

YOUTH, SPACE, AND SEXUALITY:

An exploration of the literature

August 2011, Rotterdam
By: Irene van Oorschot, MSc

This literature review was conducted in the context of the larger research project “Sexual Development and Diversity”, coordinated and financed by the Fund for Scientific Research on Sexuality (Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Sexualiteit).

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
1. Introduction: Controversial Sexualities?	3
References	6
2. Defining Sexuality, (Public) Space, and Youth	7
2.1 Sexuality/Sexualities	7
2.2 (Public) Spaces	8
2.3 Youth	9
2.4 References	11
3. Three Areas of Study	13
3.1 Sexuality and Youth	13
3.1.1. Socio-Medical Accounts	14
3.1.2. Sexualities and Youth Culture	15
3.1.3. Sexual and Sexualized Youth: Societal Fears and Fantasies	16
3.2 Sexuality and Public Space	17
3.2.1. Sex in Public	17
3.2.2. Sexualization of Space	18
3.3 Youth and Public Space	20
3.3.1. Mental Maps	20
3.3.2. Exclusions and Resistance	20
3.3.3. Liminal Spaces and Identities	22
3.4 References	23
4. Sexuality, Youth, and Public Space	29
4.1 Youth and Sexuality in Educational Spaces	29
4.2 Public Spaces, Sexuality, and Threatened Youth	31
4.3 Sexualizing and Desexualizing Space	33
4.4 References	36
5. Reflections and Research Suggestions	38
5.1 Well-trodden Paths	38
5.2 The “Known Unknowns”: Suggestions for Further Research	41
5.3 References	46
6. Notes on Methods and Ethics	47
6.1 Space and Method	47
6.2 The Ethics of Research on Youth and Sexuality	48
6.2.1 Researching Youth	48
6.2.2 Researching Sexuality	50
6.3 References	51

1. INTRODUCTION: CONTROVERSIAL SEXUALITIES

In 2006, social workers from Amsterdam alerted local politicians and media to a relatively new phenomenon graphically described as “breezer sex”, or: the practice among urban youth of having sex in exchange for material goods, for instance “a breezer, a hamburgers, or a ride home” (EenVandaag May 15 2007; GGD Amsterdam 2006). Reported to be widespread in at least some areas in Amsterdam, this phenomenon sparked a brief flurry of popular opinions. In 2007, transactional sex seemed start spreading to the provinces, as a title of the newspaper report suggested in its headline “Breezer sex spreads beyond the Randstad” (“Breezer seks ontgroeit de Randstad”). The existence as well as the “spread” of transactional sex among youth was met with disbelief, indignation, shock, or cynicism. One Mr. Girbes, a commenter on an online news forum put it as follows:

*“Natural urges have always played a role in everyday life. The problem however is that it now has acquired an economic aspect. The victim, the girl, is apparently unaware of the fact she’s throwing away her childhood. She has not been taught any discipline which is so necessary today because of the free culture of sex. [...] And her parents have neglected to take responsibility. The weakest among us fall victim. The resulting problems are for the community to deal with. The machos have an easy life.”*¹ (retrieved from EenVandaag, May 15 2007)

Like this commentator, those looking for a cause of this behavior pointed to absent parents (sometimes with a focus on working mothers more specifically), MTV culture, and the “sexualization” of everyday life. Others replied with barely disguised racism, referring to a statement by social worker Ineke Wijnsma that especially Moroccan and Antillean male youth “know exactly how to charm a girl”² (Metro, April 20 2007). Another online commenter on the EenVandaag forum, for instance, exclaimed that ‘[t]he Netherlands 10 years ago isn’t today’s Netherlands anymore. With all those different cultures in the country the norms and values we are used to in the Netherlands are withering away! A bad development!’³

After some debate in parliament, Minister of Justice Donner asked the GGD Amsterdam to further research the shape and prevalence of transactional sex in Amsterdam. The results of these studies were published in 2010 (van de Walle et al. 2010). The researchers found that transactional sex was not nearly as prevalent as

¹ Admittedly loose translation of the following Dutch fragment: “Dat natuurlijke driften een rol spelen in het dagelijkse leven is een signaal van alle tijden. Het probleem nu is echter dat het een economisch aspect heeft. Het slachtoffer, het meisje, is er zich kennelijk niet van bewust dat ze hiermee haar jeugd volledig te grabbel gooit. De discipline [sic], dat heden ten dage zeer noodzakelijk is, is haar niet geleerd doordat de vrije sex cultuur. [...] De zwaksten onder ons zijn daarvan het slachtoffer. [...] Ouders hebben ook nu weer kennelijk hun verantwoordelijkheid niet genomen. De problemen die hieruit volgen zijn alweer voor de gemeenschap. De macho’s hebben een heerlijk leven.” All translations from Dutch to English are the author’s.

² In Dutch: ‘Ze weten precies hoe ze een meisje in moeten pakken.’ Report by Machteld Veen in Metro, published on April 20, 2007.

³ In Dutch: “Het Nederland van 10 jaar geleden is niet Nederland niet meer. Met allemaal verschillende culturen in de [sic] land, vervagen de normen en waarden zoals wij die in Nederland gewend zijn. Een slechte zaak!” (EenVandaag May 15, 2007)

some media had portrayed it, and that young women themselves did not relate unproblematically to their involvement in transactional sex (van de Walle et al. 2010). Feeling of shame dominated their reflections on the times they engaged in transactional sex. It seemed sex was not easily interchangeable for food or shoes after all.

While relatively rare and not perceived as normal by a majority of teens, transactional sex among youth has however proven to be capable of generating heated debate among Dutch people. Other – admittedly minor – moral panics of this sort include the attention generated for lover boys and sex in “kelderboxen” (storage areas). Several themes emerge from the media-coverage of these types of sexual behavior among youth. Firstly, a constructions of childhood as a period of innocence threatened by sexual corruption predominate, exemplified in the commenter cited in the above fragment arguing that girls are “throwing away” their childhoods. Secondly, female youth have been portrayed as “victims”, suggesting young women need protection in the spheres within which parental or institutional authority is lacking. Thirdly, some of these tropes are strongly racialized⁴, and target especially urban, Moroccan and Antillean youth as the perpetrators of sexual violence. Fourthly, the shock about an urban phenomenon dangerously “spreading” to the more rural parts of the Netherlands seems to illustrate some culturally embedded conceptions of the city as a space of vice and disorder and the countryside as (morally) more pure, yet vulnerable to corruption by the ways of the city. Of particular relevance here is also the fact that the voice of the youth involved in these practices was – perhaps unsurprisingly – lacking, and that the debate was dominated by those far removed from the experiential worlds of teenagers, namely, adults.

As such, this vignette is illustrative of the anxieties surrounding youth, sexuality, and their involvement in the public sphere or public spaces. The growing suspicion that there are spaces within which youth engage in loveless, dangerous and/or coercive sexual practices take place is potentially destabilizing to not just the idea that parents have the authority and capacity to monitor their teenagers’ sexual behaviors, but also to cultural notions of romantic love, childhood, the proper use of the public realm, and the relationship between the city and the countryside. More importantly, it also raises questions as to the ways teenagers do engage in sexual practices; the meanings sexuality has for them and the sexual identities they negotiate for themselves; the spaces they create for the expression and construction of their sexualities; and the way gender, sexual identity, race, and class are implicated in these processes.

It is the aim of this literature review to shed light on the social scientific literature surrounding these teenage practices and adult fears surrounding those. From May to July 2011, I have searched various online databases for literature relevant to the subject at hand. Key terms were “sexuality”, “sex”, “sexual behavior”,

⁴ I will use the term “race” and “ethnicity” interchangeably throughout this piece, even though the use of “race” as an analytical category is less prevalent in Continental Europe. In Anglo-Saxon research however, this term does not have the essentialist connotations it has in Dutch and is generally understood to be a social construction.

“sexual identity”, “sexual practices”, “youth”, “adolescence”, “public space”, “public sphere”, and “private space”. I used the Erasmus University Library’s database (sEURch) and PiCarta, so that I was able to draw on various disciplines in finding literature for this review. I focused in my research on articles published in peer-reviewed journals, yet made use of more established and influential monographs or edited volumes when they were referenced frequently and treated as authoritative and relevant works.

This search did *not* however yield many articles focusing *directly* on the intersection of youth, sexuality and space. In dialogue with prof. Du Bois-Reymond, I have extended my search to be able to sketch the outlines of three major approaches that are well-researched and theorized, namely youth and sexuality, sexuality and public space, and youth and public space. In working through these three areas of academic focus, I aim to describe the state-of-the-art insights in these fields, which are then used to the outlines of a research agenda that is potentially interdisciplinary. This literature is hence structured in accordance with the following Venn diagram:

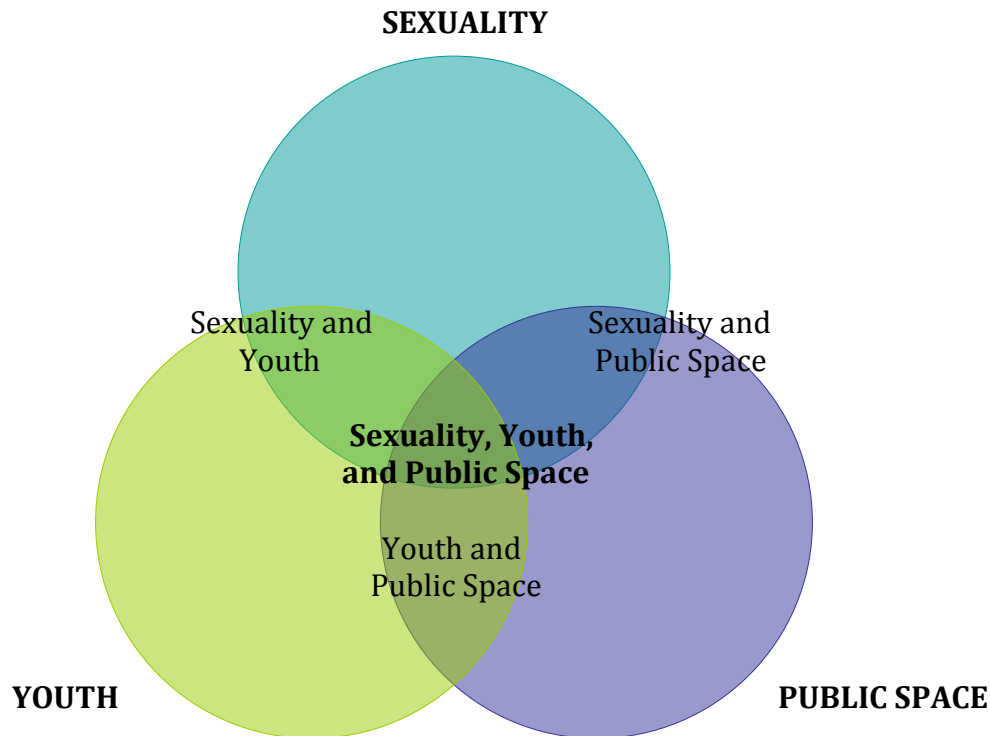


Figure 1: Venn diagram illustrating the three levels of analysis proposed

The capitalized terms in the diagram above are the definitions with which I will be working; each of these will be elaborated upon in part 2. I choose here to define sexuality in broad terms, encompassing not just sexual practices but also sexual identities. Public space is defined in a similar, constructivist way: at stake is the way individuals, through their actions and meaningful renderings of space, create, challenge, or subvert the “publicity” or “privacy” of space. The social construction of “youth” will also be touched upon, and I will draw attention to the way gender, race, and class are implicated in structuring the experiences and life worlds of youth today.

