perceive their everyday spaces. That is to say, their answers both reflected the way they perceive the camp, as well as but it also allowed to grasp the way they relate, understand and (culturally/socially) construct everyday spaces. One of the youth leaders defined these places the following way:

> *"[the camp-space] is special, because you are not in school, but you can be with your school community ... but you are not with parents ... but it has a homey intimacy ...so it's not so rigid, like meeting in town... so it means that a lot of positive things unite in the camp, in the camp-space, which also allows [the*

campers] to think about sexuality more actively for instance (...) because it is very intimate." (Gábor, youth leader, 20)

Intimacy, hominess and feeling secure had been a reoccurring way to describe the camp, and nearly all of the interviewees mentioned the liberating feeling of being under less control. Not only did it appear as free from parental control, but also free from a social control (or order) in a wider sense defined in spatial restriction / freedom. For instance, David found it very liberating the way the intimacy of home and the commonality of public space merges as he said,

"in a way it is a public space where there are no properties. There are rooms and beds, but there aren't marked private spheres" (David, youth leader 21)

I found this statement a particularly strong critique of everyday social order reflecting on its property based commodified structure. Like David, others also noted that the camp is also similar to the school because it is a site of education, only that education happens through a very different approach.

"... at the same time it is space for education, even if not in its traditional sense, but in an informal way... so it's not like a teacher-student relation" (David, youth leader 21)

"....a little bit like a school, but, when I say school it makes people think a of school in a formal sense and the Summer Camp is not like that at all...it is like a home, with a 'mom' and a 'dad' [referring to the group leaders], who teach you in a good way for interesting things continuously" (Kati, youth leader 21)

As the above quotes imply interviewees distinguished between the possibilities of learning (understood as something positive) from the institutional, hierarchical setting of the school (seen as something negative). To sum up the main points made by the interviewees were the experience of freedom and liberation linked to the camp as opposed to control and discipline of the school and home. On the other hand positive similarities included intimacy shared with home and the presence of peers and the possibility to learn and experience new things, shared

with the school. Public space was associated with more freedom in the case of older campers, but it was described as a different type of freedom that lack intimacy.

There is a complexity in the way these feelings are attached to the camp that is inseparable from the space itself. The same people can have meetings during the year and the same programs can be organised in the community house, but the very unique feeling (mostly associated with freedom perhaps) is only associated with the camp-space, which I will further explore in the next section.

3.2. *Affect and the 'campscape': Liberating fences*

> "To 'feel' landscape in the expressive poetics of spacing is a way to imagine one's place in the world. The individual can feel so connected with space that s/he no longer is aware, momentarily, of being (merely) human; we may become the event, we may become the landscape" (Crouch 2010, 14)

The increasingly blurry borders between disciplines and the desire to make sense to the world around us from a more critical perspective is signalled by the different 'turns' in different disciplines appropriating theories form one another. Social and cultural studies from the 1980s started to take a 'spatial turn' mainly adopting theories from geographical science, nearly entirely diminishing the border between the two. At the same time and increasingly from the mid-2000s social sciences faced an 'affective turn' starting to reflect on the social (and even the spatial) construction of emotions. In human geography, also often referred to as cultural geography of affect, the most debated theory came about by the affective turn has been termed as non-representational theory by Nigel Thrift (2007) during the mid-1990s. However, others suggest that it is more accurate to refer to it as "non-representational theories" (Anderson and Harrison 2006) or "more-than-representational" (Lorimer 2005) as it cannot be conceptualised as a single theory, but more of "an umbrella term for diverse work that seeks to better cope with our self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multisensual worlds". (Lorimer 2005:83). Non-representational theories were primarily inspired by scholars of social/cultural-

constructivism, phenomenology and post-structuralism (including Merleau-Ponty, Deluze, Butler, Latour), striving to incorporate notions of 'affect', 'emotion', 'embodiment', 'performance' and 'practice' in the field landscape research and more generally in the field of human geography. (Waterton 2013, 66) Affect and non-representational theories seek to move beyond the question of representation, "re-focus cultural geographic concerns on performativity and bodily practices" (Patchett 2015, Thrift 1997) and engaged with "mundane everyday practices that shape the conduct of human beings towards others and themselves in particular sites" (Thrift 1997: 142). That is to say non-representational theory is interested in reflecting on the way social is embedded in the physical world and way physical spatiality interact with and embrace culture through affect.

For the present case study non-representational theories are particularly useful. By drawing on the field of landscape studies in cultural geography it helps to understand, what I refer to here as 'campscape'. I believe the concept of campscape and its understanding in the described framework is helpful here because it can capture the role of the space in which campers' experiences become unique to the camp and it becomes unique through the socially (or culturally) constructed meanings attached to it. However, non-representational theory aim to go beyond the argument that landscapes exist "as far as culture gives [them] an existence, symbolising and expressing culture's hidden essence" (Rose 2006 in Waterton 2013, 69). But instead, looking new materialism from closer, as experiencing landscape involves a "full range of sensory experiences: it is not only, visual, but textures to the touch and resonating with smells, touch, sounds [and] tastes" (Waterton 2013, 69). In this sense landscape is not a passive entity and a result of our understanding, but landscape "force us to think", it "affect", "provokes" and "stimulate". (Waterton 2013)

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Therefore my aim is highlight that feelings associated with campscape are socially constructed results of the there present youth culture. The unique (youth) culture of the camp gives meaning to its physical space and vice versa only within that space can those feeling evoke and that youth culture is also unique to that particular space.

