Flâneurs With a Purpose:

The Transformation of Children's Unattended

Mobility in the City of Kyiv

By

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Abstract

Children's unattended mobility is the realization of children's right of movement and an important source of socialization and development. In my thesis I analyze how the social construction of childhood and its everyday practices, particularly unattended mobility, is changing within the risk and knowledge driven society in Ukraine. Thus, I look on children's mobility within the changing urban landscapes, deploying empirical research on the experience of young Kyivans themselves children in 1980-90s, an era of turbulent post-socialist transition, and their parental practices as enacted with their own children, a new generation in the times of neoliberal change. I argue that not only is children's unattended mobility decreasing due to growing risk-perception and moral panic, but also that it is becoming subject to excessive control: children's activities are comparatively limited and strictly prescribed by various means of guidance and remote supervision. Moreover, I observe the ways in which a fixation on success determines parenting, possibly to the detriment of children's mobility and even their socialization, affecting their experience of the city.

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I want to thank all of my respondents for generously sharing their stories.

To all the children I've met since 2015 in our continuous work on city exploration, you've taught me more than I could ever have expected.

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To Josh, for his love and endless support, and Zoe, my eternal engine.

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Introduction

Why be afraid?

Masha, 10

In the summer 2015 the non-governmental organization Cultural Geographies held its first big event on presence of children in the city of Kyiv. Children aged 8-14 visited our urban camp to attend classes on various topics, as well as to meet urban activists, street artists, and municipal workers. We finished at 6PM; parents would pick up their children and chat with us, the organizers. One mother didn't come the first day; instead her son, Nikita, had me speak with her over the phone: she asked me to let him go home by himself. I double-checked that he definitely knew where he was and how to get back. The next day after class, he approached me with a request that I call his mother to let her know that he was going to music school after class and then to meet her where agreed. During the conversation it came to light that all those places (our camp's location, his music school, and home) were situated in different districts and their disposition required 20-40 minutes of commute time. I was intrigued by Nikita's freedom of movement and confidence in spatial orientation as he was not yet 10 years old at the time. Such liberty is no longer common, though children of the preceding generation, as I remember from my own experience, usually were entitled to move freely without parental supervision. My interest in this phenomenon and its possible interpretations has brought me to the further study of children's unattended mobility.

As a topic of study, children's mobility is covered by several disciplines, namely anthropology and sociology, human and cultural geography, psychology, cognitive

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science, and urban studies. The scholars concerned with the childhood within an urban context stress the great influence of children's mobility on the health and cognitive capacities of the young, such as the elaboration of spatial and analytical skills, weight control and overall physical health, thus, its limitation causes manifest negative consequences (to mention few: Qvorturp, 2005; Gill, 2007; Katz, 2005). The various aspects of children's mobility within the urban environment and social space is examined in a wide range of studies across the globe: some note how the various physical characteristics of an urban space, such as the lack of green areas or traffic, shape maternal perception of social danger thus decreasing children's outdoor mobility in, in one instance, Italian cities (Alparone and Pacilli, 2012); how factors such as age, sex, and ethnicity shape the patterns of everyday mobility in the Australian city of Perth (Villanueva et al., 2013); how official and unofficial children's movement is organized under parental "license", i.e. permission given by parents to their children for the sake of movement without accompaniment in London (O'Brien, Jones and Sloan, 2000); how risks as perceived by parents, namely the danger of injury in traffic, contact with ill-intentioned adults and drugs influence the limiting of children's mobility in USA (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2006). However, the children's movement in post-Soviet territories remains thus-far under-explored. While Soviet childhood was widely studied by native and foreign scholars (Markowitz, 2000; Kelly, 2007), only a few studies can be found on children's everyday practices in the post-Soviet period, specifically the experience of children in negotiating the urban space. Vikotria Yakovleva's extensive study based on memories of childhood in the period after the Chernobyl explosion provides us with the important contextual, material, and linguistic setting of children living in the transitional period in Ukraine, 1980-1990s (Yakovleva, 2016). The short overview of "the world of childhood" based on memories of then-children born in Russia in the

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1990s focuses on everyday practices and parent-child relations (Gutyra, 2016). With the focus on child- or family-friendliness of space of a few Russian cities as perceived by parents and by children, a handful of studies contribute to a select corpus contending with the perception of urban space by children (Vereshchagina and Bandurin, 2016; Shpakovskaya, 2017). No studies, to my knowledge, look closely at everyday practices of children in modern Ukraine, specifically how they move and interact within the urban space. Thus, with my research, I aim to contribute to the scope of the existent body of materials whose emphasis is on children's mobility, exploring the personal memories on being a child in 1990s and correlative narratives recounting the raising of children in the 2010s which reflect social and urban processes particular to Kyiv as they are relevant to the everyday lives of young citizens.

In my thesis I analyze how children's mobility is changing within one particular city through two generations, how parental practices in the establishment of limits and boundaries for such movement is molded, what risks and threats are perceived by parents that compel them to control their children's movement as they invariably do. I argue that not only children's unattended mobility is decreasing due to risk-perception and "informational pressure", or, what in effect amounts to media manipulation, but also that it is becoming, consequently, over-controlled. Social ambition, that of parents on behalf of their children, is another variable.

Theoretically, I explore the phenomenon of children's unattended mobility through the lenses of the changing notion of childhood in modern society, which imposes certain norms and expectations informing parental practices (Qvortrup, 2005). I use the analytical approach developed in children's geographies studies to examine how children perceive space, which places they visit and how their mobility is organized and supervised by adults (Holloway and Valentine, 2000). Through the concepts of risk

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and dangers I focus on the complexity of parental limitations and perceptions of safety for their children during their mobility within the city (Douglas, 1992; Beck, 1992, 1995; Katz, 2005). I also use as an analytical lens the literary idea of *flânerie* as a practice of dériving within the city, brought to the discussion by Walter Benjamin and then actively used in studying urban contexts, especially in feminist urban studies (Benjamin, 1975; Tester, 1994; Elkin, 2017).

Theoretical framework

One of the prominent researchers involved in the history of childhood, Philippe Ariès, studying mostly French society, argued that childhood as a category didn't exist until the 17 century (Ariès, 1962). Prior to that children were perceived exclusively as future adults. As modernity distinguished itself from the preceding ages, children, generally speaking, gained more freedom in self-expression, but remained "de-spatialized and de-contextualized" (Qvortrup, 2005), under the strong belief that they were to be cared for by their parents, teachers, or care-givers, but not by others adults. With further growing interest in the cognitive abilities of children vis-à-vis their preparation for adult life, "conscious emotionality or sentimentalization" invoked certain child-friendliness within society. With rapid changes in modern society the nominal protection of children emerge due to their designation as a vulnerable category; this is the socially constructed notion of childhood as largely accepted today. This historically contingent construct determines, among other things, the continued assignment of permissible places for children, what also caused the limitation of children's visibility in public life, keeping them partially confined due to their inability to adapt to the adult society. Hence, the originally positive notion of protection "increasingly turned into

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control of children and young people" and brings to the emergence of hyper-vigilance approach in parental supervision (Qvortrup, 2005; Katz, 2005).

How in these restricting conditions children exercise their autonomy in urban realm? To examine the exploration and use of public spaces by children I borrow the approach used by Sarah Holloway and Gill Valentine in their continuous work on children's geographies. In their study they focus on children as social actors with the struggle as a minority group to gain the voice and the right to use a public space (Holloway and Valentine, 2000). As they argue, the construction of children within the family and society is always reflected in practice. The way, how Kyiv children's movement is organized under supervision of parents depicts the perception and placement of children by and within society. Following Holloway and Valentine's statement that the global understanding of children's position within the space should be interconnected with local concerns, in my thesis I am looking from the position of locally determined specifics of place and space in Kyiv, Ukraine, of two different periods, at the global processes of transformation of childhood. From this position, I apply what the authors of Children's Geographies suggest to use for the examination of the interrelation of space-place and the processes within it as exercised by children. The conceptual categories of *importance of place*, *everyday spaces* and *spatial discourses (*which originally developed in feminist studies of space) I re-transform into *importance of space, everyday mobilities* and *spatial discourses* for the purposes of my thesis to closely analyze the experiences of children's mobility. I argue, that not only the place as built environment is important for mobility, but the societal dimension which makes space of the place, in this way affecting children's perception of the city (Low and Smith, 2006). Perceived as safe or dangerous, the city is explored with different intensity and spatial dynamic. The societal setting of Kyiv as argued in this

thesis, first at the edge of two eras in 1990s and then within challenging shifts in 2010s, determine the *importance of space* experienced by children. Instead of further examining the spaces of everyday interaction of children, I look precisely at everyday practices of their movement within the spaces — the *everyday mobilities* — and how they are organized and controlled as narrated by parents. I keep the original notion of *spatial discourses* represented by these narratives as affected by risk and opportunities perception.