As the literature on the precise intersection of youth, public space, and sexuality is relatively underdeveloped, I will discuss three separate areas of their intersections in parts 3, denoted in the diagram by the three areas where the spheres overlap. Part 3.1 will outline the literature on sexuality and youth (shaded upper left area in the diagram); part 3.2 will focus on the literature on sexuality and public space (shaded upper right area in the diagram), while part 3.3 aims to address research on youth and public space (lower shaded area in the diagram). In doing so, I aim to draw out the most defining features of each body of research and sketch a picture of the assumptions scholars in these field operate with, and address the hiatuses in the literature.

In part 4 of this literature review, I will provide an overview of the literature focusing on the intersection of youth, sexuality, and public space – the area, in the diagram, shaded darkest in the middle. In part 5 I will reflect on the literature discussed and the underlying assumptions these researchers work with, and develop several research questions that address the hiatuses in the literature discussed in part 3 and 4. Methodological and ethical considerations in researching youth, sexuality, and public space will be provided in part 6.

References

- Van de Walle, Robert, van Berlo, Willy, Picavet, Charles, and Verhoeff, Arnoud.
Niet voor Niets: Vormen van Ruilseks onder Jongeren. Rutgers Nisso Groep/GGD
Amsterdam, 2010. Report.
- GGD Amsterdam. *Seksueel Gedrag van Tieners in een Subcultuur in Amsterdam*
Zuidoost: Rapportage van een Quick Scan. Amsterdam: GGD Amsterdam, 2006
- EenVandaag, May 15 2007. “Breezerseks Ontgroeit Randstad.” Retrieved on June 7,
2011 from
http://www.eenvandaag.nl/binnenland/32061/breezerseks_ontgroeit_randstad
- Metro, April 10 2007. “Breezerseks Duikt op in Noord Holland.” Retrieved on June 7,
2011, from <http://www.onanslemming.nl/?p=811>

2. DEFINING SEXUALITY, (PUBLIC) SPACE, AND YOUTH

In the following I will define the three central terms of this literature review: sexuality, public (and private) space, and youth. It is not my aim here to provide exhaustive intellectual histories of the concepts at hand; rather, I aim to sketch the theoretical history of these three terms in broad strokes, making use of seminal texts in their respective fields. At the end of each piece I will propose three working definitions to be used in this literature review. All three working definitions are indebted to the epistemological tenets of social constructivism, meaning that the social construction of reality by actors (and the very “real” consequences of such constructions) will be put centre stage.

2.1 Sexuality/Sexualities

The definition of sexuality I will be working with in the following literature review is informed by post-structuralist and constructivist tenets, associated closely with the seminal work of Foucault (1976) on sexuality, power, and the subject, and Butler's (1990) work on the performativity of gendered and sexual identities. This entails, firstly, that I conceive of contemporary notions of sexuality as historically and culturally embedded. What we understand to be sexual behaviors or identities are socially produced (Plummer 1975; Foucault 1976; Weeks 2003). As such, this conception contrasts with more common notions of sexual behaviors and identities as biologically determined, as located in the realm of nature and instinct, or associated with the pre-social forces of the unconscious. Rather, I conceive of sexual identities and practices as quintessentially social phenomena.

The second characteristic of sexuality is that it is produced within relations of power. Sexual identities and practices are actively given meaning by discourses, of which the medical, psychoanalytical, and biological are dominant in the Western world today (Foucault 1976). These constructions of sexuality are capable of producing certain (sexual) subjects, a process Foucault coins *subjectivation*. The term subjectivation is especially apt as it draws our attention to the formative power of discourses (resonating with the passive “being subjected to”) while it also emphasizes that our subjection to these power-ridden discourses is what make us (social, political, sexual) subjects at all. At the same time, sexuality is not a historical constant, and is the subject of subversions, transgressions, as well as more hegemonic renderings of what sexuality is (and should be) (Stein & Plummer 1994; Cf. Corber & Valocchi 2003; Warner 1993).

Thirdly, sexuality intersects with structures of domination based on race, gender, and class. These race, gender, and class identities intersect with sexuality on multiple levels and shape people's sexual experiences, practices, and identities in profound ways. It is because of this that the term sexuality is displaced by a more internally diverse and heterogenous notion of “sexualities” (Weeks 2003). The last characteristic of the definition of sexuality I aim proposing here pertains to its performative nature. Like gender – intimately bound up with sexual identity and practices – sexual identities come into being through iterated, embodied

performances of sexual identities. Sexualities are hence produced both through language (discourses) and embodied styles (Butler 1990).

2.2 (Public) Spaces

Space, according to Lefebvre 1991[1974]), is practiced place, meaning that places receive their meaning through the interactions of social actors within them. As such, space – like sexuality – is always socially produced. Secondly, the social production of space takes place within power-ridden fields of social action, in which some actors are able to ensure their spatial practices emerge as hegemonic definitions of space, while others may actively contest these. Examples of social actors are state authorities, municipal governments, urban planners, private businesses, individual users of space, and (urban) grassroots organizations. The notion of space adopted here is hence one that treats space as subject to subversion, (re)negotiation, and resignification (Mitchell 1995; Fraser 1990; Hartley 1992), sometimes through embodied, performative practices (Conlon 2004).

In terms of public or private space, this means that the publicity or privacy of spaces are social accomplishments, so that the empirical question for scholars revolves around how space is appropriated, or “lived” (Lefebvre 1968). An empirically rigorous approach to public space would concentrate on trying to understand what actions take place within specific spaces and what meanings these have for the actors inhabiting, using, or passing through these places. The relationship between spaces and actors is also an embodied, performative relationship, so that spaces and (sexed, gendered, racialized, classed) bodies exert mutual influence on each other (Conlon 2004). A simultaneous focus on power-relations “playing out” in these spaces enables researchers to investigate how spaces are “made public” or “made private” by more or less powerful social actors.

As – ideally - the material location of the Habermasian, democratic public sphere (Habermas 1989[1962]), public spaces are also politicized, meaning that they are a site of political representation as well as fleeting encounters with people of different (racial and class) origins and (gender, ethnic, sexual) identities, or, “those who are different, whose social perspectives, experience and affiliations are different.” (Young 1990:119). However, (formerly or ideally) public spaces may be “privatized” by socially powerful actors, meaning that private parties acquire a say in how parts of public spaces are designed, what goals these spaces serve, and even what type of people are included and excluded from them⁵ (Zukin 1995; Davis 1990). Approached from this angle, the creation of public space is hence project of boundary erection and maintenance (Sibley 1995), excluding some actors from participation in certain (public?) spaces. Homeless people, youth, sexual minorities and ethnic Others may be barred from using certain ostensibly public spaces (as in

⁵ Which point is frequently made by urban sociologists like Zukin and Davis. Especially in the late 1980s and 1990s, scholars have drawn attention to the changing balance between the private and public sphere. Due to neoliberal politics of deregulation, urban renewal programs, increasing societal fears of racial, ethnic, and sexual Others, and the rise of consumerism in the Western world, the public sphere has been subject to a dual process of “privatization” and commercialization, meaning that private parties have an increasing say in the design, uses, and policing of public spaces.

barring youth in larger groups from entering shopping malls, for instance), while others' use of these spaces is deemed unproblematic (e.g. middle class adults with purchasing power in the same shopping mall). The practiced, politicized, and contested use of space is central to the definition of space that I will work with in this literature review (as well as important perspective on the exclusions of youth or Other sexualities from certain spaces introduced in part 3.2).

2.3 Youth

Contemporary research on youth in general shares three characteristics: firstly, its recognition that "youth" is a social construction; secondly, its understanding that "youth" is an internally diverse group of people with experiences tied to their subject positions as classed, raced, and gendered subjects as well as the context within which they find themselves; and thirdly, a sensitivity to the social marginalization youth may be subjected to more generally. The following is an elaboration, after which I will propose a definition of youth.

Like the category of the "child", youth is generally perceived to be a social construction, whose roots lie in the socio-historical developments accompanying the post-war economic boom in the West (Cf. Takanishi 1978; Aries 1962; Hendrick 1990; Somerville 1982; Valentine 1996). Several factors have contributed to the rise of the adolescent. Firstly, the average time spent in school (secondary and tertiary) has risen steadily in developed nations, so that young people are generally more financially dependent on their family or financial provisions made by the state. Secondly, young people enter the work force later in their lives full-time. Thirdly, the average age of marriage has been rising for both men and women. Even though marriage does not, for many young people, coincide with leaving the parental home anymore, many of today's youth live with their parents for a longer period of time (Furstenberg 2000:899). Meanwhile, societal concern with this third category arose as a response to youth's visibility in public space (Valentine et al. 1998:10) in the 1950s and 1960s. Due to low unemployment levels and rising wages in these same decades, a new consumer market emerged geared towards the life-style choices of young people (France & Wiles 1997:63). It is at this historical juncture that the adolescent was "invented" (Hobsbawm 1994). In the literature, youth are commonly described as being between 16 and 25 years old, even if this conceptualization "bears no relation to diverse legal classifications of childhood" (Valentine 2003:38) such as the right to vote, the right to consume alcohol, or the right to leave school. In this literature review, I will anchor my conception of youth in roughly this age-category. However, as much work concentrating on youth (and especially their involvement in public space) also focuses on pre-adolescent youth ranging from 10 to 16 years old, I will use this definition in a rather loose manner and attempt to draw in research focusing on youth ranging from early puberty to late adolescence, i.e. youth from 10 to around 25 years old. However, I also aim to emphasize that "youth" as a category is internally diverse, contextually embedded in several spheres, and also a group of people that faces forms of marginalization. I will elaborate on these characteristics of the category "youth" in the following.

Characterizing the sociological and human-geographical literature on youth is the recognition that the category of youth is internally diverse and embedded within several contexts. The analytical triad race-gender-class has taken on increased importance in the literature on youth (culture). The experiences of youth are not homogenous but tied to their subject positions within racial, classed, and gendered structures of inequality as well as the spatial context (Cf. Eder 1994; Fine 1991; Griffin 1985; McRobbie & Garber 1976; Roman et al. 1988; Massey 1998; Thorne 1994; Proweller 1996; Levinson 1998; Watt & Stenson 1998). Important spheres within youth may be studied are the family home, peers and neighborhoods (Furstenberg 2000:901), with some scholars focusing on the dominance of peers in socialization processes (Harris 1998), treating youth as a “tribe apart” (Hersch 1999). The focus on spatial settings such as schools, neighborhoods and the street will be discussed in more detail in part 3.3 on youth and their engagement in public space.

Lastly, youth is often considered a group of people subject to social marginalization. Lacking political representation (they can’t vote), less consumer power (they usually are financially dependent on their parents), and facing parental as well as institutional constraints on their independence and autonomy, they are a group of people whose interests and wishes may easily be overlooked, especially in terms of their engagement in public space (Valentine 1996; Malone 2002). However, youth are social agents in their own right, and studies generally display an awareness of the tactics of resistance youth may employ in challenging or negotiation adult power.