One of the youth leasers discussed the so called "Summer Camp feeling", which, according to him is something that everyone talks about and it is just a feeling that they all know, but it is impossible to describe with other words because that is the feeling embedded in the context mutually forming and formed by the social. Dina started to talk about the Summer Camp feeling, when I asked him to describe the camp by comparing it to the everyday spaces in the following way:

> *In a relatively small space, a lot of people (...) without parents, in place that is not so formal like a school, but not so intimacy free, rigid space like the Deák Ferenc Square or a party place. But it has the best of all; that I can hang out with friends like in town, the intimacy of home – but without parents, and I am surrounded by my age group like in school. So it results in a unique atmosphere. So this how I would define that special 'Summer Camp feeling'. (Dina, youth leader 19)*

While it could be argued that home, school and public spaces are also unique in their own ways, I believe the uniqueness of the described Summer Camp feeling still has further implications that could be also captured by a slightly farfetched reference to the Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZ) coined by Hakim Bey (1991). The TAZ is usually conceptualized as temporary and spatially flexible zone that is an island within the wider system, but free of its authority and oppression. The camp-space itself is not temporary but it is temporary in the life of the campers. The idea of the TAZ was inspired by "18th century pirate utopias where mini-societies were formed by individuals who consciously lived outside the law even if only temporarily" (Hernández 2007, 155). That is to say, TAZ is "as an island of achieved social change" that is "is able to operate as a free space within the present structures of domination" (Bey 1991 in Hernández 2007, 154-5).

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Laura expressed the way the camp allows such a utopian feeling of desired society by pointing to the secure feelings it can give, where *"anti-Semitism is not an issue"* and that her younger cousin often talks about the *"liberating feeling of being openly gay and being able to openly talk about it"*. She then adds:

> *"In the end it is a bubble, maybe it is too harsh, but sometimes it is a fake closed world … like a little wonderland when you are there and when you come back you are all of a sudden in the world, that is the reality."(Laura, earlier youth leader, 26)*

Her expressions capture the temporality of the lived utopia one can experience through the liberation they experience from a security that does not necessarily mean a security from the dangers associated with adult world.. Or at least from the denagers they aimed to be protected from with the fences, the security guards and the CCTV cameras, but perhaps they feel secure from the invasive social order and control associated with everyday spaces.

For instance, for David it was also important that in this "wonderland" of the camp one have the opportunity to negotiate their environment as they wish and amongst each other:

> *"It is very homely, [campers] actually live here for two weeks and they get a room and for those two weeks they form those rooms based on their identity, tidy or messy, top of the bunk bed, bottom of the bunk bed." (David, youth leader 21)*

However, one should be careful with the romanticised notion of camp. On the one hand, because my interviewees are from the pool of campers, who then decided to become youth leaders therefore even though they pointed moments, when the Summer Camp have become too exhausting and undesired for them so they had to seek a secluded spot (like Laure explained: *"I really liked it here [she points on the terrace of the last row of houses facing a green more abandoned area], when I wanted to escape the buzz of the camp for a bit or I wanted to call my mom, then I came here."*). But in most cases my interviewees were 'pro-camp' campers.

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On the other hand, camps cannot escape the wider system just like the TAZ, but the camp, at least it's very fundamental frame, unlike the TAZ, is organised top-down, resulting in an institutionalised and not necessarily intentional opportunity for children to create youth culture. Therefore, while everyday spaces are organised, both physically and discursively in an adultist way, architecture and design reflect the need of adults and in these context different strategies of control are used to discipline children, the very idea of summer camps neither falls out of this system. Jones (2008) in his discussion on the "otherness of children" in an "adult-imagined universe" highlights that "in many ways more attention is paid to children than ever before (including in academia)". Jones (2008, 2011) highlights the contradictions between the contradiction between this idea that we live in the "century of childhood", when romantic ideologies celebrate the children including that

> So called child-centred education became ever more the norm. Children's rights were enshrined in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child Charter (…) Children have a whole series of 'spaces' set aside from them in terms of play, communication, entertainment, and commodities (television, books, toys, cloths, playgrounds). The physical spaces are often made as attractive (bright colours) and as safe as possible (playgrounds surfaces coated with spongy rubber to protect from injury). (Jones 2008, 201)

That is to say, children regulated in "ghettoised, commodified, institutionalised, regulated, over-determined 'places of play' which seem for some to be the only option" (Jones 2005, 37). However, these spaces "are not considered to be an effective substitute for a geography which somehow is more open and multidimensional, where the wider environment remains as a 'childhood domain'" (Jones 2005, 37). Therefore, summer camps follow the wider divisionism of socio-spatial planning, where spaces are increasingly fragmented and single-use spatial structure is preferred (Smith 1996). It draws up on the dichotomy, where non-productive places are seen as feminized space and aimed to be located outside of the "masculine space" of work and production (Bondi and Damaris 2003). And while strict dichotomies of masculine space of work and feminine space of home of (neo-)liberal cities have been challenged or at least

nuanced (Bondi and Damaris 2003), such cases are there to remind the wider neo-liberal, patriarchal social order that considers children as "Other" (Jones 2008)