As modern children's movement is put within certain frame of control and limitation, in order to explore what drives the parents in establishing the practices of parental supervision, I will look, again, how global reflects in local. As many studies claim, a wide range of threats and dangers in everyday life perceived by the parents affect their attitude to the children's movement. On macro level, it is argued that the society is driven by the produced fears and risks, from nuclear disaster to bankruptcy, which affects the decision making in everyday life (Beck, 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). In my thesis, I examine what global risks, seen to affect children — namely, of sexual abuse or car injury — are of high importance also for Kyivan parents. Some risks, as one of Otherness, which, as Mary Douglas argues, are culturally specific and variaties in locales, are mediated and developed by the specific of Ukrainian societal space (Douglas, 1992). I examine these two groups of risks as seen by Kyivan parents as determinants of limiting children's unattended mobility.

The methodology and setting

Methodologically the argument of my thesis relies on ethnographic research I conducted in Kyiv in April 2018. My interviewees are Kyivans who were children in the 1980-1990s and now have children of their own aged 8 - 14 years. With the few

exceptions, all the respondents grew up in Kyiv. Almost all of the families my interviewees represent consist of two working parents, with some of mothers having a part-time job. In my research I didn't examine specifically class or occupation of my respondents. As Ulrich Beck argues, the influence of class has decreased in modern society, and knowing the family background or occupation doesn't always help to determine the lifestyle, opinions and beliefs which drive them in the establishing of their parental practices. He argues that "people with the same income level, or to put it in the old-fashioned way, within the same 'class', can or even must choose between different life styles, subcultures, social ties and identities" (Beck, 1997). Acknowledging the specific and common background of my respondents of living in 1990s in Kyiv, I was led by this approach looking on how their familial traditions and lifestyles set up their approaches to children's mobility in the city. What is in common, the respondents live in their own or rented apartments, mostly in old buildings and districts; half of the respondents mentioned they had a car in the family, but, with a single exception, mostly do not use them for chauffeuring their children to school; most of the respondents don't usually travel abroad, but travel within Ukraine; and all of them are able to provide their children with the necessary material life, and additional classes in wide variety.

I knew personally only few respondents, most of them were found through the social network. I tried to involve not only mothers but also fathers in the research: three out of twelve are male respondents, and in order to add to gender's parity of this research, the female interviewees also mention the role of fathers in establishing parental practices on children's independent movement. The interviews were semi-structured, consisting of two parts: the conversation about own childhood and practices of unattended movement across the city of Kyiv, and the current parental approach towards own children's mobility. Thus, this thesis is limited by the personal narratives

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and memories mediated, as I mention further in the text, by nostalgia and generated certain controversies of their perception of space and place. Though I initially planned to interview the parents only, some of my respondents brought their children, whose comments valuably contributed to the text, as one of the comments of self-reliable Masha,10, laconic and capacious, I use as the epigraph. Most of the interviews were held in public spaces: parks, cafes, districts of interviewees' children's everyday mobility. Even though I wrote that I would like to be invited home and explore the neighborhood of children, not many interviewees suggested that. I was at five homes and yards to observe while having conversations. It can be explained with busy schedule, but together with protectiveness of some respondents on their data, for instance, their children's names or home addresses, it brought me to the general impression of cautionary attitude to the stranger researcher. In sum, the ethnography here represents twelve stories of parents (3 males and 9 females) about their own childhood and the practices of their children's mobility (as some respondents have more than one child, the stories they share apply to 6 girls and 9 boys aged 7-14 in total).

I find also important here to provide with explanations on the terms I use. 'Children's mobility' or 'children's movement' are used to describe movements of children, under supervision or not, within a certain space. In my research data analysis I provide with the examples of everyday mobility as well as some exceptional movements on special occasions. I use 'unattended', 'unaccompanied', 'free' and 'independent' mostly as the synonyms to describe the mobility without physical presence of adults.

As for the structure of this thesis, I analyze ethnographic data in three chapters. In Chapter 1, I focus on the urban landscapes of Kyiv and how they were and are

currently explored by children in two distinct decades. I look at the establishment of the routes children follow(ed) during these two periods, the use of public transport and their general interaction with public space. I argue that the space, rather than the place, determines children's mobility, whether it is perceived as safe or dangerous by parents. In Chapter 2, further to the examination of what limits children in their mobility, what risks and dangers are seen by parents as threatening to their children, I note the cautionary methods articulated in and by certain families. I bring here the notion of terror talk as a mode of public discourse that forms the perception of a risky environment albeit public, and emphasize the appearance of parental resistance as a manifestation of moral panic. Finally, in Chapter 3, I then explore how children's unattended mobility has undergone measures of control, and argue that the purposes of mobility, i.e. the destination, together with the risks as perceived by parents, determine the limitations imposed.

1. Children's geographies of Kyiv: Space, place and mobility through the decades

One of the most substantive research on children's independent mobility was conducted in UK by the group of scholars curated by Mayer Hillman analyzing the data of two periods, of 1971 and 1990, based on the interviews held in the same schools, in order to observe the change across the generations (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg, 1990). The results were surprising, if not shocking, revealing the decreasing of free movement by children: from eight children of ten in 1971 to only one child of ten in 1990 who had an autonomy of movement. The age of children who were allowed to go to school or to a shop by themselves rose from 7 to 10 years old, meaning that "in just 19 years children had 'lost' up to three years of freedom of movement." (Gill, 2007). Quite similar results were discovered by the research held in USA, Italy and Denmark in the subsequent studies in the next decades so this phenomena of decreasing children's mobility is seen as a global trend. However, little of information was available regarding the children's mobility within the post-Soviet territories. What I discovered in my research (acknowledging the limits of the received data which may hardly represent neither post-Soviet space in general nor Ukraine in particular) is that according to the stories of my respondents, while being children in 1980s and 1990s they had considerable freedom of movement in Kyiv. For most of them, the first independent movements within urban space happened at the age of 5 or 6, when they were allowed to play in the courtyard, go to the kindergarten or school by themselves or accompanied by other children:

> "I was going to nursery which was nearby at the age of 5, together with my friend who lived close. I also remember I was walking to the metro station sometimes to meet my dad from work",

says Bogdana, whose childhood was spent in two different districts, and who raises her 14-years son now. Sveta, the now-mother of two boys of 10 and 5 years old, grew up in a working class district in livable green area. She started going by herself at the age of 6: "There was not much of control. I walked from school by myself, didn't call my mom, just stayed home or at playground after my homework's done." In their 11-14 years, young Kyivans could not only walk to school or shop and back, but were allowed, or at least not controlled, in exploring outskirts and neighbor districts. Boys and girls, children of 1990s, were wandering around, using bikes and skates, running and playing in big companies.

> It was the end of 1980s when we have started to explore the outskirts. My friends and I, we had bikes and rode everywhere, parents never knew where we were. Obolon[1] was just in its construction process, new huge district, *terra incognita*. It was exciting to go and explore those urban sand-dunes, watching how new buildings and districts arose. We were gathering in big companies, there was nothing to do, we were just meeting in the courtyard in the morning and go. (Maxim)

This free movement, deriving around without any goal or time limit I call here child flâneurie. This activity is essentially about liberty, limitless movement, being-with-others and experiencing the city (Tester, 1994: 8). The figure of a flâneur brought into urban discussion by Walter Benjamin in XX century, incarnates the idea of free-wandering and aimlessly being in the city, which was later studied through various aspects, including one as experienced by a child (Milani, 2017). The experience of flâneurie is different from a touristic observation, as a flâneur feels himself, or flâneuse – herself, being a part of the city (Tester, 1994; Elkin, 2017).

Some of the places which young Kyiv citizen chose for play could hardly be called safe, as, and it is well known and studied, risk attracts children tremendously

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[1] Obolon is one of the newest districts which was built in the end of Soviet era and then developed in 1990s. Those who got the apartments in the buildings of the first line then were able to observe further habitation.