Sexuality	(Public) Space	Youth
As an historical and cultural construct (Foucault 1976; Butler 1999) rooted in Western Enlightenment thought and various associated disciplines (medicine, biology, psychoanalysis).	As produced by social actors within power-relationships (Lefebvre 1974). Examples of actors: state authorities, municipal governments, private businesses, individual users of space, grassroots organizations.	Like the category “children”, a socio-historical construct (Aries 1962; Takanishi 1978; Jendrick 1990; Somerville 1982; Valentine 1996).
The meaning of which is subject to hegemonic (medical, biological, sociological) discourses (Foucault 1974), culturally and historically specific notions (Plummer 1975) and embodied performativity (Butler 1990).	As such, subject to hegemonic renderings of space as well as resignification, renegotiation, and subversive, embodied practices (Mitchell 1995; Fraser 1990; Hartley 1992; Conlon 2004).	Youth as internally diverse, i.e., as produced as subjective experience and social reality within matrices of power (race, class, gender, etc. Cf. McRobbie & Garber 1976; Griffin 1985; Roman et al. 1988) and several social spheres (peers, the family, school, etc.).
Sexuality as more properly thought of as “sexualities”: i.e., various identities and practices produced in various historical and cultural fields of meaning, as well as within matrices of power like race, gender, and class (Weeks 2003).	Exclusions and inclusions of certain people, habits, lifestyles, i.e. “boundary erection and maintenance”, as central to constitution of place as public or private space (Sibley 1995; Fraser 1990; Hartley 1992).	As marginalized/relatively powerless within several spheres (Hall & Jefferson 1975; Epstein 1998:10; Clarke 1974; Willis 1977), esp. Public space (Malone 2002; Valentine 1996); however, as possessing agency to “subvert” adult power

Figure 2: A summary of the definitions of sexuality, (public) space, and youth.

2.4 References

- Aries, Phillipe. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. New York: Random House, 1962.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 2006 [1990].
- Conlon, Deirdre. "Productive Bodies, Performative Spaces: Everyday Life in Christopher Park." *Sexualities* 7.4 (2004): 462-79.
- Corber, Robert J. and Stephen Valocchi, eds. *Queer Studies: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
- Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. London/New York: Verso, 1990.
- Eder, Donna. *School Talk: Gender and Adolescent Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995.
- Epstein, Jonathon S. "Introduction: Generation X, Youth Culture, and Identity." *Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern World*. Ed. Jonathon S. Epstein. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. 1-23.
- Fine, Michelle. *Framing Dropouts: Notes on the Politics of Urban Public High Schools*. Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1991.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality 1: The Will to Knowledge*. London, Penguin Group, 1998 [1976].
- France, Alan, and Paul Wiles. "Dangerous Futures: Social Exclusion and Youth Work and Late Modernity." *Social Policy & Administration* 31.5 (1997): 59-78.
- Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to Actually Existing Democracy." *Social Text* 25/26 (1990):56-79
- Furstenberg, Frank F. "The Sociology of Adolescence and Youth in the 1990s: A Critical Commentary." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62 (2000): 896-910
- Griffin, Christine. *Typical Girls? Young Women from School to Job Market*. London: Routledge, 1985.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989 [1962]
- Hall, Stuart and Jefferson, Tony, eds. *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain*. London: Hutchinson, 1975.
- Hartley, John. *The Politics of Pictures: The Creation of the Public in the Age of Popular Media*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Harris, Judith R. *The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn out the Way They Do*. New York: The Free Press, 1998.
- Hendrick, Harry. "Constructing and Reconstructions of British Childhood: an Interpretative Survey, 1800 to Present." *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Children*. Ed. A James and A. Prout. Basingstoke, Falmer Press, 1990. 35-39
- Hersch, Patricia. *A Tribe Apart: A Journey into the Heart of American Adolescence*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1999.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914 – 1991*. London: The Folio Society, 1994.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1991 [1974].
- Lefebvre, Henri. *Le Droit à la Ville*. Paris: Anthropos, 1968.
- Malone, Karen. "Street Life: Youth, Culture and Competing Uses of Public Space." *Environment and Urbanization* 14 (2002): 157-68.
- Massey, Doreen. *The Spatial Construction of Youth Cultures. Cool Places: Geographies*

- of Youth Cultures*. Eds. Skelton, Tracy and Valentine, Gill. London: Routledge, 1998. 121-29
- McRobbie, Angela, and Garber, Jenny. "Girls and Subcultures: An Exploration." *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain*. Eds. Hall, Stuart and Jefferson, Tony. London: Hutchinson, 1976. 209-222
- Mitchell, Don. "The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85.1 (1995): 108-33.
- Montgomery, Heather. "Child Sexual Abuse: an Anthropological Perspective." *Children and Sexuality: from the Greeks to the Great War*. Ed. Rousseau, George. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2007. 319-347
- Plummer, Kenneth. *Sexual Stigma: An Interactionist Account*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Proweller, Amira. *Constructing Female Identities: Meaning Making in an Upper Middle Class Youth Culture*. Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1998.
- Roman, Leslie G. Christian-Smith Linda K. and Ellsworth, Elizabeth A. *Becoming Feminine: the Politics of Popular Culture*. London & New York: Falmer Press, 1988.
- Sibley, David. *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Somerville, John C. *The Rise and Fall of Childhood*. London: Victor Gollanez, 1982.
- Stein, Arlene and Plummer, Kenneth. "I Can't Even Think Straight: Queer Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology." *Sociological Theory* 12.2 (1994): 178-87
- Takanishi, Ruby. "Childhood as a Social Issue: Historical Roots of Contemporary Child Advocacy Movements." *Journal of Social Issues* 34.2 (1978):8-27
- Thorne, Barrie. *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.
- Valentine, Gill. "Children Should be Seen and Not Heard: The Production and Transgression of Adults' Public Space." *Urban Geography* 17.3 (1996): 205-220
- Valentine, Gill. "Boundary Crossings: Transitions from Childhood to Adulthood." *Children's Geographies* 1.1 (2003):37-52
- Warner, Michael, ed. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Watt, Paul and Stenson, Kevin. "The Street: 'It's a Bit Dodgy around Here': Safety, Danger, Ethnicity and Young People's Use of Public Space." *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Eds. Skelton, Tracy and Valentine, Gill. London: Routledge, 1998. 249-266
- Weeks, Jeffrey. *Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 2003 [1986].
- Willis, Paul. *Learning to Labour*. Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977.
- Young, Iris M. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Zukin, Sharon. "Whose Culture? Whose City?" *The Cultures of Cities*. Ed. Sharon Zukin. Cambridge MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1995. 1-48.

3. THREE AREAS OF STUDY

The following is an exploration of the themes, assumptions, and theoretical and empirical approaches characterizing the three areas of focus identified in the above. Part 3.1 will summarize research on sexuality and youth; part 3.2 will focus on research on sexuality and public space, while part 3.3 pays attention to the research area of youth and public space.

3.1 Sexuality and Youth

Sexual behavior among youth has been subject to rapid and important changes throughout the 20th century. Rooted in a process of modernization and individualization, the hold of religious norms on sexuality have gradually lost much of their hold on youth today. Ravesloot et al. (1999) associate this process with a move away from a *prohibition morality* characterizing post-war Western countries – in which sex before marriage or a partner of the same sex was simply prohibited by strong communal norms – to a *situational ethics* of sexuality, that is: the situational weighing of whether or not sex will take place (3). Associated with this process of change is, according to Ravesloot et al., the notion of a choice biography, in which individuals increasingly take on the responsibility to structure their lives in accordance with more individualized goals and interests (id:3). In terms of youth's sexual health and sexual needs, the ideal seems to have become communication and negotiation with their parents, rather than shame and silence (Du-Bois Raymond & Ravesloot 1996; te Poel & Ravesloot 1995; DiIorio et al. 1999). This development is recognized more widely across the Western world (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Giddens 1993).

The fact that youth are engaging in sexual acts earlier than before, coupled with the more general growth of the social scientific study of sexuality throughout the 1980s and 1990s⁶, has given rise to three dominant approaches of youth and sexuality. The first are socio-medical accounts of sexuality and youth, in which researchers focus on the “dangers” of sex among youth: STDs (in particular HIV/AIDS), and sexual coercion. Some of these studies explicitly align themselves with a feminist agenda; most are quantitative. Over the last 20 years, these studies generally display a growing commitment to conceiving of sexuality among youth as embedded in complex relations of power and (class-based, gendered, raced) structures of domination.

The second area of focus is rooted in the study of youth cultures and focuses on the negotiation of sexual identities in the context of – often urban and lower-class – youth subcultures. These studies are predominantly qualitative-interpretative, and focus largely on gender rather than sexuality.

The third approach addresses the discursive and symbolic constructions of youth and sexuality in Western culture and is associated with cultural studies or media studies. These studies often speak to contemporary, media-driven debates

⁶ In large part, of course, this was a response to the demands of feminists and sexual minorities throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and to the HIV crisis of the 1980s.

about the “sexualization of society”, and attempt to deconstruct some of the assumptions underlying the discourses employed in the creation of such “moral panics”.

3.1.1 Socio-Medical Accounts

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, youth became increasingly conceptualized as an “at risk” category for contracting the HIV virus (Cf. Hein 1992). While hormonal changes during puberty and adolescence, especially for young men, were pointed to in order to explain the unsafe practices at the heart of the spread of HIV among youth (Udry et al. 1985, 1986; Udry 1988), many commentators have drawn attention to the embeddedness of risk behaviors in larger social structures such as poverty, race, gender, sexual orientation, as well as peer group dynamics (Campbell & MacPhail 2002), parental controls (Romer et al. 1994), and insufficient or ineffectual sexual education (Fine & McLelland 2007).

In keeping with the focus on more structural (economic and cultural) factors characteristic of the social sciences, scholars of HIV and youth have focused on the domain of economic inequalities and gender inequalities in explaining HIV infection rates among youth (Parker et al. 2000). HIV infection rates among youth have been demonstrated to be correlated with poverty and homelessness among youth (Athey 1991; Diaz et al. 2004; Pfeifer & Oliver 1997; Romer et al. 1994; Stricoff et al. 1991), the effect of which is moreover both gendered and racialized. Especially in the US and African context, those youth at most risk of contracting HIV are racial minorities (black, and in the US, Latino), and female (Adler & Qulo 2000; Dunkle et al. 2004; Grunbaum et al. 2001, 2003; Mann & Tarantola 1996; Selikow et al. 2002; Wojcicki & Malala 2001) These quantitative studies, often based in the US or Sub-Saharan Africa, strongly suggest that HIV infection rates are embedded in societal structures of inequality. Qualitative substantiation of this claim is offered by, for instance, Selikow et al. (2002), who draw attention to the lack of bargaining power black and poor young women in South Africa have when it comes to insisting their partner use condoms. Forced, by poverty, to engage in transactional sex these young women have little say in whether the sex taking place is safe or not. Gender, race, and poverty hence interact to form specific at-risk groups among youth (Nettleton 1995; Kruger & Richter 1997; Tallis 2000; Vance 1991; Wingood & DiClemente 2000). (Sub-)cultural norms on proper masculinities and femininities also make female youth more at risk for HIV infection, both in Western and non-Western contexts. Ideals of male assertiveness and sexual prowess may give rise to non-monogamous sexual contact among heterosexual as well as homosexual youth, while their receptive partners may lack the bargaining power to negotiate safe sex (Selikow 2002; Gomez & Marin 1996; Mutchler 2000). Sexual orientation has also proven to play a role: gay and queer youth are more at risk for contracting HIV than their heterosexual counterparts (Hays et al. 2004; Lemp et al. 1994; Osmond et al. 1994).