In summary of this Chapter, Summer Camps are spaces, where on the one hand fences allow a liberating feeling free of parental and usual social control; as one of the interviewee said she doesn't *"even think about it if [the fences] are there ... at most places they are covered with bushes and [they] are just too busy with the activities within"*. On the other hand these places serve to maintain the wider social structure, where children are positioned as Other, in the need of supervision, protection and placed to 'develop' skills to become adults.

4. Youth culture: "Everybody is looking forward to the camp"

Following the previous chapter, I will further explore the way children and young people negotiate their life in the Summer Camp. First, by discussing existing literature on the role of summer camps regarding to child development and parental or adult expectation; and second by looking at the way children and young people themselves (through the eyes of the youth leaders) negotiate their lives within the Summer Camp and their motivation to attend it. My aim with putting these two perspective next to each other is to detail the contradictions of the child centred culture and the way children in fact 'deal with their situation' as "others" (Jones 2008) in a neo-liberal context, where normative development towards earners and consumers is an ultimate goal and child and youth sexuality is tabooised. While it is presumed that *"everybody is looking forward the camp throughout to the year"* as one of my interviewee said I would like to highlight the very different motivation between children and parents behind their 'excitement' towards the camp.

4.1. Child 'development' and the goal of summer camps

The American Camp Association (ACA) provides yearly reports on summer camps across the United States discussing the effects of 'camp experience' on children (www.acacamps.org). Amongst other researches ACA have defined and categorised potential sights of child development and measures them across the (registered) camps based on staff and parental perception. Their so called annual 'Youth Outcomes Battery' report measures child development based on the following scales: 'affinity for nature scale', 'camp connectedness scale', 'family citizenship scale', 'friendship skills scale', 'independence scale', 'interest in exploration scale', 'perceived competence scale', 'problem-solving confidence scale', 'responsibility scale', 'spiritual well-being scale', 'teamwork scale', 'young camper learning scale' (www.acacamps.org). Henderson et al. (2007, 840) also conducted a similar research

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concluding that based on parental perception children changed (positively) in "leadership, positive values and decision making, positive identity, making friends, spirituality, environmental awareness, social comfort, independence, peer relations, and adventure/ exploration" This research of Henderson et al. (2007, 987) was based on one-week or longer "camp experience from the perspective of parents" where the researchers used a national (US) sample of almost 2,300 parents.

Regardless of how we perceive and understand these developmental categories suggested by the ACA or Henderson et al. (2007) it indicates the significance of summer camps in the life of children. But however overarching and comprehensive the list of developmental categories they considered in their research, like the other researches I fund on summer camps, Henderson et al. (2007) also left out gender and sexuality from their discussion.

That is to say, on the one hand, these reports indicate that camps have, assumed to have or at least desired to have (positive) changes on campers. On the other hand they also prompt a critical reassessment of the meaning of development as I argue it is used and interpreted in a somewhat simplistic way, as well as lack the complexities of the way development may be perceived especially by parents, who are in fact pay for these camps to 'provide' such development to their children.

As it has been noted in different sub-fields of the social science the idea of development is problematic on many levels. For instance as Moore (2001, 835) points out that "sociologists increasingly eschew traditional socialization theories conceptualizing children as passing linearly thorough an invariable sequence of universal stages of development passively absorbing adult standards or normative behaviour". In this regard the following statement of Henderson et al. (2007) is rather problematic, as they argue "most camp programs are considered part of the *positive youth development* movement and aim to offer experiences that

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are not only safe and enjoyable but also aid in *children's progress toward adulthood.* (Henderson et al 2007, 988 – with my emphases). Not only does such statement disregard the agency of children and young people, but implies a normative direction towards one ought to progress. Such approach to development is also reductionist in terms lacking a critical perspective on children's agency. For instance a child may have several reasons for not taking part in certain activities or behave in certain ways. This may include being critical, being disengaged with (the offered activities), having confidences issues and so on. Therefore '*choice*' may be part of not following certain assumed developmental processes. More recent studies of sociologists for instance seek "to understand kids as active agents, as competent social actors, and socialization as a process whereby kids collaborate to organize and negotiate meaning in their social lives" (Moore 2001, 582)

However, beside the summer time education of children, the primary role of summer camps on a practical basis are to provide parents with organised child care during the summer break, providing an alternative to just hanging out on the street without supervision. These are not necessarily contradictions between parental goals and the motivation of children to attend summer camp, but there tend to be an 'equivocation'. Paris described this mismatch between parental expectation and children's motivation to attend the following way:

> Widely disparate groups of adults praised the summer camp movement as an antidote to modern, industrial ill, arguing that camps removed children sitting in urban apartments, the threat of health epidemics and 'artificial' leisure, while teaching social acculturation and good citizenship. For millions of American children, meanwhile camp life represented a first experience of community and self-reliance d the physical boundaries of families and home neighbourhoods. (Paris 2001, 48)

While there are no contradictions in what is considered the goal of the parents with sending their children to summer camp and the motivation of the children to attend, but what it does is that it reinforces normative ideas about children, childhood, social structure and 'development'

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and ignores or at least understate desires, sexuality and in more general the agency of children and young people.