(Holloway and Valentine, 2000; Gill, 2007). "Together with my cousins we were playing everywhere: construction sites, train rails and other interesting places" (Viktoria). Tanya, who grew up in one of the central Kyiv districts, also mentioned quite regular for then and now times situation, well-familiar to habitants of old districts[2]: "when the underground pipes were under repair and everything was dug up in the courtyard, it was a lot of fun for us to jump around." While already in 90s in European countries the movements on ensuring safety of children's play and mobility and thus structuring them according to adults' vision of appropriateness were rising (Gill, 2007), in Ukraine some children were enjoying the lack of supervision and vague limitation of freedom of their movement across urban outskirts:

> "Everyone knew everyone in our school, as it was the one for few neighborhoods. We were arranging a time and going to school together with the classmates. On the way back our route was longer — we were exploring the outskirts. (Kolya)

Parents participation in arranging children's everyday life and mobility was not that evident and ubiquitous. Most of the time children spent by themselves. "They were busy, too many things to manage, they worked, there was not much time for us" (Olga). "The lunch is on the table" — an expression which then-children describe the level of self-sufficiency, when their parents were leaving the already prepared food as the main evidence of parental care. Few of the respondents mentioned the care of their closest relatives — grandmothers, elder sisters or brothers:

> "When I was already in 7th grade, around my 12-13, my grandmother decided to see me everyday, meeting me after school and cooking for me. I wasn't really happy about it, it felt as certain controlling of my actions, and I wanted to spend time with my friends instead." (Sveta)

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[2] As one of the problems of urban population in 1990ies S.Tsenkova also mentions pipe leakages and poor water provision quality (Tsenkova, 2006, 20)

This remaining freedom of movement of children of 1990s is especially surprising considering the political, economic and social context of the first decade of independence on post-Soviet terrain. Politically, unlike in the neighbor countries of post-socialist bloc, the transition period in post-Soviet countries and particularly in Ukraine was apathetic: decentralization did not happen, the bureaucracy on all levels of political and social life replicated itself from the previous era and to initiate the decision making processes traditionally was unfavored. The decade witnessed the escalation of unemployment and growing poverty with further stratification of the society: the appearance of extremely poor on the one side and nouveau riche, who developed from former nomenclature and party followers, on the other (Abbot and Wallace, 2010). It all led to the increase of crime level, drug addiction and lack of societal trust. The alternatives forms of economy have developed; the hyperinflation and change of the currencies three times in 10 years. All these changes could not but affect the adults of that time. They had to choose how to take care of their children: to provide with food and basic material needs, or with an emotional support and presence (Tymczyk, 2011). As other anthropological studies on this transitional period reveal, parents were looking for any chance of gig work, and providing the food and basic essentials for many families was the task of priority (Gutyra, 2016; Yakovleva, 2016).

The territory and people which formed the socio-spatial space for children's mobility were chosen rather by children than by their parents:

> The time was crazy! In their 12-14, everyone was smoking, you could buy the cigarettes apiece, weed was everywhere! There was a lot of junkies shooting opium, there was no need in parents telling us any stories — we saw them and were terrified, we knew where they were mostly located, and didn't go there as we heard how freshmen get easily involved in drugs consumption. And no one wanted this. We lived in a very specific district, lots of former prisoners lived nearby, their kids were pickpocketing. So whenever you took a bus going somewhere, and see them in, they'd show you a fist, threatening you to keep your

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mouth shut. We have never gone to that district where they lived, it was not our territory, we were afraid finding ourselves there. (Bogdana)
There were places which could be crossed only during the day time. In 90s, it was better not to go to the grove nearby, as it was most certainly to get in a fight there after sunset. It was a border for us not to cross. (Kolya)

What these two comments reveal is growing stratification of the society within the urban space, as divided for living by working people or emerging marginalized groups. This transformation of space is imposed on existent place, being experienced by the children of emerging society. In the following subchapter I analyze how these societal changes reflected on place through the decades, and what modern families thus experience as their built environment.

1.1. Same place, new space: 'flowing terrains' of Kyiv through the decades

I want to focus now on the spatial dimension of children's mobility, namely children's livable, experienced places of Kyiv. As I will explore, the societal spaces have changed tremendously through two generations, decaying and reviving, though their locale, the place has been adapted slowly, in some cases becoming kept-in memories of the past.

When thinking about city planning from the child's perspective, many urban researchers recall the "popsicle test", which appeared after Austin University professor Terry Kahn in 1990s provided with a distinction of neighborhood as a place where a child can get a popsicle in 5 minutes from home by bike. This simple idea was transformed and widely used in different countries across the communities to evaluate

how an urban space is adjusted to children's needs[3]. In other words, in a proper planned district, a child can easily and safely move between home, school, a playground, and a basic shop within short distances between them, with minimized traffic and other possible threats. Tim Gill, the author of *No Fear. Growing Up in a Risk Averse Society* and appreciated scholar of children's mobility and play, agrees, that this approach demonstrates the planning based on children's needs and capacity, focusing on "a central idea in child-friendliness: children's everyday freedoms and choices. And it links this directly to local geography and perceived safety" (Gill, 2007). Though Soviet urban planners didn't elaborate any particular approach with a catchy name for it, the idea of considering children in urban planning seems to be consonant with the concept of utopian, or ideal, city developed by Soviet planners, which aimed to simplify the living of all the families working hard on building socialism. If to go to any typical working class district planned and built in the period of 1960-90ies in Kyiv, one may observe the repeating pattern in planning of main facilities on the "popsicle distance". The typical buildings, usually of 5 floors, for 80-100 apartments, are placed to form the inner yard, with a playground and a little garden. Nurseries and schools were planned to accommodate children from few such neighborhoods, and were built usually nearby. The later period in housing provision in the times of Brezhnev's leadership [4] brought some changes considering growing urbanization and the necessity to accommodate more habitants: new buildings were of 9-11 floors offering more comfortable but still minimalistic apartments for more dwellers. The basic norms

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[3] The simplicity of this approach reveals the understanding and inquiry of urban development practitioners and community developers for such a measurement of children accessibility of space: https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/08/the-popsicle-and-halloween-tests-what-makes-a-place-livable/244021/

[4] The historical periods in USSR usually are distinguished by that-time party leaders. It finds its reflection in the history of architecture and urban planning as well: stalinka (1930-50s), khrushchovka (1960-1980s), *brezhnevskie apartments* (1980-90s) became the common names for typical housing those periods of leadership of Stalin, Knrushov, Brezhnev respectively (Andrianova, 2015).

on infrastructure planning were kept to the comfort of working families. I observed such settlings during my fieldwork while visiting few interviewees' neighborhoods settled in Soviet time. In their own description of the spaces they grew up in, my respondents use such metaphoric names as Pentagon, or Aquarium, in order to emphasize the organization of place, wide and protected from the outer territory, well observed from different angles, including the possibility for parents to watch through windows their children playing outside:

> We lived in the city center in the house which people called Pentagon. It was a very big multi-storey house with closed court yard. All the children were playing by themselves being well-observed from the windows. The nursery school was also there, not much cars were own and parked in the yard, parents were in nodding acquaintance with each other. We started to go out to play being at the age of 3 or so. (Tatiana)

Such territory planning allowed to set the perimeter for unattended children mobility, forming the "pure place", seen as safe and appropriate for children's movements (Jones, 2000:34). However, the housing planned and developed during the first decade of independence didn't provide any remarkable innovations, replicating the standards of previous era, often without sufficient control. Moreover, the period of 1990s is characterized with the lack of attention to citizen's changing needs and poor infrastructure for growing population. Within the crisis, more rural habitants moved to the cities, where with the decay of state-financed sectors many schools and kindergartens were closed and the premises rented for offices of appearing private sector. The increased rate of private ownership of housing also affected in loosing the attention to organization and maintenance of common spaces and facilities (Tsenkova, 2006). The changes which could be assumed to happen in the nearest future, for instance, improving of welfare and increasing car ownership, seems not to be taken

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into account[5]. New developer projects grew rather vertically, providing with more floors and more apartments, but not horizontally, arranging a better public space.