A second focus of the socio-medical literature on sexuality and youth is a concentration on sexual coercion and abuse. Inspired in part by feminist concerns with “hidden” sexual violence in the private sphere, these studies focus on sexual abuse by family members and peers in settings ranging from the home to the college

campus. These studies find that young women in particular are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual violence than their male or adult counterparts. Kuyper et al. (2009) offer a perceptive discussion of the literature focusing on gender differences in the experience of sexual coercion, abuse, or violence, focusing in particular on demographic, individual, and social factors influencing the extent to which youth experience sexual violence (4-7). Demographically, minority youth as well as less educated, gay, and non-Western youth are more likely to experience sexual violence, with women in all these groups facing additional risk because of their gender (id; Cf. de Bruijn et al. 2006; de Graaf et al. 2005; Timmerman 2005). Individual factors influencing the likelihood of victimization are youth's sexual histories and behaviors (with more experience with sex almost automatically increasing the risk of sexual victimization), sexual attitudes and motives (or: the extent to which youth subscribe to sexist stereotypes increases their likelihood of being both perpetrator and victim of sexual violence), and last, people's communication skills in relationships and sexual assertiveness (when lacking, the chances of victimization are higher) (ib id. 2009 5-6)⁷.

While this brief overview does not do justice to the significant body of work revolving around sexual coercion and violence among youth, two observations are of importance here. Firstly, many studies demonstrate that sexual violence is embedded in larger societal structures of inequality (Cf. Kuyper 2002). It is generally recognized that gender, sexuality, race and class affect the chances of victimization. Secondly – and of importance in this overview of socio-medical accounts of youth and sexuality – is the fact that this type of study concentrates on the experience of violence at the cost of focusing on the pleasures of sexuality for youth. While youth may be a risk category for both sexual violence and HIV and STD infections, these socio-medical accounts on the whole display a lop-sided view of sexuality among youth as primarily a site of danger and disease rather than a source of pleasure and of discovery. This is problematic as it neglects the pleasurable aspects of sexuality for youth (Kuyper et al. 2011; See also, for notable studies of pleasure and sexuality: Bradshaw et al. 2010; Owen et al. 2010). This question will be taken up in Part 5 of this literature review.

3.1.2 Sexualities and Youth Culture

The body of research operating under the rubric focusing on youth culture rarely focuses explicitly on sexual practices among youth. However, some researchers point to the way sexual identities (as heterosexual or homosexual) are negotiated within youth culture (e.g. Johansson 2009; Kearney 1998; Calhoun et al. 1998; McNamee 1998). Often, the negotiation of a gender identity is heavily dependent on the construction of an appropriate sexual identity, so that in order to properly “perform” masculinity, young men have to also “perform” heterosexuality, for instance through expressing an interest in sex with women, pornography, etc

⁷ For reasons of brevity, I will not offer a substantive overview of the Dutch and Anglo-Saxon literature on this topic. For further reading I suggest using Kuyper's et al. (2009: 4-7) excellent literature review as a starting point.

(Johansson 2009). Again, such youth cultures or subcultures are implicated in raced, classed, and gendered dynamics between the subculture and other subcultures and more dominant (often white, middle class) culture (id.; Maira 2002). Moreover, it has been suggested that some youth cultures are less sexual than others. The 1990s rave scene, with its reliance on XTC and solo dancing, for instance, has been described as an a-sexual response to the HIV crisis in the late 1980s (Tomlinson 1998; McRobbie 1994), even though the dance floor has been described as one of the most public sites for teenage, sexual expression (Frith & McRobbie 1978/9). Most studies of youth culture focus however on the performances and practices of gender over sexuality.

3.1.3 Sexual and Sexualized Youth: Societal Fears and Fantasies

The third, general approach to youth and sexuality does not aim to examine the sexual practices and identities of youth, but rather focuses on media narratives revolving around youth and sexuality. A central question in this type of research is what these media narratives on youth and sexuality might tell us about the society we live in; what its morals are; and how it chooses to conceive of childhood and adolescence. These researchers often employ close readings, or discourse analyses, of news items as their research method, and focus on so-called “moral panics”. Initially described by Cohen (1972), the term moral panic described a brief but intense period of mediatized, societal concerns with its own moral order. Often, these moral panics are rooted in highly local and small-scale issues (like, for instance, the existence of transactional sex in certain areas in Amsterdam). However, these local issues have the capacity to generate heated debate about the moral contours of a society and as such acquire national dimensions. For instance, in debating transactional sexuality in certain areas and milieus in Amsterdam we also draw moral boundaries between “good” and “bad” sex, and “good” and “bad” youth. In doing so, a local issue allows citizens to define the boundaries of a national, moral order.

The study of youth and sexuality in the media hence becomes a lens through which to critically examine adult society. The research on youth and sexuality generally distinguishes between two perceived threats to the social order: firstly, sexually active youth themselves, and secondly, the “sexualization of society”.

In the first type of moral panic, sexual behaviors among youth may be taken as sign of deteriorating sexual norms. Sexuality among youth may be more or less accepted (as it is in the Dutch context, for instance) or not (as in the US context), yet certain practices and “sexual styles” are perceived as dangerous, illegitimate and harmful do the youth involved. Transactional sex (sex for material goods) and sex divorced from meaningful romantic connection feature heavily among the sexual practices that are condemned when youth engage in these (Cf. Curtis & Hunt 2007). In the second type of moral panic, youth are primarily – though not exclusively – treated as victims of the sexualization of society. The sexualization of society here denotes the increased pressure put on young men and women to conform to standards of beauty, sexual prowess and performance – standards which are thrust upon them by popular culture. Problems as diverse as eating disorders, the spread

of STD's, and even pedophilia are, in this type of media narrative, subsumed under the "sexualization of society" explanation (Egan & Hawkes 2008:297). The problem with this type of media narrative, Egan & Hawkes (2008) argue, is that it treats sexualization as a monolithic process and construes youth as passive recipients (not active, negotiating agents) of cultural representations (293-294). In its treatment of female "victims" (of standards of beauty, or standards of sexual prowess, for instance), moreover, this media narrative also conflates the expression of girls' sexuality with "sexualization". The idea that girls might *want* to pursue sex for its own sake seems lacking, they argue, from these media narratives and as such they are intimately intertwined with patriarchal notions of female desire as absent, subdued, or as always based on romantic love. These narratives also display a class-bias: the type of "good" sexuality implied in these narratives, i.e., a sexuality based on feelings of affection and mutual respect, is a bourgeois, Western ideal and contrast with the "infectious form of sexuality" that has "historically been associated with the working class" (id:306; Cf. Cunningham 1991; Zelizer 1985).

In deconstructing the assumptions underlying these debates on sexuality and youth, these scholars are able to question the ambiguity with which we conceive of adolescents. On the one hand, Western societies are prone to treat youth as overtly sexual, hormone-driven, and irresponsible. On the other, adults are quick to defend the "innocence" of youth in, for instance, underage sex scandals and cases of pedophilia (Kincaid 1998). This ambiguous conceptualization of youth, they argue, tells us more about the way adults want to perceive of their own sexuality (as responsible, healthy, and nurturing) than that of adolescents (id; see also Giroux 1998).

3.2 Sexuality and Public Space

The study of sexuality and public space is heavily indebted to social geography, feminist thought, and queer studies. Two approaches to sexuality and space stand out in particular: the first concentrates on *sexual practices in public*, sometimes using space as a passive "backdrop" to sexuality – investigating, for instance, differences between urban and rural areas - while at other times imbuing space with a more active role in structuring access to sex. The second approach focuses on the *sexualization of space*, meaning the varied practices through which spaces become designated as heterosexual, homosexual, or even spaces for deviant, illicit sexualities. This approach also connects the issue of sexuality with citizenship (e.g. the notion of "sexual citizenship"), participation in the public realm, and social, political, and civil rights as conceptualized by British sociologist Marshall (1950). As such, this second approach focuses on the political and politicized nature of public space and resonates with the debates on public space as discussed in Part 2 of this literature review more generally.

3.2.1 Sex in Public

The study of sex in public has been dominated by a focus on prostitution and homosexuality. A focus on prostitution is imminent in Symanski's (1981) study of

the social and legal regulations of prostitution, leading to “immoral landscapes” to which “deviant” sexualities are relegated. Similar in its approach is Hubbard’s (1998) study, focusing on the way fears of HIV, crime, and illicit sexualities are employed to curtail prostitution in Birmingham.

The study of homosexual acts in public is more developed than that of prostitution. In describing the phenomenon of “cruising” or “cottaging”, various scholars have drawn attention to the various physical sites that are the locus of such practices. These may range from truckers’ rest-stop areas (as in Corzine’s and Kirby’s 1977 classic study), public restrooms (Cf. Dalton 2007; Ashford 2006/7), or gay bath houses (Cf. Holmes et al. 2007, Frankis & Flowers 2005; Richters 2007). These authors point to the spatial features of certain settings that are conducive to the pursuit of anonymous sex, such as the anonymity of the dark, or the public nature of rest stops and public bathrooms, giving those looking for sex a valid excuse to be there. Some authors imbue the spatial setting with an active role in structuring the sexual practices taking place. In this context, Richters (2007) and Holmes et al (2007), for instance, discusses the particular architectural lay-out and atmosphere of gay bath houses as creating an environment hospitable to those pursuing anonymous sex. Most of these studies are based on observations and interviews, yet Frankis and Flowers (2007) provide an excellent overview of quantitative literature on men having sex with men in “public sex environments”, focusing in particular on the way health care providers may better reach those at risk for HIV infection.

Some attention has also been paid to differences between urban and rural settings, with particular emphasis on the way homosexual practices are shaped in more traditional rural settings as opposed to the more liberal climate of the city (Aldrich 2006; Corzine & Korby 1977). Lesbian sexuality in public or semi-public spaces has received little attention to far. Cooper’s (2007) study on a lesbian bath house stands out as an addition to the literature on gay practices in public spaces, as well as Kramer’s (1995) chapter on the construction of lesbian and gay identities in rural areas in the United States. Little attention been paid to heterosexual acts in public. Bell (2006) however examines the way the practice of “dogging” (cruising for heterosexual sites in parking lots, etc.) takes place in practice. However, his article focuses exclusively on the discursive construction of this practice and the ways it is technologically mediated (through the internet, the mobile phone, and the car).

3.2.3 Sexualization of Space

In examining sexual practices in public, social geographers have made important additions to our understanding of public (and private) space. In line with the problematization of “public” and “private” space outlined in part 2 of this literature review, they draw attention to the ways space is given meanings through complex processes of negotiation and resignification. A public park may, for instance, transform into a more “private” space for sex during certain times of the day or night; or, certain areas of the city may be sexualized because they host a concentrated number of gay bars, sex shops, or brothels. Such claims on public space may be also contested by the police, citizens repelled by such practices, or

local policies that aim to restore the “public” or nonsexual (or heterosexual) nature of the space involved (Conlon 2004). For this reason, scholars within queer studies have often pointed out how public space is both gendered (as masculine) and sexualized (as heterosexual) (for an overview of this literature, see Hubbard 2000:191-194) by more dominant parties that try to curtail the claims on space of sexual minorities (gay or lesbian people, prostitutes, etc.). The sexual harassment of women – or the cultivation, among women and men, of fears of such sexual victimization- is often cited as one way space is masculinized (i.e. constructed as a proper space for men, but not women; Valentine 1989; Gardner 1995; Painter 1992; Stanko 1990, 1996), while gay-bashing is often seen as contributing to the construction of space as normatively heterosexual (Namanste 1996). Moreover, the images of love and romance in public space (in advertisements, etc.) legitimize heteronormative expressions of love and sexuality. Hence, scholars argue that majority groups impose their definition of space onto places, all the while marginalizing Other sexualities (not only homosexuality, but also for instance S&M) and banning those from the “public eye”. As such, these sexualities are not represented in the public sphere. If we conceive of public space as a political arena, then this entails that such sexual minorities may lack “sexual citizenship” (Richardson 1998), or: others’ full recognition of their social, civil, and political rights (Marshall 1950)⁸.