Additionally, it is important to discuss the motivation of campers as well behind camping as their motivation to attend the camp have a great impact on the youth culture of the Summer Camp. In the next section I will discuss some of these motivation and the way these motivation form the youth culture. I would like to note that I do not want to reduce the motivation of campers to sexuality by any means – as many others have been mentioned above – instead I would like to focus on this aspect due to its relevance to this research.

4.2. Youth amongst each other

The way children and young people relate to their camp experience often differ from the above expectation, but camp experience is something that is really important and determinant for them as well. Often the camp is a central highlight of the whole year and provides gossips and energy until the next summer. Paris (2001), in her research on New York summer camps of the early-twentieth-century and "American girlhood" similarly notes the important role of summer camps in the life of children and young people. One of her interviewees Estelle lamented her last year at the summer camp this way: "… I had to go on in life, and yet I know what I was leaving behind was something I could never replace and was something I'd miss and love all my life" (Paris 2001, 48). Such romantic indescribable feelings towards summer camps and its "semi-autonomous and temporary communities away from (…) parents" came up in my interviewees' narratives too as it has been mentioned in the previous chapter. In a way it also implies that it is so hard to describe, because there is no such feeling in the 'normative adult world' and thus there are no words that can be used in an interview to describe it other than the 'Summer Camp feeling'. On the other hand however campers do not create a world that is sealed off and unreflective of the world outside in fact they "creatively appropriate information from the adult

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world to produce their own unique peer cultures (…) simultaneously contribute[ing] to the reproduction of adult culture" (Edler 1995 in Moore 2001, 839). The way questions, discourses and ambiguities regarding to sexuality, gender and attached moralities are appropriated in the youth culture of the Summer Camp is particularly implicative of the way parents, campers and youth leaders relate to the camp. For instance, one of my interviewee notes that one should be realistic about the excitement of teenagers regarding the camp and he brings up the example of his younger brother the following way:

> *"I am not convinced that my younger brother's peers, who are 15 years old, are going to the camp because they are thinking that 'Oh the camp theme is so interesting this year and I am fucking interested in, who were our great Jewish leaders', rather they interested in who is attending which session, who will be in the same room, which girls are coming with the Russian group or with the Americans (…)they know that there will be like 500 other people and there is this great opportunity that they meet somebody, and something may happen." (Peter, age group leader, 25)*

As Peter describes social networking have primary role behind the motivation of the campers to attend the camp and one of the most important aspect of it includes the possibility of 'dating' or 'getting with somebody'. Or at least it appears as part of the conversations as a something that is desired. The talk about dating is also important in terms hierarchy among campers. As Moore (2001, 836) highlights not only it is gender and race that is socially constructed and mutually construct one another, but age as well, "as an identity, relation and practice, also has a flexible and interactional nature". In her comparative research of two summer camps discusses how "kids (…) actively and collectively constructed and negotiated gendered and racialized emergent sense of ages as they established and negotiated peer relations" (Moore 2001, 836). Talk about sexuality is an important determinant of socially constructed age, but when I asked whether it is in fact possible to have sex in the camp (in any interpretation of sex) the answers were ambiguous and more often seemed appear in anecdotes than as personal experience when

talked about campers, but more often as a personal experience, while being a youth leader, that I will discuss in more details in the next chapter.

While the idea of going to the camp to meet a potential Jewish partner seemed very alien to most of the respondents (apart from Laura, who said that while it might not be a primary goal, it is a great space where it may happen), they saw the Summer Camp a great platform both for meeting and hanging out with friends, and to a "get with somebody".

In conclusion, it could be argued that summer camps are sort of "win-win" solutions, where everybody gets what they were looking for. Parents are helped out during the summer break with a solution for supervised childcare that is perceived to be more reasonable, valuable and safer than just hanging out on the street. And young people can experience a relative level of freedom in a space that is centred around them. However camps are also embedded in the wider social structure, living it unchallenged, where children are considered as "Other" and they progress towards full citizenship. Under such discourse the camp becomes a space where activities are out of sight and leaving the 'adult world' with the comfortable feeling of not blurry knowledge of the youth culture within.

5. Child and youth sexuality: tabooisation and indoctrination

As it was argued in the previous chapters (sleepaway) summer camps are alternative spaces where young people have space (both physically and theoretically) to more freely negotiate their everyday practices and value systems[5]. While to some extent they follow the taboos and sexual morals of the wider society, due to the fact that campers arrive from a wide socio-spatial and socio-economic spectrum they compromise and renegotiate these locally in a space that differs from their everyday spaces (home, school, public space). By reflecting on the previous chapters discussing the spatial particularity of sexual moralities from critical youth and feminist geography perspective and the role and goal of summer camps in the way children come to understand themselves (as gendered and sexual being) and their environment, here my aim will be to highlight how tabooisation of youth sexuality manifests in a summer camp or perhaps in this particular Summer Camp. More precisely how sexualities are present, discussed, negotiated, enhanced and/or controlled.