"The place" built in 1990s is what most of the modern parents have to deal with. Rarely renovated, with lack of parking and not adjusted to changing needs of modern citizens. "Our yard is not safe, there is no space for safe movements, especially with children, all the roads are for cars — it is dangerous to skate or bike" explains Anna, who lives with her husband and 10-years daughter Masha in the 16-storey building on the hills at the edge of remote district in Kyiv, which was erected in the late 1990s. She used to work in municipal department of city planning and her father was an architect. "The yard in neighbor building is better equipped and organized, so we often go there to play and feed birds". She mentions "we" as her only daughter Masha is not moving freely within the space but mostly accompanied by her mother, and Anna tours me across the neighborhood they live in to demonstrate the objective reasoning of her daughter's limited mobility. The neighborhood is formed with three multi-storey buildings which were erected on the hills, though giving spectacular view on post-industrial terrain of Kyiv outskirts, the place lacks any public space in-between. "The place without space" is crossed over with roads, choked up with parked cars, surprisingly reveals the maintenance structures — heating and gas facilities stand in the center between the buildings. However, as Robin Moore suggests, even such places for children are "flowing terrains" — experienced in more "intimate, fluid and intense" way than they are perceived by adults (Moore, 1986:56, 57). Being seen as "little houses" of peculiar form, these facilities played a certain part in Anna's daughter limited experience in exploring the territory:

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[5] Indeed, in the 1990s the car ownership has risen incredibly, reaching sometimes, particularly in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, 150-200% comparing to the rate of car ownership in late Soviet time (Tsenkova, 2006).

> When Masha was little, she played making up her own story about a gas station and a boiler room, placed in the yard. She was bringing them flowers and gifts, giving them names. She didn't have much friends and had to use her own fantasy. (Anna)

This phantasmagoric impersonation of ugly constructions, which were placed in the central space as a manifestation of independent living and a "new time" (these facilities provide gas and hot water directly to only these buildings around, what in 1990s might be seen of high importance due to constant interruptions in supply of basic utilities), reveals specific children's ability to adjust the space, at least imaginary, to their needs in play and exploration (Hart, 1979). This quasi-space forces its users to escape: "If we want to go for a walk, we have to take a bus and go in the city center. I learned how to deal with it when Masha was a baby, just packed everything we could need and went for a walk for a whole day" (Anna). When we were walking across the space and observing the territory from the 16th floor of the building, at some point I asked if there any reasons or justifications for such children-unfriendly planning, as Anna's father was participating in the project as an architect. But Anna doesn't evaluate this project professionally, rather critically perceives the place as a user. Further I explore in details the parental strategies of avoiding and adjustment to the space-place as performed through establishing and organization of children's movement.

1.2. Changing practices of children's mobility

Olga, who raises two boys, Vanya, 11, and Pasha, 7, walks me around the neighborhood they live in, the old remote working district with the buildings erected in late Soviet times, and poorly organized space between them: former lawns are appropriated for car parking, the benches are demolished, the place is for passing-by on the way from and to home. The school is approximately 5 minutes far from their

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house and though there are no roads to cross on the way, the main concern of Olga explaining why her boys are supervised on their way home after school, is that it is just not safe. "And I can do it, as I work on freelance and often at home. In the morning my husband drops them off near the school, and they like it" (Olga). However, most of the respondents I communicated with do not chauffeur their children.[6] Maxim's children, a boy and a girl in their 10-12 of a father, Kyivan himself, were always supervised to school nearby their house. It is located on 500 meters distance from their home but there are two roads to cross. That's why they weren't allowed to go alone, being always accompanied by their father or other "trusted persons". The building is situated in a *promzone[7]*, so leaving the borders of courtyard was undesirable. If the children needed to go somewhere, the family used the services of a trustworthy taxi driver, who was in the family's use for at least the decade. The children were also supervised to any children's parties they wanted, to the doors and back, "with the respect to the private territory".

The first school Timofey attended, the elder son of Viktoria, Kyiv citizen in third generation, was situated nearby, and it was chosen specifically so he could go by himself. In the 5th grade he changed the school where he has to walk for 15-20 minutes. Timofey draw me a map of his route, which goes through the rails, without a traffic light, so he had to spontaneously cross it. They were first practicing the route with his mother — "until the reflex was elaborated: first to look right, then — left" (Viktoria).

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[6] As far as my respondents don't chauffeur their children much, I further do not develop this aspect of decreasing children's mobility, though I acknowledge this emerging trend growing worldwide (e.g. Hillman, 1990; Fotel and Thomsen, 2003)

[7] Eng. industrial zone, a district of heavy production facilities including usually planned nearby the habitation facilities.

The process of preparation of children to their unattended mobility within urban space, for those who still exercise it, often takes a form of a project. It is more deliberate and well prepared process, if to compare how these parents being children themselves were moving spontaneously across the city. The school for Tanya's two children, a boy of 10 and a girl of 8 years old, is situated quite remotely, around 30 minutes of walking. They have a car in the family but starting from this year the children had to go by themselves, as Tanya found a job and has to leave early in the morning. The preparation process for their first unattended walk to school was the following: first, there were few training walkings following two different routes possible to take, on the way to school and back, with the discussion to what to pay attention to, how to cross the streets, etc. Next, Tanya was following the kids 20 meters behind them as she wouldn't be there. It took approximately 2 weeks for this preparations. Later in the class her son made friends with another boy who motivated Tanya's children to use public transport together as well. "That boy is very independent, going to all his additional classes by himself", says Tanya. Such children became the local heroes of sorts — described as fearless, independent, "the last of Mohicans" — being rather an exception among usually supervised children. The disappearing of children from their usual spaces of presence, as streets, courtyards and playgrounds, or decreasing everyday mobility to schools even becomes threatening to those who still have such freedom of movement. As Anna, 10 years old Masha's mother, mentions, there were plenty of kids playing outside in the past, and it was less risky then for any particular child — now it looks unusual when children play without surveillance, there are almost none of them, and some couple of girls playing alone would seem vulnerable.

What helps parents to keep the children on unattended move? Some of the respondents claim, that their own habit of walking determine the approach to setting

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their children's mobility. These practices repeatedly developed in own childhood find its re-establishment in the parental approaches of some respondents towards their children, who are growing up in Kyiv in 2010s. As Nina recalls, she used to walk a lot being a child, preferring it to the use of public transport if the points of destination are within 5 kilometers. She was relying on straight lines and wide pedestrian paths along the main roads, instead of small, usually dark narrow streets through the districts. Living in the same area where she grew up, together with her three daughters Nina continues to walk with them on long distances: "They have had to walk a lot since they were little — as I used to do too, they had to adjust. Girls also take skate boards or rollers when we are walking." (Nina and Masha, 14, Tonya, 9, Sasha, 2). Viktoria, who grew up in a working class remote district of Darnitsya, enthusiastically describes the family tradition of hiking, which also was adapted in their urban walking practices, including her own as a child free movement within the closest districts. She now encourages her children, Timofey, 12, and his sister of 4 years old, to walk a lot, together and separately. For instance, they recently explored the district visiting the playgrounds Timofey put on the map in Google Earth program, walking 6 kilometers in total. "He is known for his self-reliability in class" adds his mother. Now they have a group of children, who also like to walk home, and Timofey accompany them, as he said, "to make sure they get home. And for me it is just a nice circle to walk home" (Viktoria and Timofey, 12). Once children find a proper company, they become more demanding to gain their freedom of movement:

> "Together with friends they started to go after school somewhere around, to the MacDonald's which is close. There is not much places to go, actually. It is the girl, their classmate, who initiated the city walks. They have a Viber group and decide where to go next."

Olga tells, whose boys, 10 and 7, are mostly supervised in their everyday practices. The second or third child plays also an important role in liberating the movements of older children: going on walk with them they help their parents taking care of younger siblings, but also explore with them the territories around. Having younger child also motivates mothers to let the elder ones go more by themselves — to school, additional classes and shops, etc. Nina, mother of three girls, let the elder ones take 1 year old sister with them for walks, and encourages the oldest one to take her 7 years old middle sister with her in further explorations.

Some of the respondents grew up in the same districts where they live now with their children. I assumed that knowing the space and trusting it should reflect in responsive parental practices towards children's mobility. Though I didn't find such correlation. Many of those parents who changed the place of living let their children go unsupervised, as do Tanya, Semyon & Anna, and Anna; and those who grew up in the same place — as Anna O, Olga, or Maxim — supervised them mostly. Following Hillman and his team's findings in their substantive research on children's mobility in UK, these choices to let go or not — are made according to the individual perception of risks (Hillman, 1990; Giddens, 1995). In the following Chapter I will provide with the discussion on globally accepted and culturally specific risks as perceived by parents and affecting their supervision of children.