Power relations, however, always give rise to resistance (a Foucauldian would say power contains its own resistance!), so that certain spaces function as “interstitial” spaces in the “heteronormative fabric” of society and can be called “queer zones” (Bourcier 2001) or “sex zones” (Hubbard 2001). These terms generally denote barely controlled, often urban areas within which these illicit sexualities are tolerated (gay districts, for example, or the Dutch “afwerkplekken”). Such zones may be subject to a process of commercialization, as have been, for instance, urban “gay villages” (Skeggs 1999) and the red light district in Amsterdam. However, some scholars have pointed out that it is a mistake to equal such commercialization with substantive incorporation into the public and political domain (Skeggs 1999; Whittle 1994). While having purchasing power and commercialized visibility may equal some measure of influence, even power, in today’s economy, these scholars argue that it remains impossible for lesbian, gay and transsexual people to “buy” themselves “out” of structural discrimination on the labor market or the discrimination they face in many Western countries when they want to marry and raise children. Equating “visibility” or “publicity” with “sexual citizenship” is hence a highly problematic move.

In sum, the literature on space and sexuality focuses predominantly on issues of sexual citizenship, on gay and lesbian spaces, and on urban homosexual practices and identities (Thomas 2004).

⁸ For perceptive discussions of the political issues at stake in the marginalization of queer sexualities in the public sphere (and public spaces), see Hubbard (2001), Berlant & Warner (1998), and Richardson (1998). These debates hark back to notions of public space as the spatial materialization of the public sphere discussed in part 2.2 of this literature review.

3.3 Youth and Public Space

The study of these diverse processes and factors affecting youth and public space can be divided into three major approaches. The first, prevalent in the 1970s, concentrates on the way youth navigate through – mostly urban – space and uses “mental maps” as a method to investigate these navigations. However, this approach focused predominantly on younger children at the cost of teenagers’ and adolescents’ “microgeographies” and paid little attention to broader structures of power. The second approach treats public space as a site of exclusions, and concentrates on the ways in which youth are excluded from public space and the ways in which youth resist these (adult) exclusions. More recently, however, the binary oppression/resistance pervading the conceptualizations of these studies has been criticized, and has made room for a more contextual approach to teenagers’ use of public space. This approach puts the ambiguous and *liminal* nature of public space for youth centre stage. In this third approach to public space, it is conceptualized a site to experiment with various lifestyles, identities, and adulthood⁹.

3.3.1 Mental Maps

The study of children and youth in public space can be traced back to the 1970s, when Kevin Lynch’ notion of the “mental map” was employed to examine the uses children make of public space in their immediate environments (Travlou: 2003; Cf. Ward 1977; Lynch 1977; Hart 1979). These mental maps, arrived at through extended participant observations, are depictions of the spatial horizons of certain individuals, and as such describe the various movements and concentrations of children in a certain neighborhood. However, this type of research focuses largely on children at the cost of teenagers and adolescents (Vanderstede 2009: 12; Matthews 1995), and does not examine the spatial trajectories of children in a wider context. In other words, while it focuses on the micro-spatial movements of children, it has been unable to contextualize these trajectories on larger spatial scales such as the urban or national level (id: 12).

3.3.2 Exclusions and Resistance

The second approach identified here starts from the premise that children, but more importantly youth, have been increasingly subjected to marginalization in public spaces. The commercialization of outdoor recreation – excluding those without purchasing power - and, in the US context, the diminishing quality of specially urban spaces due to the privatization of formerly local or national government tasks have inhibited youth from spending unstructured time in public (Katz 1998; Welten et al. 2007). The rise of motorized transportation, secondly, has increased parental controls over children’s movements in public and curtailed their mobility. Thirdly,

⁹ The distinction between these three strands is loosely based on Vanderstede (2009) and Travleau (2003).

due to a move towards a more competitive and neoliberal economic climate, unstructured leisure time for children and youth has been diminished in favor of time spent learning and developing skills (e.g. participating in organized sports, after-school activities, etc.) (Zeijl et al. 2000; Welten et al. 2007; DePaepe 1998). The fact that these activities take place in relatively circumscribed settings (the sports club, school, music lessons, etc.) also means that the lives of children and youth are increasingly subjected to a process of *insularization*, i.e., the concentration of their activities in various spatially and socially defined settings at the cost of spending unstructured time in public space (Zieher 2002). Last, it has been argued that fears of pedophilia, violence and drug abuse among youngsters emerging throughout the 1980s and 1990s have similarly contributed to parental fears and increased parents' controls over their sons' and daughters' movements (Lieberg 1995: 720; Travlou 2003: 8; Cf. Lucas 1998). In Anglo-Saxon settings, the specters of gang violence and of crime and deviance among youth have moreover given rise to curfews, "move-on laws" (according to which loitering in public is prohibited in certain spaces), and "stopping and questioning" operations by the police. Youth hence occupy a precarious position as both to be potential victims (of the unruly behaviors of other youth) and potential perpetrators (of loitering, of causing trouble, etc.) (Malone 2002). It has been argued, then, that youth, lost their "place" in public space:

"Public space is [...] not produced as an open space, a space where teenagers are freely able to participate in street life or define their own ways of interacting and using space, but it is a highly regulated – or closed – space where young people are expected to show deference to adults and adults' definitions of appropriate behavior, levels of voices, and so on – to use the traditional saying: 'Children should be seen and not heard.'" (Valentine 1996: 214)

These regulations of public space are exacerbated by the rather "public" nature of teenagers' private, familial lives. Confronted with the "adult gaze" at home, public space (the streets, malls, parks etc) are teenagers' resort from parental controls. Yet in public space, they find their presence again policed by the regulations cited in the above (White 1994: 103). Public space, within this framework, is hence conceived of as a "landscape of powerlessness" for teenagers (Matthews et al. 1998). Within this "panoptican of the adult gaze" (Matthews et al. 2000b), teenagers attempting to lay claim to (or "colonizing") public space are hence involved in acts of resistance (Valentine 2004).

While this approach is influential still, it has come under increasing scrutiny throughout the last decade. The binary of oppression/resistance does not, according to Matthews et al. (1998) do justice to the ambiguities and tensions in teenagers' involvement in public space. It also homogenizes the category "teenagers" and in doing so neglects conflict between teenagers over public space and differences between teenagers in their uses of public space. The following is a discussion of the contributions of this strand of research in the study of teenagers and public space.

3.3.3 Liminal Spaces and Identities

While remaining sensitive to the exclusions central to the creation of public space, scholars of youth and public space have more recently started to pursue two strands of research. The first focuses on the ambiguous nature of public space (and as such as not simply or only a site of marginalization or resistance), while the second draws our attention to the way gender, class-, and racial differences *between* teenagers are reproduced in teenagers' use of public space.

The first strand of thought is heavily indebted to Matthews et al (1998), who concentrated on the so-called "fourth environment" of teenage lives: the spaces beyond home, school, and organized leisure activities. These public and semi-public spaces (shopping malls, streets, public transportation), they argue, are sites within which teenagers negotiate their autonomy and independence (from adults), "practice" in adulthood, and negotiate their identities. The "adult gaze" structuring teenagers' lives is here understood as a favorable, and necessary condition for this kind of experimentation: "[it] provides a safety net that enables young people to develop their identity, individuality and even promulgates acts of rebellion without real danger" (Matthews et al. 1998: 292). As such, these spaces have liminal qualities, meaning that they are sites of negotiating the "betwixt and between" of childhood and adulthood. Percy-Smith (2001) draws our attention, moreover, to conflicts between teenagers over the uses of public space. Older teenagers often effectively control streets or parks by bullying younger kids, and as such establish a hegemony that is not associated with "adult" authority but nevertheless gives rise to complicated strategies of avoidance among younger teenagers and children. The "powerlessness" some youth may experience is hence not due to adult power but to the power to control certain spaces exercised by other youth.

A second approach to public space and youth embeds its discussion of teenagers' involvement in public space in larger structures of inequality, focusing in particular on race, class, and gender. An important question for this kind of scholarship is how youth negotiate their race, class, and gender in public spaces. Mary E. Thomas (2009), in contrast, draws attention to the salience of racial identifications in structuring young Latina's physical movements in educational settings (2009) or those of black teenage girls (2005), while Dwyer (1998) concentrates on the ways in which young British Muslim women use public space (like schools or the streets) to challenge racial stereotypes through their dress and behaviors. Fear of racism and discrimination also affect the geographies of youth, as Watt and Stenson show in their study of the uses of public space Asian and Afro-Caribbean youth make in a medium-sized city in the UK (1998). As such, public space is also the site to negotiate subcultural identities. Especially gender-differences in the use adolescents make of space are well-researched, with researchers finding that girls' mobility and behaviors in public space are subjected to more parental controls and normative ideas on "proper", feminine behavior (O'Brien et al. 2000; Tucker & Matthews 2001; Ward Thompson et al. 2002). In terms of class, it is generally established that middle class parents seem to exercise more influence on their children's leisure time so that their unstructured involvement in public space may be less substantial than that of their lower-class

counterparts (Zeijl 2000; Sutton 2008; Lareau 2000)¹⁰. In terms of rural-urban differences, it has been argued that youth enjoy more freedom of movement in rural areas, with its fields and forests. However, research appears to suggest the opposite: the differences between rural and urban areas have decreased throughout the last two or three decades so that youth, especially less affluent youth, in rural areas have come to face similar parental controls on their movement in public space (Valentine 1997; Matthews et al. 2000a).

The two strands identified here – treating public space as a liminal zone for teenagers and, on the other, investigating the way teenagers' involvement in public space is gendered, "racialized", and "classed" – are not mutually exclusive. For instance, Karsten and Pel's study (2000) combine the two concerns in their qualitative study of middle class, male skateboarders in Amsterdam and their movements through the city. Karsten and Pel argue that these male youth, through "hanging out", are able to experiment with, or negotiate, new types of masculinity. In doing so, Karsten and Pel treat public space as a site of experimentation for youth as well as a site where gender exerts its influence and/or are reimagined and challenged.

3.4 References

- Adler, Gary and Qulo, Abed. "HIV/AIDS and STD's" *South African Health Review*. Durban: health Systems Trust, 2000.
- Aldrich, Robert. "Homosexuality and the City: An Historical Overview." *Urban Studies* 41.9 (2004): 1719-34
- Ashford, Chris. "Sexuality, Public Space and the Criminal Law: The Cottaging Phenomenon." *Criminal Law* 71 (2006/7): 506-19
- Athey, Jean L. "HIV Infection and Homeless Adolescents." *Child Welfare: Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program*. 70.5 (1991): 517-28
- Beck-Bernsheim, Elizabeth and Beck, Ulrich. *The Normal Chaos of Love*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.
- Bell, David. "Bodies, technologies, Spaces: On 'Dogging.'" *Sexualities* 9.4(2006): 387-407
- Berlant, Lauren and Warner, Michael. "Sex in Public." *Critical Inquiry* 24.2 (1998):547-66
- Bourcier, Marie-Helene. *Queer Zones*. Paris: Balland, 2001.
- Bradshaw, Carolyn, Kahn, Arnold S., and Saville, Bryan K. "To Hook up or Date: Which Gender Benefits?" *Sex Roles* 62 (2010): 661-669.
- Bruijn, Paula de., Burrie, Ingrid and Wel, Frits van. A Risky Boundary: Unwanted Sexual Behavior Among Youth. *Journal of Sexual Aggression* 12.2 (2006): 81-96
- Calhoun, Thomas C., Harms Canoon, Julie A., and Fisher, Rhonda. "Exploration in Youth Culture. Amateur Stripping: What We Know and What We Don't" *Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern World*. Ed. Jonathon S. Epstein. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. 302-326
- Campbell, Catherine, and MacPhail, Catherine. "Peer Education, Gender and the

¹⁰ The geographies of younger children are similarly affected by race, class, and gender. See, for instance, the ethnic, but predominantly gendered, differences in childrens' participation in playgrounds (Karsten 2003).