Panton, a psychologist working at the American Camp Association notes that "many teens have told [her] that camp offers them a place to try out new things, and this includes the sexual arena. As she highlights "experimentation with sexuality is a vital part of camp for many kids" (Panton 2000). However it is important that under what discourses are these experimentation happen. Perhaps power relations are the most reflected in the way different discourses of moralities prevail in a summer camp. Summer camps especially those linked to religions and / or ethnicities or embedded in national(ist) discourse are scenes of what Besley refers to as "social education and guidance" (Besley 2002, 429). According to Besley (and others) indoctrination is inherent in such situation and "morality (…) is an area where indoctrination is most likely to

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[5] This perhaps only apply for 'pro-camp' campers, for those who do not like the Summer Camp, it's just another form of control, so I would like to highlight again the limitations of this research in this respect.

occur, because 'informed' people differ in how they perceive these, and what they believe young people should be taught" (Besley 2002, 429). Considering both the point of Epstein et al. about the "danger of not knowing" and Besley's concern about indoctrination, it evokes the question of knowing *what*. Schools as well as summer camps are spaces of meeting points of different 'knowings' and 'moralities'. In a summer camp youth leaders negotiate their appropriated knowledge of certain moralities. They apply these in relation to the way they understand their power in the hierarchical structure of the camp and they make decisions and relations based on those moralities.

The interviews suggest that there is an increasing conservativism in the way sexuality is dealt with in the camp or at least sexuality is more controlled, that may be connected to the generally increasing tendency to protect children (see for example Karaian 2014).These were the most conspicuously highlighted by the older interviewees, who experienced the camp life in its earlier phases. There discussion reviled that rules are more centrally determined, resulting in a more authoritarian approach with more "*consciousness*" and "*clearer talk*" about sexuality as part of the youth leader training (quotes from the interviews). However the interviews also reviled that ambiguity still arose in relation to the border between prohibiting and criminalizing on the one hand and encouragement and over sexualisation on the other. To reflect on this problem area I decided to choose to mention two games from the camp based on my memories to allow interviewees to bring up their memories in relation to those games. These games had been organised by youth leaders and recently have been banned by the camp leaders. Following the discussions on these games I asked more explicitly about sexuality and whether is it in fact possible to have sex in the camp to reflect on the different ways sexuality is understood in different contexts – as part of organised games or as part of 'extracurricular activity'.

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5.1. Games with sexual connotation and gendered implication: kiss-fight

The first game, called *kiss-fight* (*harci-puszi*) is a game, where campers based on gender are separated into two groups (rarely in gender mixed groups) and the members of one group receive odd numbers and the other group's members receive even numbers. The numbers are whispered in their ears by the youth leaders and they have to keep it as a secret until their number is called. Then they sit in a circle and if the game is played with gender division then for instance a girl sits in the middle and calls one boy (by randomly saying an even number), whose task will be to kiss her on the cheek and one girl (by saying a random odd number), whose task will be to protect the one sitting in the middle from being kissed and at the same time kiss the 'attacking' boy. Whoever fails to protect the person in the middle or fails to kiss the one in the middle has to sit in the middle of the circle and the game continues the same way, with the others cheering around. This game seemed extremely controversial and the respondents were most of the time ambiguous about it.

> *I think that is a divisive problem among the youth leaders. ...Because during childhood it is really a cute game (...) until a certain age, it is really possible to see it without any sexual connotation...Of course, after a while it is awkward. (...) when I went to that a [different session I usually go to] (...) it was really unpleasant for me to play kiss-fight, I was a teenager, I didn't feel comfortable in my body...it was a too intimate interaction...and yes I did feel like I was pressured, because it would have been embarrassing to leave. But who knows how many of the others felt the same way. (Lili, earlier youth leader, 26)*

> *[as a] youth leader I thought that it must be a fun for the kids even though that as a 13 years old it wasn't necessarily a great fun for me ... I think I was 12-13, when I had my first kiss-fight, I was quite embarrassed, but I also wanted it, because you have this wow if I am called out with that guy, but then what if with the other guy, and what do they think, and our bodies touch ... so for the first time ... yes it is understandable that it is controversial ... but of course no one is ever forced to play this game, nothing is forced in the Summer Camp. I think it is a game that should never be forced on anybody, because there are lot of inhibitions and the bodies are touching each other (Laura, earlier youth leader, 26)*

The memories of Lili and Laura highlights the two sides of the debate. Although Lili understands the fun part of the game she relates more with the anxiety it may cause. For Laura

it is pretty much the opposite, while she also expressed anxiety in relation to the game, as her intonation showed as well during the interview, she did not see the game primarily from the perspective of 'danger'.