2. "Love it so, but mother says no": Risks and limitations of children's unattended mobility

Risks, as childhood itself, are "necessarily constructed" (Adam at al., 2000). They represent the perception of safety, fear, and imagination, as it is always half-real, with a considerable level of uncertainty (ibid.) As implied by Ulrich Beck, modern risk society is characterized with the individualization and reflexivity (Beck, 1992). Accordingly, Individuals act in response to their fears and take decisions to minimize potential negative results. Acting under the probability of negative events is particularly can be seen in setting control on children's mobility and curbing their autonomy. Mary Douglas, who worked closely on taboos and dangers in her anthropological studies, also examined risk as representing a subjective perception of danger within modern society; cultural theory is seen by Douglas as another means to scrutinize risk as determined by societal norms. While risk as such is often perceived by and responded to by individuals, she claims that risk cannot be understood without an appreciation for its cultural, social, historical, and political context. According to Douglas, risks and dangers are culturally specific and can be seen as means in establishing certain boundaries with the other. The Other might be anyone who doesn't meet one's expectations as a trust-worthy member of society, or simply a stranger exhibiting alterity. Moreover, those already somehow disadvantaged (and children in particular are seen as one of the most vulnerable social groups) are more likely to suffer exposure to risks. I will further explore globally and locally specific risks as perceived by Kyivan modern parents and mediating children's unattended movement.

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2.1. "Kidnapping? Possibly. Robbery? Definitely.": Risks, dangers and terror talks

The main risks seen by parents who limit their children's on different scale, are often connected with traffic and "stranger danger". These seem to be the features in common for parents worldwide (Katz, 2005; Malone, 2011). Almost all interviewees mention the traffic as on of the first stoppers, which prevent them from letting their children go by themselves. Statistics on the car accidents in Ukraine says that less than 1% of children who got injured in the car accidents were "guilty", in most of the cases the fault was on drivers. The official reported numbers on injuries are not trustworthy: the number of car accidents said to occur in Kyiv is inexplicably lower than it is reported on the regional level. Having officially reported 3000 deaths in traffic incidents per year in total, the NGOs performing fact-checking argued that it is at least 30% higher[8]. Thus, the risk to get injured becomes objective, as the one which can't be controlled or prevented.

The fear of a hypothetical threat at the hands of strangers was admitted to by many of my respondents. "The stranger danger" trope is attributed to an erosion of trust in society which the parents noticed over time, as compared to their own nostalgic recollection of their own childhood:

> People knew each other, strangers used to help each other. There were "roofs", a kind of peer protection for each girl — if someone offends someone, they protect the victim, these older friends. Everyone had her own people. Now the turnover of people is fast; everyone is moving somewhere next, but in my time people used to live in the same place for years. We all were hanging out together and weren't afraid; in the case of trouble one's own people could intimidate the offender(s). (Bogdana)

> There was no fear. Interactions with strangers were encouraged; to ask for help, or ask the way, any question like this could be asked. (Kolya)

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8   https://hromadskeradio.org/programs/kyiv-donbas/skilky-lyudey-gyne-na-dorogah-ukrayiny-oficiyna-statystyka-vidriznyayetsya-vid-danyh-aktyvistiv

This nostalgia about the safe space where children could freely move knowing people around and trusting strangers, adds to the anxiety of modern parents (Jackson and Scott, 1999). Paradoxically, that this nostalgic memories refer to the time where there was no safety at all, according not only to existent studies, but to some other parts of my interviewees' own stories and reflexions on socio-spatial space of their childhood. Even describing the level of trust and accountability to strangers as high in their own childhood, almost everyone of my respondents had some negative experience of interaction with strangers in the past, that informed their current parental practices as well:

> I remember when a man asked me to leave with him. I had just a fight with my grandmother, and even had a thought for a moment to go, but then thought of my mom, that she might have got upset. We have never discussed any things like that. (Anna)

> I remember one accident which happened in a house in central district we recently moved to with my mother. It was in elevator; a man was trying to approach me [Sveta doesn't provide the details and I'm not asking]. I was coming back to this encounter over and over, thinking what I did wrong and what I could have done differently, what I should have been done to protect myself. We never discussed it with my mother. I have a considerable degree of fatalism. Thinking of such stories, I know I can't prevent everything, neither for myself nor my children. I take certain actions and talk with them a lot about safety, but it will be as it may be. (Sveta)

Other stories from the respondents about experiences with ill-intentioned people reveal that this risk was, of course, always present. Their parents asked them to be more careful:

> What and whom we were said be afraid of? Maybe just of strangers and "The White Brotherhood". (Anna)

The White Brotherhood appeared in early 1990ies and grew considerably; many then-children recalled the precautionary talks given by their parents about the risks that

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befell those who enrolled in this sect. The main mission proclaimed by the sect was to prepare for the end of the world which was seen as forthcoming (with a precise date announced). In order to maintain the "enlightening" activity of its leaders, Maria Devi The Christ and her secular husband, new parishioners, usually young people, were expected to provide donations (Balukova and Vesnina, 2013). This organization was represented as a consistent danger by a few of my respondents. In general, the rules or norms of children's behavior outside the home were generally not discussed in detail by families in 1990s:

> I was on bike since the age of 9-10; my parents never knew where I was. I just had to be home before it was dark. And around the time my parents were coming back from work, I tried to stay in the courtyard, closer to the house. We didn't discussed these rules; they were somehow established and everyone was OK with them. (Semyon)

> We didn't talk about any dangers or risks that much. I mean, they told me some stories but we didn't discuss them in order to understand how to behave or react in such situations. It was not common to talk about things like that,

Olga shares on how her parents dealt with the possible threats. More attention was paid to the cases of robbery, especially in a public space or on transport:

> I was not allowed to wear any gold necklaces or earrings, as everyone was afraid then of gypsies who tear off gold jewelry or hypnotize you to give it with consent. Once we were on the big local market, we figured out how to go there. But then there some people noticed that we are alone, without adults (my friend and I were around 14-15). The gypsy woman started to talk something about the earrings, that she'd lost just the same as mine. I understood that she talked in a strange, slow way, and at some point I made my friend and myself run out of there. The idea was to catch any bus we could find, and then later we would figure out how to get home. But luckily we met out classmate with her family, and felt safe. (Olga)

Having experienced the rough times of the 1990s, modern parents talk much on the risk of being robbed, but don't elaborate. They don't provide their children with expensive phones, they teach them to surrender their belongings easily and with no

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regrets. "Kidnapping? Possibly. Robbery? Definitely. It's not even a fear, it's an expectation, sooner or later it is gonna happen. There is a fear of getting serious injuries in the process though" says Kolya when we talk about possible threats. His son, twelve-year-old Kit, adds: "You just have to give everything you have, that's it". This answer satisfied Kolya: "We didn't talk about it in details, but it sounds right to me."

I also talked with parents about the context in which Ukraine, and Kyiv particularly, has been put recently and how they perceive this situation in order to allow or limit their children to move freely within the city. In 2013-14, the Revolution of Dignity erupted in Kyiv and was transmitted to most regional centers. Starting as a peaceful protest, it degenerated into a violent, armed confrontation. Further dramatic changes to the geo-political and social order of the country were consequent to the civil unrest: separatist movements arose and unrecognized, proto-states asserted independence, the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR); the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation took place in the spring of 2014; the ongoing armed conflict involving Russian troops and the rebel militias of the DNR and LNR has, to date, brought about more than 10,000 casualties and incalculable misery. One of the outcomes of this situation is increasing mobility and the forced movement of internally displaced citizens to the capital and to the Western Ukraine. According to media and humanitarian aid reports (UNHCR, 2017), there are certain prejudices that exist against Ukrainians from the East. They have often trouble with their job searches, or are facing problems finding apartments to rent (many notice that some advertisements in social networks include the prevision "not for refugees from the East", and contrary to that, some welcome refugees with "Internally displaced people-friendly apartment" in their ads), schooling and other social services being provided. I

wondered if the war itself and the people who had to move to Kyiv are seen as an additional threat and thus add to parental anxiety. Bogdana didn't mention it by herself talking about the risks, but answered on my direct question. Yes, she agreed, now many more cases with internally displaced people appeared,

> "One woman, being drunk or what, threw her baby in a garbage bin, and picked up another baby from a nursery! Such stories can be read in "Obolon Guards", the facebook group of the movement appeared during Maidan protests, which members keep an eye on order and safety in our district, so one of their members had found that child. This woman, she moved from the East as discovered. Such stories exist, people are afraid of them, and of these people too."

Though not many parents see internally displaced people as a particular category of threat; some of them see the general atmosphere of war in the country as contributing to increase tensions between people, the rise of aggressiveness and the crime level:

> 5 years ago or so it was less dangerous. It is not connected with internal migrants, but with the war itself, of course. After the revolution [of Dignity] the control has decreased, the level of crime has increased. (Kolya)

Paradoxically, according to the studies on happiness which was held in Ukraine in 2016, the citizens of not directly affected by the war regions, including Kyiv and its oblast, didn't feel considerable changes and doesn't seem to be affected (Coup and Obrizan, 2016).