- Development of Critical Consciousness: Participatory HIV Prevention by South African Youth." *Social Science and Medicine* 55.2 (2002): 331-45
- Cohen, Stanley. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. St Albans: Paladin, 1972.
- Conlon, Deirdre. "Productive Bodies, Performative Spaces: Everyday Life in Christopher Park." *Sexualities* 7.4 (2004): 462-79
- Cooper, Davina. "Well, you go there to get off: Visiting Feminist care Ethics through a Women's Bathhouse." *Feminist Theory* 8.3 (2007): 243-62
- Corzine, Jay and Kirby, Richard. "Cruising the Truckers." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 6.2 (1977): 171-92
- Cunningham, Hugh. *Children of the Poor: Representing Childhood since the 17th Century*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1991.
- Curtis, Bruce and Hunt, Alan. "The Fellatio 'Epidemic': Age relations and Access to the Erotic Arts." *Sexualities* 10.5 (2007): 5-28
- Dalton, Derek. "Policing Outlawed Desire: 'Homocriminality' in Beat Spaces in Australia." *Law Critique* 18(2007): 375-405
- Depaeppe, Marc. *De Pedagogisering Achterna: Aanzet tot een Genealogie van de Pedagogische Mentaliteit in the voorbije 250 Jaar*. Leuven: Acco, 2002.
- Diaz, Rafael M., Ayala, George, and Bein, Edward. "Sexual Risk as an Outcome of Social Oppression: Data from a Probability Sample of Latino Gay Men in Three U.S. Cities." *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 10.3 (2004): 255-267
- DiIorio, Colleen, Kelley, Maureen, and Hockenberry-Eaton, Marilyn. "Communication about Sexual Issues: Mothers, Fathers, and Friends." *The Journal of Adolescent Health* 24 (1999): 181-89.
- Du Bois-Reymond, M. & Ravesloot, J. "The Roles of Parents and Peers in the Sexual and Relational Socialization of Adolescents." *Social Problems and Social Contexts in Adolescence. Perspectives across Boundaries*. Eds. Hurrelman, K. & S.F. Hamilton, S. F. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1996: 175-97
- Dunkle, Kristin L., Jewkes, Rachel K., Brown Heather C., Gray, Glenda E., McIntryre, James A., Harlow, Siobhan D. "Gender-based Violence, Relationship Power, and Risk of HIV Infection in Women Attending Antenatal Clinics in South Africa" *The Lancet* 363.9419 (2004): 1415-421
- Dwyer, Claire. "Contested Identities: Challenging Dominant Perceptions of Young British Muslim Women." *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Eds. Skelton, Tracy and Valentine, Gill. London: Routledge, 1998. 50-65
- Egan, Danielle R. and Hawkes, Gail L. "Endangered Girls and Incendiary Objects: Unpacking the Discourse on Sexualization." *Sexuality & Culture* 12 (2008): 291-311
- Fine, Michelle and McClelland, Sarah I. "The Politics of Teen Women's Sexuality: Public Policy and the Adolescent Female Body." *Emory Law Journal* 56 (2007): 994-1038
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality 1: The Will to Knowledge*. London, Penguin Group, 1998 [1976]
- Frankis, Jamie and Flowers, Paul. "Men Who have Sex with Men (MSM) in Public Sex Environments (PSEs): A Systematic Overview of Quantitative Literature." *AIDS Care* 17.3 (2005): 273-88
- Frith, Simon and McRobbie, Angela. "Rock and Sexuality." *Screen Education* 29 (1978/9): 3-19
- Gardner, Carol B. *Passing By: Gender and Public Harassment in Public Space*. California: University of California Press, 1995.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.

- Giroux, Henry A. "Teenage Sexuality, Body Politics and the Pedagogy of Display." *Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern World*. Ed. Epstein, Jonathan E. Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. 24-55
- Gomez, Cynthia A., and Marin, Barbara. "Gender, Culture and Power: Barriers to HIV Prevention Strategies for Women." *Journal of Sex Research* 33.4 (1996): 355-62
- Graaf, Hanneke de, Meijer, Suzanne, Poelman, Jos, and Vanwesenbeeck, Ineke. *Seks Onder je 25^{ste}: Seksuele Gezondheid van Jongeren in Nederland anno 2005*. Delft: Eburon, 2005.
- Grunbaum, Jo A., Kann, Laura, Kinchen, Stephen A., Williams, Barbara, Ross, James G., Lowry, Richard, and Kolbe, Lloyd. "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – the United States, 2001." *Journal of School Health* 72.8 (2001): 313-28
- Hart, Roger. *Children's Experience of Place*. London: Irvington Press, 1979.
- Hays, Robert B., Kegeles, Susan M., and Coates, Thomas J. "High HIV Risk Taking among Young Gay Men." *AIDS* 4 (1990): 901-7
- Hein, Karen. "Adolescents at Risk for HIV Infection." *Adolescents and AIDS: A Generation at Risk*. Ed. DiClemente Ralph. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992. 3-16
- Holmes, Dave, O'Byrne, Patrick, and Gastaldo, Denise. "Setting the Space for Sex: Architecture, Desire and Health issues in Gay Bathhouses." *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 44 (2007): 273-84
- Hubbard, Phil. "Sex Zones: Intimacy, Citizenship and Public Space." *Sexualities* 4.1 (2001): 51-71
- Hubbard, Phil. "Desire/Disgust: Mapping the Moral Contours of Heterosexuality." *Progress in Human Geography* 24.2 (2000): 191-217
- Hubbard, Phil. "Sexuality, Immorality and the City: Red Light Districts and the Marginalization of Female Street Prostitutes." *Gender, Place, and Culture* 5.1 (1998): 55-72
- Johansson, Thomas. *The Transformation of Sexuality: Gender and Identity in Contemporary Youth Culture*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2007.
- Karsten, Lia. "Children's Use of Public Space: The Gendered World of the Playground." *Childhood* 10.4 (2003): 457 - 474
- Karsten, Lia and Pel, Eva. "Skateboarders Exploring Urban Public Space: Ollies, Obstacles, and Conflicts." *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 15.4 (2000): 327-340
- Katz, Cindi. "Disintegrated Developments: Global Economic Restructuring and the Eroding of Ecologies of Youth." *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Eds. Skelton, Tracy and Valentine, Gill. London: Routledge, 1998. 130-144
- Kearney, Mary C. "'Don't Need You': Rethinking Identity Politics and Separatism from a Grrrl Perspective." *Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern World*. Ed. Jonathon S. Epstein. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. 148-88
- Kramer, Jerry L. "Bachelor Farmers and Spinsters: Gay and Lesbian Identities and Communities in Rural North Dakota." *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*. Eds. Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. London: Routledge, 1995: 200-13
- Kruger, Jill-Swart and Richter, Linda M. "AIDS-related Knowledge, Attitudes and Behavior Among South African Street Youth: Reflections on Power, Sexuality and the Autonomous Self." *Social Science and Medicine* 45.6 (1997): 957-966
- Kuyper, Lisette de, Wit, John de, Wijsen, Ciel. *Positieve Kanten van Seks*. Rutgers WPF, 2011. Report.
- Kuyper, Lisette de, Wit, John de, Adam, Phillipe, Woertman, Liesbeth, and Berlo, Willy van. *Laat je Nu Horen: een Onderzoek naar Grensoverschrijdende Seksuele Ervaringen en Gedragingen onder Jongeren*. Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht, 2009.
- Lareau, Annette. "Social Class and the Daily Lives of Children: A Study from the United

- States." *Childhood* 7.2 (2000): 155-71
- Lemp, George, Hirozawa, Anne, Givertz, Daniel, Nieri, Giullano, Anderson, Laura, Lindregren, Mary L., Janssen, Robert and Katch, Mitchell. "HIV Seroprevalence and Risk behaviors among Young Gay and Bisexual Men: The San Francisco/Berkeley Young Men's Survey." *JAMA* 272 (1994): 449-54
- Lieberg, Mats. "Teenagers and Public Space." *Communication Research* 22.6 (1995): 720-40
- Lucas, Tim. "Youth gangs and Moral Panics in Santa Cruz, California." *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Eds. Skelton, Tracy and Valentine, Gill. London: Routledge, 1998. 2145-60
- Lynch, Kevin. *Growing up in Cities: Studies of the Spatial Environment of Adolescence*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1977.
- Maira, Sunaina M. *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.
- Mann, Jonathan M. and Tarantola, Daniel J. M, Eds. *AIDS in the World vol. II, Global Dimensions, Social Roots and Responses*. The Global AIDS Policy Coalition. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Marshall, Thomas H. *Citizenship and Social Class and other Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950.
- Matthews, Hugh, Taylor, Mark, Sherwood, Kenneth, Tucker, Faith and Limb, Melanie. "Growing-up in the Countryside: Children and the Rural Idyll." *Journal of Rural Studies* 16 (2000a): 141-153
- Matthews, High, Limb, Melanie, and Percy-Smith, Barry. "The Unacceptable Flaneur: The Shopping Mall as a Teenage Hangout." *Childhood* 7.3 (2000b): 279-81
- Matthews, High, Limb, Melanie, and Percy-Smith, Barry. "Chaging Worlds: The Microgeographies of Young Teenagers." *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 89.2 (1998): 193-202
- McNamee, Sara. "Youth, Gender and Video games: Power and Control in the Home." *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Eds. Skelton, Tracey and Valentine, Gill. London: Routledge, 1998. 195-206
- McRobbie, Angela. *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994
- Mutchler, Matt G. "Young Gay Man's Stories in the States: Scripts, Sex and Safety in the Time of AIDS." *Sexualities* 3.31 (2000): 31-54
- Namaste, Ki. "Genderbashing: Sexuality, Gender and the Regulation of Public Space." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 14(1996): 221-40
- Nettleton, Sarah. *The Sociology of Health and Illness*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.
- O'Brien, Margaret, Rustin, Michael, and Greenfield, Jon. *Childhood Urban Space and Citizenship: Child-Sensitive Urban Regeneration*. End of Award Report. 2000.
- Osmond, Dennis H., Page, Kimberley, Wiley, James, Garrett, Karen, Sheppard, Haynes W., Moss, Andrew R., Schragger, Lewis and Winkelstein, Warren. "HIV Infection in Homosexual and Bisexual Men 18 to 29 Years of Age: The San Fransisco Young Men's Health Study." *American Journal of Public Health* 84 (1994): 1933-37
- Owen, Jesse J., Rhoades, Galena K., Stanley, Scott M., and Fincham, Frank M. "Hooking Up: Relationship Differences and Psychological Correlates." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 39 (2010): 553-563
- Painter, Kate. "Different Worlds: The Spatial, Temporal and Social Dimensions of Female Victimization." Eds. Evands, David J, Fyfe, Nicolas R., and Herbert, David T. *Crime, Policing and Place*. London: Routledge, 1992: 164-95
- Parker, Richard, G., Easton, Delia, and Klein, Charles H. "Structural Barriers and