Most importantly they define being forced in a rather different way. While for Laura it as an outer pressure, for Lili it is about peer pressure, at least they articulate it that way. However, even in Laura's comments peer pressure is implicated (i.e. "what do they think"). The research conducted by Selikow et al. (2009, 108) shows that "adolescents' strong need to belong to a social group facilitates peer pressure, as adolescents who do not conform to dominant norms may be excluded from friendship circles". According to Selikow et al. (2009, 108) sexuality is one of the most important among these norms and thus "abstaining from sex and delaying sexual debut are undermined by adolescents' strong need to belong to a social group". However as Maxwell and Chase (2008, 312) highlight that peer-pressure should be understood with its complexities and argue that "

> pressures (…) derive from the broader community [and] may be imposed by institutions (the public care system, the school) or may emerge from a youth subculture in which sex among young people is normalised Not only do pressures come in a variety of forms and from a large number of sources, some pressures may be linked to specific contexts (Maxwell and Chase 2008, 312).

In this sense, while kiss fight is a game unique to the Summer Camp, the way it is interpreted and played by the campers, by each camper, is embedded in and appropriated from the wider social reality and in the wider social reality of each camper, or even more of the more dominant campers. The construction of peer pressure within the camp is thus constructed through the interpretation of the wider social (or cultural) reality of the campers.

Kiss-fight was banned a few years ago by the camp leaders, which also resulted in ambiguous reactions. This decision was commented by the interviewees the following ways:

[*In the last couple of years the game has been banned. What do you think about that?*]

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… banning is a bit too harsh I think … at a certain age they are just waiting so much to play this and we are just providing them platform, where in a frame, under our control they can express their desires … I think banning is silly, maybe just more attention should be given to what age group and in what frame. (Laura, earlier youth leader, 26)

Eventually maybe it is better if it is banned, but it can also lead to a direction …hmm … when we start to ban everything and become overprotective (…) and then we start banning things that we should not be disturbed by in normal cases. (Peter, age group leader, 25)

Laura in her narrative recognises the often denied existence of child or youth sexuality and in her interpretation it is better if it happens under certain control and openly, rather than unregulated. However she does not consider that it does not prevent it from happening outside of the given "platform" and "frame", but in fact may encourage sexuality and attaches positive values ('coolness') to it.

David, who was really excited to talk about the game and brought up good memories also thought that there were several problems with it:

I used to love this game! (…) I am thinking how dangerous this game is…not physically…I mean from that perspective it is quite dangerous … but … I don't think it is a big problem that it has been banned. It was always a very divisive game … I don't think it was initially banned because of gender roles … it is boys against girls, but it could be between dorms. (David, youth leader, 22)

He touched upon the very essential problem that the game inevitably incorporated that is its fundamental heteronormative rule that the kiss has to happen between a girl and a boy. However he assumed that banning the game had nothing to with this problem, rather with the general violence it may provoke. So I asked my respondents if it have made a difference if the game was not called 'kiss-fight', but something like 'high-five-fight'. While most of them thought that it makes a difference none of the thought that it would have make a difference regarding to banning it.

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The new materialist discourse on what Alldred and Fox (2015) termed "sexuality-assemblage" is particulary useful here as it highlights the way a body part becomes sexualised and their example is particular relevant to the way sexual connotation arose in relation to kiss-fight:

> "For example, sexuality-assemblage accrues around an event such as an erotic kiss, which comprises not just two pairs of lips but also physiological processes, personal and cultural contexts, aspects of the setting, memories and experiences, sexual codes and norms of conduct, and potentially many other relations particular to that event." (Alldred and Fox 2015, 4)

While in kiss-fight kiss is far from an erotic kiss, more of a struggle to somehow push ones lips on the other's cheek, lips have prescribed meanings that are appropriated in the youth culture of the Summer Camp. This process of appropriation from the adult world is a process, where lips and the kiss they give may be desexualised on the one hand, but in fact as kiss on the cheek is not really aimed to be a sexual act in the 'adult world' (at least in the wider social context in which this camp is placed) can be understood as a form of 'childish sexuality'.

The interviewees have addressed a wide range of concerns regarding the game, however it should be noted that apart from Lili all of the respondents smiled as a first reaction, when they heard the name of the game combined with other sudden expression of joy. I find this important in the light of the often self-contradicting or at least ambiguous answers. While for Lili anxiety in relation to game was a more prevailing feeling attached to the game, others referred to this anxiety as a much more distant experience that they either found less significant beside the fun they encountered or they simply referred to anxiety as someone else's experience. In either case the narratives show critical engagement with several themes attached to the problematisation of the game. On the one hand participants reflect on details such as peer pressure, the heterosexist nature of the game, the anxieties it may evoke and that physical contact that may not be equally natural or desired for all. On the other hand however they note and often disagree with the top down policy in which the game is banned as it carries wider implications about

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sexuality and physicality. That is to say while they do understand the rationale behind banning and see it as an easier and more practical approach they are unconvinced about its deterministic nature.