The risks and responsive parental practices towards children's mobility are gender-specific. As Kolya, Kit's father said, "If I had a daughter, I would never let her go out by herself". Nina, the mother of three daughters of different ages, during the whole interview tried not to talk about any negative experiences or rumors of risks and dangers which might be threatening to her girls in the city space. She said only that she paid lots of attention to increase the girls' awareness on privacy, personal touching and strangers, who can approach when and who cannot. She provided the girls with

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books too. Regarding the risks and dangers for girls, Anna hasn't mention it to Masha yet, neither has she provided any books. She acknowledges the necessity to have such conversations, but says that she needs some time to better prepare for this, "But definitely, there is a need to talk about it". Anna explained some scenarios on behavior in critical situations, showed "the video with dogs"[9] and others. The main message is that it is suspicious when an adult approaches a child asking for help, he/she should ask for a help another adult. Though Masha can't understand why she is not reliable in such situation. I think that she is concerned with children not being taken seriously. When she succeeds in all her ideas and initiatives, being empowered by her parents, for her, being unable to help someone else or to deal with some situation by herself is upsetting. Masha tells me how to react in any of those possibly dangerous situations, making up the scenarios of being heroic: to hit a robber, to defeat the offender, using her skills of karate.

What is interesting is that some mothers perceive the risk of sexual abuse as strictly gender specific and they don't provide their sons with any information regarding other cases, but do so with their daughters. When we talked about such risks, Viktoria says there are lots of scary stories in the news, lowering her voice and making it more secretive. She explains to her son, Timofey, 12, that there are lots of perverts, who entice children — "we say because of organs" — so he shouldn't talk with strangers, especially when he accompanies his little 4 years old sister. Anna chose the same approach with her son Danya, 11, though she understands that with her daughter, who is 7 now, she will need to have a different conversation:

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[9] The viral video, which is mentioned almost by every respondent. The social experiment was staged in Central Park in New York, when a man after receiving consent from parents at the playground, approached their children and suggested them to go with him to see other dog like one he had. All children without exception followed the man.

> We gave a book to Danya and said 'please read what you are interested in'. It's not common in our family to discuss such things. We don't talk with him about abuse, as we don't want it to be perceived as a norm, that a man can approach another male, man or boy. (Anna)

The topic of sexual abuse is, as one would assume, related to sexual education generally, which, in a quite traditional society like Ukrainian, is itself perceived as a taboo[10]. Though it is argued, for instance by Jackson and Scott, that sexualization of risk is culturally and locally specific, as the concerns regarding it have spread worldwide I would argue that the risk became global, being constructed as childhood itself, and adapted to the views of each particular society (Jackson and Scott, 1999).

The risk of "kidnapping for organs", as some parents recalled, has existed since 1990s. There was an investigation of actual cases covered widely in media, so many parents remain frightened. Maxim, who is a psychologist (his wife is a doctor), says it is nonsense: such an operation (organ harvesting) would require a long-time preparation, investigation of the medical history of the children abducted, and, additionally, there is serious risk of failure, so he doesn't see these talks as well-grounded, but rather as urban legends. Semyon, the father of Zlata, 8, also recalls the periodic, "once in two-three years" appearance of the particular stories in social media: an attempt to steal a child, a girl, by disguising her in boy's clothes; or returning a child without one kidney who was stolen at the playground, etc..

> When they kidnap children, they just come with a truck and just take a child. Or disguised policemen can approach saying that parents asked them to pick him/her up. Children would go with a policemen because of the uniform, they trust it. There was a story of how "a policemen" — a man disguised as one — took an expensive phone from a school boy. No, I saw the story on he internet. Nothing like that happened in our school or neighborhood, as far as I know. Our main problem is cars in the neighborhood. Though once someone threw a cigarette stub from

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[10] Recently developed and published online course on sexual education on Ukrainian platform https://edx.prometheus.org.ua/courses/course-v1:EPF+SEXED101+2018_T2/about caused a storm of discussion, as it suggests to have an alternative, as to the official discourse represented in schools, open conversation on sex for youth.

the upper floor of the building, and a child was walking there so he got
a burn. (Anna)

All these fears and urban legends can be identified as "terror talk", a notion developed

by Cindi Katz in her work on social reproduction in public space (Katz, 2005). According

to her study, terror talk, a predominantly media-based discourse regarding children,

came to prominence in USA in the period of the 1980-90's and was fixated on violence

and "gruesome tales", though there was no statistical evidence of an increase of such

cases. Many of my respondents acknowledge that they are affected in their perception

of risk by terror talk. I hope to explore in further detail what instigates such fears and,

in so far as it may be possible, locate the fluid line which separates real danger from

exaggerated risk.

2.2. Fighting "the informational pressure"

Many parents mention the presence of moral panic or, literally translated from

Russian, "informational pressure," and though there is no such expression in English,

I think it precisely describes what is happening with the parents:

> I think that maybe in reality there are not many cases when something
> bad happens. I think it is mostly informational pressure. But still, I am
> concerned, especially because of the traffic. (Olga)

> It feels that we didn't know about some cases before. We have a Viber
> group with other parents. Some suggested we have a workshop on self-
> defense for children. There are posters everywhere, and news of
> missing children. Maybe the crime level has remained the same, maybe
> in the past instances of kidnapping was not publicly announced, but now
> the speed of news is incredible. (Tanya)

The terror talks are coherent with moral panic, which in its defined specificity is the

reaction to a threat coming from marginalized groups, marginalized due to their

nationality, ethnicity, class, sexuality, etc. (Cohen, 1972; McRobbie and Thornton,

1995). In the case with children, who themselves are seen as vulnerable and

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marginalized, the moral panic produced in the media is aimed at children in order to protect this valuable and sentimentalized category against anyone who may seek to hurt them. Furthermore, the scale of the induced moral panic comprehends the city as a whole as the locality or scene of all potential threats produced by strangers. Reactionary parents remove their children from the common space or impose additional limitations on their movement. But some adults may develop so-called moral entrepreneurship, the position to claim they know the reasons for, and are able to fight, this problematic issue (Becker, 1963; Critcher 2003). Some initiate patrols, as one mentioned above in the district of Obolon; parents also create groups to investigate and share information in order to forestall potential dangers. As Anna, who allows her daughter Zlata, 8, comparatively high mobility, mentioned, "It is a time of concerned moms". She told me the story of an incident which happened recently in her neighborhood, provoked by one of such messenger groups. A few mothers who were escorting their children to school and back, had noticed a man who was often sitting in a car in front of the school, as they claimed, looking at young students leaving after their classes. These mothers approached the man, detained him, called the police, and it figured out that the man was delivering water to school, and "looking at the girls because they were not dressed accordingly due to the weather." As many experts claim, the child predator cases are rare, especially in comparison to the public perception.(Castaneda, 2000; Katz, 2005). The moral panic fixated on sexual abuse in the USA, according to National Lawyers Guild Review Editor-in-Chief, Nathan Goetting, "stigmatize and shame without regard to actual risk".[11]

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[11] Expert overview http://ccresourcecenter.org/2015/01/16/moral-panic-sex-offenses-results-cruel-self-defeating-overpunishment/

What is problematic here is that, in a time of hyper-individualization and post-truth, when the media and government's reliability is questionable, parents create their own communities, though they are sometimes unable to identify real, as opposed to imaginary, risks, and thus adversely affect their children, and other people as well (Castaneda, 2000). In this rise of the community, which in Ukraine I think happened after Maidan revolution, modern parents find peer support as the revival of a lost solidarity (Beer and Koster, 2009).

Modern parents spend more time on the preparation of their children to enter the real world, not in the future when they will become adults, but now, assuming the necessity and the importance of such movements within the urban space. They buy specialized literature and show educational videos. Anna, Zlata's mother, has attended workshops for parents on children's security and self-defense in public space. She learned about what to do in this or that situation. Zlata knows that only parents can pick her up, or some adult who knows "the secret word", a previously agreed password; she knows she has to scream as loud as possible if someone tries to drag her to their car or to any dark place; she knows that if she's lost her mother on the way somewhere, she needs to go back to the place they saw each other last. Anna says this training helped her to be more confident and prepare her daughter for being on her own.