- Facilitators in HIV prevention: A Review of International Research." *AIDS* 14 (2000): 22-32
- Percy-Smith, Barry. "Tyrannical Spaces: Young People, Bullying and Urban Neighborhoods." *Local Environment* 6.1 (2001): 49-63
- Pfeifer, Robert W. and Oliver, John. "A Study of HIV Seroprevalence in a Group of Homeless Youth in Hollywood, California." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 20 (1997): 339-342
- Poel, Yolanda te and Ravesloot, Yolanda. "A Bridge too Far?" Communication on Sexuality within Families." *Young* 3.2 (1995): 58-70
- Ravesloot, Janita, du Bois-Reyond, Manuela, and te Poel, Yolanda. "Courtship and Sexuality of Young People in the Fifties and Nineties – An Intergenerational Study from the Netherlands." *Young* 7.4 (1999): 2-17
- Richardson, Dianne. "Sexuality and Citizenship." *Sociology* 32 (1998): 83-100
- Richters, Juliet. "Through a Hole in the Wall: Setting and Interaction in Sex-on-Premises Venues." *Sexualities* 10.3 (2007): 275-97
- Romer, Daniel, Black, Maureen, Ricardo, Izabel, Feigelman, Susan, Kaljee, Linda, Galbraith, Jennifer, Nesbit, Rodney, Hornik, Robert C., and Stanton, Bonita. "Social Influences on the Sexual Behavior of Youth at Risk for HIV Exposure." *American Journal of Public Health* 84.6 (1994): 977-985
- Selikow, Terry-Ann, Zulu, Bheki, and Cedras, Eugene. "The Ingagara, The Regte and the Cherry: HIV/AIDS and Youth Culture in Contemporary Urban Townships." *Agenda* 53 (2002): 22-32
- Skeggs, Beverley. "Matter out of Place: Visibility and Sexualities in Leisure Spaces." *Leisure Studies* 18.3 (1999): 213-32
- Stanko, Elizabeth A. *Everyday Violence: Women's and Men's Experience of Personal Danger*. London: Pandora, 1990.
- Stanko, Elizabeth, A. "Warning to Women: Police Advice and Women's Safety in Britain." *Violence Against Women* 2 (1996):5-24
- Stricoff, R. L., Kennedy, J. T., Nattell, T. C., Weisfuse, J. B., and Novick, L. F. "HIV Seroprevalence in a Facility for Runaway and Homeless Adolescents." *American Journal of Public Health* 81 (1991): 50-53.
- Sutton, Liz. "The State of Play: Disadvantage, Play and Children's Well-Being." *Social Policy and Society* 7.4 (2008): 537-49
- Symanski, Robert. *The Immoral Landscape: Female Prostitution in Western Societies*. Toronto: Butterworths, 1981.
- Tallis, Vicci. "Gendering the Response to HIV/AIDS: Challenging Gender Inequality." *Agenda* 44 (2000): 58-66
- Thomas, Mary E. "The Identity Politics of School Life: Territoriality and the Racial Subjectivity of Teen Girls in LA." *Children's Geographies* 7.1 (2009): 7-19
- Thomas, Mary E. "Girls, Consumption Space and the Contradictions of Hanging out in the City." *Social & Cultural Geography* 6.4 (2005): 587-605
- Thomas, Mary E. "Pleasure and Propriety: Teen Girls and the Practice of Straight Space." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 773-789
- Timmerman, Greetje. "A Comparison of Girls' and Boys' Experiences of Unwanted Sexual Behaviour in Secondary School." *Educational Research* 47 (2005): 291-306
- Tomlinson, Lori. "'This Ain't No Disco' ... Or Is It? Youth Culture and the Rave Phenomenon." *Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern World*. Ed. Jonathon S. Epstein. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. 195-211
- Travlou, Penny. *Teenagers and Public Space: Literature Review*. Edinburgh: Openspace Research Centre, 2003

- Tucker, Faith and Matthews, Hugh. "They Don't Like Girls Hanging Around There: Conflicts over Recreational Space in Rural Northamptonshire." *Area* 33.2 (2001): 161-68
- Udry, Richard J., Billy, J. O. G., Morris, N. M., Groff, T.R., Raj, M. H. "Serum Androgenic Hormones Motivate Sexual Behavior in Adolescent Boys." *Fertility & Sterility* 43 (1985): 90-94
- Udry, Richard J., Talbert E. M., Morris, N. M. "Biosocial Foundation for Adolescent Female Sexuality." *Demography* 23 (1986): 217-227
- Udry, Richard J. "Biological Predispositions and Social Control in Adolescent Sexual Behavior." *American Sociological Review* 53 (1988): 709-22
- Valentine, Gill. "A Safe Place to Grow Up? Parenting, Perceptions of Children's Safety and the Rural Idyll." *Journal of Rural Studies* 13 (1997): 137-48
- Valentine, Gill. "The Geography of Women's Fear." *Area* 21.4 (1989): 385-90
- Valentine, Gill. *Public Space and the Culture of Childhood*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.
- Vance, Carole S. "Anthropology Rediscovered Sexuality: a Theoretical Comment." *Social Science Medical Volume*, 33.8 (1991): 867-74.
- Vanderstede, Wouter. *Chillen, Shoppen en Hoppen in het Tienerweefsel: Onderzoek naar het gebruik en de Beleving van Publieke Ruimte bij Tieners: Casestudy in the Centrumstad Mechelen*. Meise: Onderzoekscentrum Kind & Samenleving vzw – Ruimtecel, 2009.
- Ward, Colin. *The Child in the City*. London: Architectural Press, 1977.
- Ward Thompson, Catherine, Aspinall, Peter, Bell, Simon and Findlay, Catherine. *Local Open Space and Social Inclusion: Case Studies of Use and Abuse of Woodlands in Central Scotland*. Edinburgh: Openspace Research Centre, 2002.
- Watt, Paul and Stenson, Kevin. "The Street: 'It's a Bit Dodgy around Here': Safety, Danger, Ethnicity and Young People's Use of Public Space." *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Eds. Skelton, Tracy and Valentine, Gill. London: Routledge, 1998. 249-266
- Welten, J. de, Visscher, S. de, and Vanobbergen, B. "Is een Ramp een Ramp? De Dominante Constructie van Openbare Ruimte door Skaters Uitgedaagd." *Pedagogiek* 27.3 (2007): 187-200
- Whittle, Stephen. *The Margins of the City: Gay Men's Urban Lives*. Newcastle: Atheneum Press, 1994.
- Wingood, G. M. & DiClemente, R. J. "Application of the Theory of Gender and Power to Examine HIV-related Exposures, Risk Factors, and Effective Interventions for Women." *Health Education & Behavior*, 27.5 (2000): 539-65.
- Wojcicki, Janet M. and Malala, Josephine. "Condom use, power and HIV/AIDS Risk: Sex Workers Bargain for Survival in Hillbrow/Joubert Park/Berea, Johannesburg." *Social Science and Medicine* 53 (2001): 99-121
- Zeiger, Helga. "Shaping Daily Life in urban Environments." *Children in the City – Home, Neighborhood, and Community*. Eds. Christensen, P. and O'Brien, M. London: Routledge Falmer, 2002.
- Zeijl, Elke, te Poel, Yolanda, and du Bois-Reymond, Manuela. "The Role of Parents and Peers in the Leisure Activities of Young Adolescents." *Journal of Leisure Research* 32.3 (2000): 281-303
- Zelizer, Viviana. *Pricing the Priceless Child. The Changing Social Value of Children*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

4. SEXUALITY, YOUTH, AND PUBLIC SPACE

In the following I aim to introduce some studies that have attempted to tackle the three topics of this literature review, sexuality, youth, and space simultaneously. Rather than sketching, in broad strokes, the development of these types of studies (as I have done in Part 3), I aim to draw out three fields that have the capacity to inform suggestions for further research. The first is a small collection of sociological studies focusing on the way the development of sexual identities of youth is embedded in the rather concrete (and arguably semi-public) space of the secondary school. The second, rooted in both geography and cultural studies focuses on the sexual meanings of space, and concentrates on the ways public space may come to be perceived – by youth as well as adults – as a sexually dangerous place. As such it concentrates largely on meanings of space as constructed in (media)narratives. The third set of studies I will discuss here is a rather miscellaneous collection of three articles, within which youth, sexuality and public space themes are connected in fruitful yet disparate ways. In general, these three studies center on the mechanisms through which space is made “private” or “public” by youth and problematizes, in accordance with Lefebvre, the processes through which both sexuality and its spatial context are given meaning.

4.1 Youth and Sexuality in Educational Spaces

As argued in part 3.2.3, a variety of studies, often informed by certain tenets of gender studies, focuses on the way public spaces are host heterosexualizing processes. Two of these processes stand out in particular: the first is sexual harassment in public, generally taken to be a performance of masculine sexuality and power; the second is the public display of homophobia (through bullying or gay-bashing, for instance), which similarly works to create masculine, heterosexual identities. However, such studies rarely focus on such practices among youth more specifically. One setting within which youth’s performances of heterosexuality are well-researched is the secondary school, for which reason I will here discuss this focus in more detail.

Studies focusing on sexuality and youth in educational settings generally treat the school as a site of the reproduction of norms surrounding sexual behaviors and identities (Epstein & Johnson 1998) Here, educational settings function as sites of (Foucauldian) *subjectivation*. In this part, the role of teachers, peers, sexual education curricula and school regulations of dress and comportment are briefly touched upon, reflecting the dominant focus of the literature on sexuality and youth in (secondary) schools.

In terms’ of teachers’ behaviors, Timmerman (2003) draws our attention to the relatively high incidence of instances of unwanted sexual behaviors by teachers towards their students in Dutch secondary schools. Distinguishing between gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion¹¹, she finds that

¹¹ A three-fold conceptualization of sexual harassment derived from the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire as developed by Fitzgerald and Hesson-McInnes (1989)

teachers' advances towards students are both higher than anticipated, yet are generally in accordance with larger, socio-cultural notions of sexuality. Timmerman found, for instance, that these advances were largely made by male teachers and were aimed at girls. These interactions are clearly deemed unacceptable by larger society, yet seen from a Foucauldian perspective (lacking in Timmerman's piece) they have the capacity to *subjectivate* girls in the dominant terms of that same society. In other words, they are wholly in line with societal expectations of male sexuality (as active, even predatory) and female sexuality (as receptive). Surprisingly, Timmerman found that especially verbal instances of unwanted sexual attention largely took place with other people present, say, in class, hallways, or on day-trips. Both the unexpected (yet relative) prevalence and the "publicity" of these instances suggest that they have a measure of regulative power. Even if these episodes are deemed unacceptable, they nevertheless "teach" both girls and boys in secondary schools something about female and male sexuality. Skeggs (1991) ethnographic research among working class, white adolescent women in caring courses in the UK reports on the same phenomenon, arguing that (male) teachers use "both the authority of their institutional positioning and the male gaze to define young women through their sexuality" (130). However, she also found that young women are acutely aware of their teachers' male privilege, and are able to negotiate and challenge, to a certain extent, these teachers' sexist remarks and behaviors through jokes, gossip about teachers, and using their own sexuality (sexual attractiveness) to get away with being unprepared for class, etc. However, Skeggs is quick to point out such tactics remain embedded in larger structures of inequality and lack the durability and power to address these.

Peers, however, seem much more powerful than teachers in policing and regulating sexuality in secondary schools. Epstein (1997), for instance, draws on an ethnographic study of teenage boys conducted in the UK to emphasize the ways peer-conduct in secondary schools enforces heterosexuality as the norm and homosexuality as deviant. She also argues that misogyny and homophobia are intertwined and inseparable in these boys' performances of proper heterosexuality. Epstein's study is worthwhile not only for its rich and vivid qualitative data, but also because it is located in a larger tradition of research into the performance of sexualities in secondary schools, such as that conducted by Connell (1987, 1989) Lees (1987, 1993), Mac an Ghail (1994), Mahony (1985, 1989), and Nayak & Kehily (1997), and Robinson (2005). Chambers et al (2004) contribute to this type of study by focusing on how boys' performances of heterosexuality are bound up with racial and class differences: in their UK-based focus groups, they found that lower class, white male teenagers perform masculinity by legitimizing male promiscuity while both middle class white boys and Asian boys rather adhere to models of heterosexual, serial monogamous relationships. On the whole, however, "misogynistic and homophobic bullying transcended class and ethnic boundaries" (Chambers et al. 2004: 411).