5.2. Games with sexual connotation and gendered implication: dirt-party

The other game that has been recently banned was called *dirt-party* (*dzsuva-party*). This is not a particular game more just an "*evening program that is not filled with educational material, but leaves space to go crazy and lose control*" (Laura, earlier youth leader, 26), often including playing with food, 'dirt', paint and other materials. Lili remembers this program the following way:

> *There were some slip-ups, especially with the bigger programs, when, first year university students thought it would be a good idea to introduce games they had learnt during their Freshers' week[6]. And I think quite often these were too much, and I am not saying that it was absolutely their fault........maybe there were too little control for a 17-18 old to decide, what is Ok and what is going to make many feel uncomfortable. (Lili, earlier youth leader, 26)*

However, banning this game was less controversial and most agreed that these games may be inappropriate in the context of a summer camp. This was marked by a single event that was brought up by all the interviewees, who were already visiting the camp in that year. When I asked about their memories about those nights. They just answered me with asking back the question: "*Do you mean the banana night?*" As Lili continued:

> *[One of the girls] during this bigger event had a task, something like, to put condom on a banana with her mouth, and she got really upset about it. She basically got a panic attack and felt unwell for days after the event. And it is quasi a harmless thing, but still it has an extremely sexual message, especially considering that it is watched by a bigger community. (Lili, earlier youth leader, 26)*

The older youth leaders all thought that those games got out of control and they took a direction that was no longer acceptable. However, at least Laura, also questioned the usefulness of

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[6]Translated from: "gólyatábor", the first camp / week of university students in the beginning of their studies.

banning in this case and thought that just having a more thought through and more controlled program would "*make more sense*", then "*taking away games that are otherwise great fun*".

However, as the interviewees point it out it has been a question of fun for whom and the way such game (seem to) become fun is also a matter of other complex processes. Going back to peer pressure, as Selikow et al. (2009, 108) argue "adolescents' access to a group where they feel they can ''belong'' is often exploited and used to promote negative sexual norms". Selikow et al. (2009, 108) further point it out that "peers play such a significant role in adolescents' lives that peer education has increasingly been advocated as an important avenue that could be used to challenge negative social norms". Having youth leaders, who are peer leaders, being only a few years older than the campers, in fact follows this approach to some extent. And while according to Selikow et al. (2009, 108) "peer education whereby particular peers are selected by educators, is unlikely to be successful as adolescents are influenced by peers from their own group and not necessarily by selected peers", youth leaders, who are (almost) peer leaders tend to be acknowledged by campers as something similar to peer educator with additional, institutionally defined authority.

As it is mentioned by Peter (age group leader, 25) the relationship between the youth leaders and the campers often turns into a very open and confidential one, when campers incline to be more open to their youth leader to share their secrets and personal information then with their parents or peers. These secrets can range from whom they like in the camp to sharing abusive (parental) relationships. Youth leaders in such cases are faced with responsibility that in most cases entirely alien to them and they have to make decisions in stressful context based on their discretion. Youth leaders, therefore, are or can be important sources for campers in the way campers construct and understand their- (sexual) selves.

That is to say, as it is detailed in the first chapter the camp encourages an environment of trust, comfort, openness and freedom on the one hand; following the idea that not talking about and not knowing is the most harmful (Epstein et al. 2001). However moving towards a discourse that is increasingly protective of children may, but not necessarily resulting in taboosiation and further ambiguities.

5.3. Is it possible to have sex in the Summer Camp?

After inquiring implicitly about sexuality through games with sexual implications. I asked my interviewees whether it is in fact possible to have sex in the Summer Camp. The answers addressed both "possibility" in terms of whether there are formal camp policies about having sex, and whether it physically feasible (in terms of space or time) to have sex. Additionally some of them also talked about the acceptability by the camp community of having sex.

In fact no one knew of a set rule about having sex in the camp ("*well, I don't know if there were any rules that it is not allowed to have sex, effectively, voiced this way that it is forbidden to have sex" (Lili, earlier youth leader 27*), but all thought of having sex as an open secret both among campers and youth leaders.

There were two ways to think about space; some youth leaders agreed that

> *"it [is] really hard to find space, because of the dorms... and because compared to the, size of the camp, there were relatively few places that at least had doors, that could be at least closed with a handle (...) but of course, who wanted to have sex worked it out." (Lili, earlier youth leader 27)*

Another respondent said that *"probably the kitchen is the only space where none had sex" (Peter, age group leader, 25).* And much seemed to be dependent on the way a room-community approached the idea of sex, for instance as Lili highlighted

> *"If someone had a room-community with friends or with people with similar rhythm of life or likeminded surely it was possible to agree with them to go out, leaving them free...." (Lili, earlier youth leader, 27)*

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This also links to what has been discussed in the previous section that sexual activity is an important factor in the popularity of young people and while my sample is also too small to make such judgement, but it seemed that especially among boys sexual activity was a status symbol and they do not only make their status clear among each other, but make it clear for the youth leaders as well. One of the earlier, female youth leader remembered it this way:

> *Usually the boys were telling about these proudly... if they had some sort of a first sexual experience. Or something like that...But…but I don't think there were any open conversations about these. I am pretty sure. (Lili, earlier youth leader, 27)*

On the other hand, however, a male youth leader while telling a story an event referred to *"girls, who are not even shy to flirt with youth leaders" (Gábor, youth leader, 20).*