> I had some negative experiences with strangers. It influenced my approach to childrearing. They all attended fight training. They know want to do in unexpected situations, and always have money for a taxi. The approach is the following: break an attacker's anything (yes, a leg or something!), then we will figure it out what to do. (Maxim)

The tough approach above manifests a general readiness for any endangering experience that could occur. Children are thus trained and well prepared to resist any possible threat. All of Maxim's children attended martial arts classes; they always have money for a taxi in case of some situation, and are taught to react appropriately.

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Another parent, Anna, discusses various scenarios with her daughter Masha, 10, in order "to develop her skills in understanding, evaluation and action". Masha replies to her mother: 'I'd rather not go then: what if I won't react and act right?". They also discussed a case recently happened to Anna. It was about the irritating behavior of a stranger while Anna was performing a transaction at an ATM. He stood behind her, swearing and threatening her. "It was the first time I wanted to have a gun," she said. This feeling of being unsafe and wanting to protect ones family, specifically vulnerable children, provokes some parents to sometimes extreme actions and hyper-vigilance (Katz, 2005).

What some parents find useful is to conduct experiments with their children; they stage situations so as to test their children's reactions and degree of resistance. No one among my respondents, however, has gone to such lengths. Maxim, who deals a lot with his children's preparation regarding the risks and dangers of the city, regrets he didn't have someone enact the role of a strung-out drug addict to show the consequences of drug use. Anna also mentioned that such experiments were recommended at the self-defense training she attended, and she thought of asking some acquaintances to approach Zlata and invite her to leave with them. "They should be frightened in a certain way; we should have an experiment to check their abilities" says Tanya. In the parents' view, such simulation of life situations, controlled and with an acceptable level of simulated danger, might help children to be ready for real situations which might occur in their everyday lives. But would they ever be exposed to any real risk, or use these deliberately developed skills, or would the children develop paranoia such that they would rather choose to stay home? In the next chapter I explore the mobility discourses formed among, for and by Kyivans, under the risks perceived by parents as threatening to their children, on the one hand, and

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opportunities, on another, which are seen as crucial for a child's successful future. These discourses direct the attempts of parents either to limit their children to more an exclusively home-based existence, or to move within specific and controlled spheres, through formally organized events in prescribed spaces.

3. Flâneurs with a purpose: Children's unattended mobility under opportunity and control

According to Qvortrup, children are not present in the public space because they have been marginalized in a two-fold manner: first as a group whose competences and skills are seen as only partially developed or developing, and, second, as exclusively the responsibility of others: the latter conception refers to the common belief that children are to be attended to by their parents or supervisors, but not by adults in general (Qvortrup, 2005). I would also add, that children are too busy. Children are not seen in the public space because their parents, who are now acknowledged as the only responsible persons relevant to their children, have re-established children's pricelessness, invested in their development, crammed their schedules with additional classes, and organized their lives, but solely for the sake of better future. A certain compilation or array of approaches now figure in the curation of modern childhood. Whereas in pre-modernity children were expected to grow up, become adults and only then be accepted as equal citizens, what is transpiring in the post-Soviet and post-1990s period is that children are not passively expected to simply mature, but are cultivated in such a way as to not so much fulfill their present lives, but to broaden the opportunities for their potential future. Qvortrup states, that before childhood was reconsidered and perceived as socially constructed, the "notions of opportunity were not grafted onto individual achievements, outcomes or successes but rather related to the survival of the community of which these children were an integral part." (ibid.). Now however childhood has become a project. (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995:107). This "developmental paradigm" adds to parental risk anxiety: "Under the condition of individualization it is not the future of society as a whole which is the issue but the capacities of parents to live vicariously through their children, to

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treat them as carriers of their own hopes and dreams." (Lupton, 1999:89) I will now examine in detail how children's occupations organize their mobility and use of time-space, with their being supervised and supported by their parents in their aspirations which sometimes prompts hyper-vigilance.

3.1. "Make him read, feed with broccoli and put him in a car": Re-establishing priceless child as investment

We met with Sveta, one of my first interviewees, a mother of two boys, in the park close to their place on Sunday morning. The little park has a main square with a monument dedicated to a journalist who was killed in 2000, which children have made use of in their play. There is no playground, but lots of open space for activities. Sveta's boys played with soft bullet toy guns, younger children rode scooters or balance bikes. When Sveta was introducing me to the boys, Dima, the eldest, gave me a very firm and assertive handshake and told his name. I complimented his strong and confident handshake. Sveta explained that she taught handshake "rules", and they also work on his voice.

The family visits this park every weekend, as there is no space in the courtyard of their house:

> We don't really know the neighbors, and children don't really play there.
> Though whenever we see some kids, I am trying to make acquaintances
> with mothers and children for Dima's sake. (Sveta)

Sveta called one of the mothers while we were talking trying to manage the meeting for children that afternoon. The social connections of children more often are established or controlled by their parents. Maxim also mentioned how he was influencing his daughter, when she turned 14 and started to go out, in order to "remove undesirable elements" from her social environment.

Children's time is equally managed by their parents, not the children themselves. Anna, the mother of Danya, 11 and Olya, 7, confirms her son self-reliance and busyness:

> Now, during Olya's first year in school, while they sleep after classes, Danya runs to English lessons three times per week, and twice per week brings her to her dance classes. We organize everything this way, so they can both have their classes. (Anna)

As suggested by Kirsten Drother, children now live in a knowledge society and entertainment society at the same time (Drother, 2005), which I would rephrase as "edutainment society", the notion compiled of education and entertainment, widely used in popular discourses. This over-organization of children's life with the focus on skill development, and despite extracurricular activities, often confines them to their homes, due to parents' influence or by their own choice. Indeed, there are much more entertaining and knowledge-sourcing facilities for their development online, than can be found outside:

> It is more comfortable to stay at home. I have lots of things to do: animation, modeling, wood work. I have my little brother to play with. I didn't really need to make friends, and it doesn't work well. (Nikita, 12, Kolya's son)

Being engaged in their sophisticated hobbies and interests, some children feel a lack of affinity for other children. Viktoria and Timofey, 12, who are serious hikers, told the story about when they were engaged together with a group of people, some with children of Timofey's age, in a night-walking tour around the city, a distance of 40 kilometers. I asked if Timofey got in contact with anyone there, and he said he didn't. "There was not much to talk about with them". He demonstrated the same attitude with regard to the children in his neighborhood. "I don't even try to talk with them. We don't have any common interests; it's not interesting for me to hang out there". He then

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mentioned his hobbies — animation, mapping, coding — as opposed to the interests of other children, as "some TV series": "They have definitely even not heard about anime!". "It is hard to find good companions for our hobbies, so we mostly spend time together as a family" says his mother Viktoria. These hobbies and thirst for (presumably marketable) knowledge determines the mobility discourses parents and children elaborate, sometimes together:

> Once Masha saw the building of art school, bright and spacious, it was appealing to me. She really wanted to go — I said, well, go then! Later, there were other classes she also went by herself, by metro as well. (Nina)

Some of the parents mentioned the pressure of expectations:

> It is parents who make decisions instead of their children, they schedule everything. It is all discussed on parental meetings in school, in group chats, who attends what. It became trendy to develop children; it determines what a good mother you are, how well you're occupied with your child's development — make him read, feed him with broccoli and put him in a car. (Tanya)

> It is the time of total control, when each step of a child should be known by his parents. We under the pressure — that I have to develop my child, make sure she goes on all additional classes. If I didn't arrange it, I would feel I am a bad mother, because of the feeling of guilt and the call of duty. (Anna, the mother of Zlata, 8)

The growing pressure of opportunities and imposed risks put the parents in a dilemma: to let the children go by themselves or not. Masha is a homeschooled and attends a wide range of additional classes she chose by herself: music (solfeggio, choir, piano — everything in different time in the same location of music school), slalom, English, drums, chess, and karate. The list is constantly discussed as Masha is willing to learn more, but her mother tries to persuade her it is enough. Masha answers every one of my questions regarding her experiences of walking by herself with her often-repeated phrases: "Why be afraid?", "It's easy-peasy!". Though she has a certain freedom in mobility in the neighborhood, Masha is accompanied by her mother to all the classes

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she attends. The parents started considering letting Masha go by herself. To get to the classes she needs to take a small bus ride for 20 minutes. All the classes are mostly within the same area. Logistically it is not that hard to manage, but Anna has organized her own work schedule in a way to be able to accompany Masha to her classes, so she doesn't see a problem in it, even though it would free some time for her. Some other mothers confirmed that they had adjusted their work schedules in order to provide children with care and attention.

3.2. Technologies of surveillance: How far one can go (spying)?

"Parental restrictions on children's autonomous mobility promulgate and often mask the troubling consequences of the privatization of their lives; all in the name of safety" (Katz in Qvortrup, 2005:103). The means parents use for it and practices of control determine the perception of trust and security not only in the society and open space, but within the family and at the dinner table. How do parents negotiate their risk anxiety with their children and rationalize a growing necessity to control them? There are various forms of surveillance my respondents have adopted to ensure the happiest possible outcomes.

All the respondents use phones to communicate with their children in between school and additional classes. Parents call to check if their children who go to school and back on their own are fine. Some mention that they follow the time and get anxious if their children don't call back as agreed. Often parents provide the children with the very simple phone devices, being aware of possible damage or the risk of robbery, as mentioned above. Some children are also limited in using their smartphones, as prolongate and frequent use of the phones is another concern of modern parents, and another reason why some children own phones of simpler models, or sometimes go

out without ones. Furthermore, the phones are also seen as distracting devices and thus could prove dangers in themselves:

> We talk about phones — that they distract them, putting at risk of getting hit by a car, or they can be stolen. (Tanya)

On the subject of technologies and special devices of surveillance, Sveta confirms the popularity of smart watches. This device allows parents to spot the location of a child and follow their routes through a GPS sensor:

> Some of Dima's classmates have these devices. Parents do track their children's movements, even if they drive them by car to school. But I think there is something strange in it. It doesn't feel good. I prefer to trust and negotiate. (Sveta)

All respondents are aware of smart watches, but no one is using them; they emphasize these devices' popularity and use by other parents in school. Some of the respondents complained of their being "total useless":

> This watch with a tracker — is a useless device. If someone steals a child, this device will be thrown off first. I trust my children; they are well behaved. There is no reason to track them. I don't believe in such devices. (Tanya)

A few parents tried the applications for their smartphones which allow them to track their child. Nina demonstrated the application together with her daughter, explaining to me how it worked and why they didn't use it much. She also emphasized that resort to the application is not to verify the children's words, but to have an opportunity to find them "in case of something":

> You see, it shows the data of 14 days ago, that Masha [the eldest daughter of 14] is home — but I know that right now she is definitely not at home but with her friends. So it's not really working well. We all installed this application but never really rely on it … The girls can't see where their father is; he turned off this option. (Nina)

Viktoria says they don't have any applications to control Timofey, 12: "It limits a child's freedom, it's interfering with his private life. It is of high importance to build trusting

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relationships in a family". Trust was mentioned by the majority of my respondents. They try to optimize the use of technologies without going to extremes. This is quite different from the Western studies which evidence near constant technological control in the name of safety (Fotel and Thomsen, 2003). For Kyivan parents, the zone of privacy of a child is important, as they concerned with keeping a close and intimate relationship with their children.

> Basically, it's all based on trust. I ask him to call me and inform where he is, in which district, and when he plans to come home. I just ask him to avoid risky situations, to avoid unpleasant surprises. In general, I ask him not to share with my any stressful things if he managed them by himself (Bogdana)

I find the last sentence of this quote representative of the whole idea of parental surveillance. Naturally, the phone calls and the applications are intended to secure children's safety and to decrease their parents' anxiety. When life becomes more unpredictable, parents try to control one of the few things they are to control proactively — their children. This effort thus becomes highly commercialized; following Beck, the production of 'goods' is replaced with the production of 'bads', or threats and risks, which became commodified (Beck, 1992). As one of the most extensive studies on parental surveillance proves, the market for high-technology interventions for the purpose of unremitting vigilance is growing in Western countries (Marx and Steeves, 2010). Such an intensification of the means of control imposed on children accordingly provokes further discussion of the role of children, the family and society; their ethical, reasoning and developmental aspects are to be studied separately.

What seemed to me surprising is, according to the respondents, almost none of the children use interactive maps on their smartphones. Even those who move across the city unsupervised barely know how to use them. Instead children rely on the "virtual presence" and instant accessibility to their parents. Is it correlated with the presence

of constant control and supervision of parents calling to check if their son or daughter arrived, redressed, ate and so on? Do children assume they can always call their parents to solve any issue? Don't they need tools for self-navigation? I don't have an unequivocal answer to this question, but I think there is a certain connection, especially because the children themselves are adept at employing new media and technologies: Masha, 10, has her youtube channel and makes film short videos for it; Nikita,12, is good at animation; in the end, they all use smartphones and tablets and easily discover new apps and games. Some of them also provide me with the subjective maps of their usual routes or neighborhoods, which confirms their sound spatial orientation, a necessity for children who freely move within the urban space without constant oversight. And, indeed, those few children who have their freedom of movement navigate a bit better, relying not only on maps but also on others. Three boys, Stas, Tymofey and Nikita, 14, 12 and 12 respectively, also mentioned that in case of getting lost there were always some passers-by who they could ask for directions. These boys have independence and "license" to move freely within certain territories, quite wide compared to other children's unattended mobility (Hillman, 1990). Even if these boys' parents want to know where they will be and when they are planning to return home, these children have an opportunity to wander around. Such free-range children (Skenazy, 2009) explore their outskirts, meet friends, use public transport and visit various public spaces. What helped Stas, now 14, to get more freedom of movement was to lose his way in the city 2 years ago. He apparently lost his football team at the central train station where they had just arrived. He found transport and took the metro to get home. After that his mother let him move mostly freely, within certain limits. "We even had such a game with my friends — to catch metro and get out at a random station and wander around" (Nikita, 14, son of Bogdana). The same game is played by

another Nikita, 12, Kolya's son: "I used to go by metro and look how the last stops looked like, I enjoyed to go and check each station".

These games children play freely in urban space; being flâneurs (by definition without purpose), provides them with knowledge which is gained independently; in forming their own spatial perception children posit themselves as social actors and equal to adults. The way that children perceive and experience their spaces, how they exercise their free movement, reveals parental oversight vis-à-vis risk and of opportunity, what is denied and what is encouraged. The topic I explore and arguments I bring to my thesis set new directions for the continued study of children' unattended mobility.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have documented how children's unattended mobility was transformed over the course of two generations in the city of Kyiv. As my respondents recalled from their own youth, they were freely moving within their neighborhoods, were given rein to lose themselves in new districts and explore new places with their friends. For some, spatial and temporal limits were put in place, but how they moved and what they did within the limits was mostly left to them.

I explored how the space-place as setting for everyday mobility determined the perception of the city by then-children and now-parents. I also noted that nostalgia for "the safe past" (the past as another country) affected the narratives and memories of my respondents, a sheer contradiction in light of historical analysis of the turbulent period of 1990s. Nevertheless, despite reservations, familial traditions of movement often influence parental practices to this day.

The perception of risk by parents determines the mobility of modern children in Kyiv. Some of them are often escorted by their parents to places of interest in the name of safety. In doing so, parents replace friends with whom children might explore the spaces and thereby compensate for a two-fold lack: of parent-children communication due to intensification and individualization, and of socializing with the peers often caused by the growing differentiation and personalization of interests. As the empirical evidence provided in the previous chapters proves, many of my respondents' children still can exercise unattended movement though most of them have specifically assigned routes in most cases, and operate within a strict time frame, which allows the children to commute fixedly between A and B. Mobility is organized, instructions are given — outings are undertaken for a specific purpose. Such targeted mobility is

determined by the personal aspirations and opportunities seen by children and their parents as necessary for a successful future. Many parents believe this notion of "childhood as a project" is demanded by society at large.

The respondents also recognize the effect of moral panic and terror talk spread through the media and public discourse, and some of them try to resist this seemingly requisite anxiety and empower their children to stoically, though under a degree of supervision, exercise their mobility within the city. But children's *flâneurie* without a purpose, as the process of spectating and exploring of urban landscapes, as the direct and self-reliant interaction within the space, has become rare, thus reproducing the estrangement of children from public space.

But many children don't mind; for them, the opportunities offered by the global edutainment society are limitless within the confines of their own rooms. What are the horizons for the mobility of future youth generations? Will a newly emerging risk of leaving a private safe space require the invention of new means of resolution and control? My research is a starting point for further exploration of children's mobility in Ukraine. Due to the typical constraints regular to all research, some intriguing issues have been left out: more local-specific risks could have been dedicated for thorough analysis; the renovation of modern Kyiv as it is criticized and praised by its citizens, perfunctorily meets the discourse of child-friendliness; the disappearing practice of *flâneurie* as haphazardly exercised by young *flâneures* and *flâneuses* raises gender-specific issues of being a child in a public space; most importantly, children's own perceptions of their freedom and access to public space would repay further study.

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