Therefore, in fact, even if it is not as prevalent as it is with boys (based on my interviews); girls also use sexuality and sexual activity as a status symbol, as it has been noted in the international literature as well. For instance Selikow et al. (2009) writes that while the literature on peer pressure regarding to sexual activity among boys is more extensive the processes among girls are very similar. Based on their focus group interviews with 13-14 years old pupils in South Africa argued that "girls put pressure on female peers and on boys to be sexually active, noting that it is 'fashionable' to be sexually active" (Selikow et al. 2009, 109). And not only may they pressure each other, but they risk "being excluded from 'friendship circles', if they are perceived to be abstaining from sex" (Selikow et al. 2009, 109). That is to say based on my sample it would be hard to determine a gender divide between the way peer pressure works, but by looking at the international literature beside the narratives of my interviewees it can be at least argued that sexuality has an important role in the way youth communities organise themselves, both among girls and boys, even if it takes different forms.

The one age group leader I interviewed, who was on the highest level in the formal hierarchy of the Summer Camp from my interviewees said that it is important for youth leaders are not

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going to the Summer Camp to have sex *"and increase their numbers"* and that *"the camp is not a sex camp…but no one will be sent home because of having sex as long as they attend the programs, prepared and no one is harmed"* then he added *"we do not want to send a message that sex is a sin. Sex is not a sin. It's just that a Summer Camp is perhaps not the best place to attain such experiences" (Peter, youth leader, 26)*

This narrative by Peter shows highlights what Besley (2002) discusses in relation to the ambiguous and tense border between tabooisation and indoctrination. That is to say, the role and the responsibility of youth leaders here is in a way to recognise this border. But, in fact due to several reasons this border does not actually exists, because youth leaders have different perceptions as well as the campers have different experiences.

In this chapter my aim was to highlight the ambiguities around sexuality and heteronormativity in the Summer Camp that has important role in the way youth culture is negotiated. The mentioned games with sexual connotations were heteronormative and gendered and they often reinforced the idea of sexuality being associated with 'coolness' resulting in a youth culture that is over-sexualised. Banning the games removes some tension on a formal level from the camp, but informal contexts leave further ambiguities that would be interesting topic of a further research.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore youth sexuality in a context where it has not been researched before. I focused my research with the following questions: How gender and sexuality of children and young people are performed and understood in the Summer Camp? What is the role of space in the way youth culture, including youth sexuality is negotiated in the Summer Camp?

Drawing on human geography literature and the narratives of my interviewees it can be argued that space and locality plays in an important role in the way youth culture and more precisely youth sexuality and gender is negotiated. Geographical researches that go beyond representation and draws on post-structuralist literature by incorporating discussions on emotions and affect (Thrift 2007) underpin the way romanticised feelings are attached to the space of the Summer Camp. The often used notion of "*Summer Camp feeling"* (by the interviewees) highlights this capacity of space to evoke feelings that are unique to it.

While camps are designed by 'adults' (although there are increasing encouragement for participatory planning) it is used and populated by children and young people and therefore youth culture can unfold to a greater extent. In such context children and young people have more freedom in the negotiation and in the appropriation of practices from the adult world and therefore it allows the researcher to gain a unique insight in children's and young people's world. In such context sexuality and gender identity making has particular importance.

Therefore, following the theoretical framework of the existing literature and my qualitative research I conclude that space has an important role in the way sexualities are performed in the camp because of the feelings of freedom and protection it evokes. Camps are important to

sexual self-recognition simply because they allow more space / time for exploration as well as feeling of freedom encourages experimentation. On the other hand this freedom is also repressive in a sense that sexuality (like in other youth culture is associated with coolness) is encouraged though peer pressure that has even more space in the camp as well as games with sexual implication reinforce this idea of sexual activity being associated with coolness. Additionally, it should be noted that these sexualities are embedded in the norms of the wider society as the heteronormative games showed and the way the camp follows the general tendency towards banning and control characterizing the general attitude towards children of its wider social context.

This research is just an introductory piece in a potential area of research with its own limitations, including the relatively small pool of interviewees and their selection being limited to youth leaders, who are all (assumedly) 'pro-camp' campers. It misses further elaboration on child development and the way specificities of the camp (i.e. being Jewish camp, located in Easter-Europe) may affect the way youth culture within the camp is negotiated and sexual norms are (re)produced. However, globalisation have had a great effect on youth cultures, young people having the same idols and using and visiting the same (social) medias in most countries. Therefore, while general 'truths' may not be attained from this particular case study, it highlights that observing summer camps can provide a great platform to learn more about youth sexuality and that in fact camps and especially youth leaders would need more help in creating their internal policies and approaches to address concerns and ambiguities around youth sexuality.

Therefore, further research would be important in this specific field, including interviews with other groups affecting the life of the camp; primarily the campers themselves, but interviews with camp leaders and parents would also facilitate a better understanding. Ethnographic

research in the camp during the sessions would give a more direct experience for the researcher and would also help to further conceptualise the role of space through observing the way campers negotiate their everyday in the camp space, which activities take place at which locations. Comparative researches of different summer camps would be able to help to disclose particularities. That is to say more (elaborate) research on youth sexuality in summer camps have a great potential that I believe is worth to further invest in.

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