Girls, too, police each others sexualities in schools, enforcing the infamous "double standard" upon each other by demonizing more sexually active members in their ranks. They are also shown to disassociate themselves verbally from those perceived to be lesbian (Canaan 1984, Kitzinger 1995; Hey 1997).

Some researchers have argued that the school curriculum, especially its sexual education classes, have the capacity to normalize heterosexuality and relegate homosexuality to the realm of deviance through, for instance, not discussing these Other sexualities and focusing lopsidedly on the biological and “dangerous” (HIV and STD transmission, pregnancy) - *not* the social and pleasurable - aspects of sexuality (E.g. Buston & Hart 2001; Epstein 2000; Fields 2008; Fine & McClelland 2006; Garcia 2009). It must be noted, however, that the majority of this type of study is based on the US or the UK: two countries with very different “sexual climates” than that of the Netherlands. However, van den Bongardt et al. (2009) warn us that Dutch teachers may fail to address the homophobia and misogyny central to performances of heterosexual identities by youth in class.

A last factor playing a role in the subjectivation of students in schools are its institutional regulations such as dress codes, codes of conduct, etc. Two fascinating studies on the intersection of peer behaviors, teacher behaviors, curricula, and school regulations are Hyams’ (2000) and O’Flynn’s and Epstein’s (2005). Both studies draw attention to the way the interaction between these four factors contribute to an overall pathologization of female, teenage sexuality. In Hyams’ view, for instance, teacher behaviors, student behaviors, curricula and school regulations of appropriate dress are reflective of a “discourse of academic success”. Within this discourse female (youthful) sexuality is conceived of as potentially disruptive, out of order, and disastrous. Female sexuality needs to be regulated heavily, this discourse implies, lest girls drop out of school (because of unwanted pregnancies). Academic achievement and sexual activity are hence positioned as mutually exclusive. The bodies these discourses work upon are especially those of poor and ethnically Other teenage girls as Latinas (Hyams 2000) and black women (O’Flynn & Epstein 2005) have more generally been associated with promiscuity and sexual deviance in the US context. Both Hyams (2000) and O’Flynn and Epstein (2005) show that girls both challenge and perpetuate some of the assumptions inherent in these discourses in the US and the UK context respectively.

4.2 Public Spaces, Sexuality, and Threatened Youth

As I have discussed briefly in part 3.1.3., children and youth function as convenient categories upon which to project adult fears or fantasies. Youth are conceptualized as on the one hand hormone-driven, irresponsible, and threat to public order, and on the other hand, as vulnerable and needing protection from others in public space. This ambiguity, referred to in Pain (2003) as “youth *as* risk” vs. “youth *at* risk” discourses, is the subject of a small number of studies focusing on the way these categories are sexualized, that is: the extent to which ideas about sexuality inform adult fears and anxieties about youth’s involvement in public spaces. Although youth in public space seem perfectly capable of generating fears, among those also sexual fears, it is the “at risk” conceptualization of youth that dominates the literature. In other words, youth are primarily conceptualized as a group vulnerable to the corrupting influences of sexual Others in public space. These sexualized (adult) fears come to the in societal concerns with the visibility of certain non-

heterosexual or non-monogamous sexualities in public and their corrupting influence on young people¹².

A number of studies interrogates the way youth are positioned as particularly vulnerable to certain sexualized messages in public spaces. Hubbard (2002) draws our attention to a small-scale moral panic erupting over sex workers' advertisements in public phone booths in London. Concerned citizens in London wished to see these cards removed and often appealed to their "inappropriate influence on young people" (Home Office consultation paper cited in Hubbard 2002: 356). As such, they were seen to threaten "family values" and the (apparently very tentative) innocence of youngsters. Regulating the visibility of these advertisements, the city of London sought to "prevent [commercial sexuality] corrupting 'decent' citizens (particularly women and children)." Hubbard argues that "what is significant is that the construction of the decent citizen" these protests imply "is gendered and aged, based around heteronormal assumption that pornography caters to male sexual urges and that it is women and children who need protecting from its corrupting influence." (id: 358) Here, the appeal to the innocence and vulnerability of young people (and women) serves to solidify, according to Hubbard, male claims on public space.

A similar process is at work in a moral panic surrounding the same-sex couples in the story-lines of the non-profit "Learn to Include" series used by some Australian day-care centers (Luzia 2008). This series of books portrayed children with same-sex parents in every-day situations, which caused outrage over its apparent acceptance of non-traditional family types. Luzia (2008) documents the types of responses generated by and in the media, which revolve heavily around slippery-slope tactics of debate, with parents and representatives comparing teaching kids about same-sex families to teaching them about the acceptability of prostitution, of heroin use, and of doing time in prison (320). Here again the innocence - gullibility - of children is pitted against the corrupting influence of non-normative sexualities. And here, too, does this appeal to children's innocence serve to maintain heteronormative privilege. In investigating adult responses in this moral panic, Luzia has been able to not only stress the strategic employment of notions of children's and youth's innocence, but also the way issues of sexuality pervade not just spaces obviously marked as sexual (gay spaces, for instance), but also the seemingly more neutral space of day-care provisions. As such, her approach lines up with that discussed in part 4.1, which treats educational settings more generally as gendered and sexualized space.

¹² "Stranger danger", or: the fear of pedophiles, is another area within which scholars have made important contributions; see, for instance, Pain (2006), Furedi (2001), and Zgoba (2004a, 2004b), for critical examinations of the influence of heavily mediatized narratives of "stranger danger" on standards of good parenting and on children's lives. These studies often lack a spatial element and are as such not elaborated upon here.

4.3 Sexualizing and Desexualizing Space

I will discuss here three empirical studies that focus on the ways youth engage in the contestation of the meanings of space as public or private, or as sexual or asexual. The study by Thomas (2004) focuses on the ways young, black teenage girls, through various practices, constitute certain spaces as heterosexual, i.e., as suitable for heterosexual acts. The second study discussed here is an ethnographic account by Farrer (1999) and concentrates on the way Chinese youth sexualize the space of discothèques in Shanghai, and elaborates on the way this type of sexualization of space and self is heavily implicated in global flows of images, texts, and sounds. The third study, conducted by Foley, Holzman and Wearing (2007) draws on qualitative research among female youth in Australia and examines the use of mobile telephones among teenage girls as a way to claim a measure of “privacy” and insulate oneself from the perceived sexual dangers of public space. All three studies display a particular sensitivity to the ways youth themselves negotiate the meanings of space and the meanings of their (inter)actions in them, and as such have the capacity to inform our approach to youth, space and sexuality more generally.

Thomas (2004) starts her article, *Pleasure and Propriety: Teen Girls and the Practice of Straight Space* with the assertion that sexuality studies within social geography have been dominated by a focus on urban homosexual identities and activities, on sexual citizenship, and on gay and lesbian spaces¹³. (773) The constitution of straight spaces, she argues, has been relatively underexplored in the discipline so that “the fundamental spatiality of the production of heterosexual identities remain[s] underdeveloped” (id: 774). This is problematic because this way because heterosexualized spaces are made to seem monolithic, even inevitable, while they are as much social and contextual accomplishments. In her article, she sets out to contribute to the study of sexuality within social geography by offering an example of “the sorts of practices that create and reproduce the identities, subjects, and spaces of heterosexuality.” (ib id: 774) As such, her theoretical framework is informed by a social constructivist notion of space, within which space and identities are mutually constituted, as well as a Butlerian notion of the performative power of acts, gestures, and utterances in constituting a (gendered, sexualized, raced, and so on) subject: “social practices are not *performed by* a subject; they *enable* a subject, such that without social identity subjects could not exist or come into being” (ib id: 776). As such, Thomas insists that girls’ sexual activities are not merely agential (the consequence of agency) but take place within a complex of norms and meanings without which their actions, as well as their subjectivity, lose their meanings.

Thomas examines two in-depth interviews with two black, 14 year old girls in South Carolina. The interviews focused on these girls’ sexual experiences and the spatiality of these experiences. In her reading of this material, Thomas notices two important tropes. The first is that part of the pleasure of sex for these girls is not necessarily the sex itself, but rather, the practices through which space – their bedrooms or someone else’s bedroom – is made “ready” for sex. These girls tell

¹³ See also part 3.2.3 of this literature review.

Thomas that they frequently organize “afternoon sex gatherings” when their parents are away. The girls may invite boys over to their homes and have sex with them after having carefully “set” the “stage” for sex, while other teenagers may guard the house from parental intrusions. In doing so, this allows these girls to “play house” and claim their family’s space as their own, private space. These spaces are imbued with sexual meanings: a house devoid of parental supervision is a potential venue for afternoon sex gatherings. The interaction between private, sexualized places and the heterosexual acts occurring in them produce heterosexualized spaces and bodies. Or, in Thomas’ words: “these juvenile games invoke heterosexuality and, accordingly, produce heterosexual space and identity through the sexed and gendered activity of the teens,” (ib id: 778), so that “the pleasures that drove Monique [informants’ name] sexual practices were spatial.” (ib id: 779). The second observation made by Thomas refers to the spatial framework within which girls evaluate the relative appropriateness or inappropriateness of sex. One of the girls had for instance reacted mortified when she recalled an acquaintance of her having sex in a church parking lot. The second girls’ spatial notions of sexual propriety were also reflected in this girls’ insistence that she stay in the living room with her boyfriend when she did not want to have sex, as the bedroom would be a highly (hetero)sexually charged space.

Thomas concludes her article arguing that performative acts are always and inherently spatialized, and that the study of sexualized, social space needs to pay attention to the specific and contextual constitution of heterosexual space. The fact that the two girls are black also speaks to the multiplicity of heterosexual spaces: the version of space and identity constituted here are also embedded in larger societal norms surrounding black, female sexuality, so that in setting certain spaces for sex, these black girls “cite” and hence perpetuate certain identity-building practices that constitute, to others and to themselves, not just female heterosexuality, but also *black*, female heterosexuality. This specifically black, female heterosexuality is distinguished from more hegemonic sexualities (in the US context) revolving around monogamy, “waiting for the right one”, or even ideals of romantic love.

Farrer (1999), an anthropologist and sinologist, approaches the (hetero)sexualization of space from a rather different angle. Speaking to debates about the globalization of youth culture and the ways these are locally practiced and consumed, he concentrates on the meanings of disco music and discotheques in the context of Shanghai. His research took the shape of extended participant observation in Shanghai discotheques and in-depth interviewing with their clientele. Central to the appeal of the late 1990s discotheque to young people, he argues, is the way they are able to evoke a certain out-of-the-ordinary, non-Chinese and cosmopolitan sexuality. A large part of their sexual appeal, Farrer argues, lies in the fact that the sexualities these discotheques propagate originate in Western disco culture and as such are rather alien to Chinese ideas on propriety and dating. As such, the discotheque “is a deliberately engineered space of “foreign” sexual imagery, which Chinese youth appropriate to experiment with alternative sexual life styles and sexual self-images.” (ib id. 159). Especially for young women, the discotheque is a space within which to freely experiment with sexuality: “the

separation of the disco from everyday life through its liminoid 'foreignness' increases its utility for Chinese youth exploring alternative sexual images and behaviors." (158). Central to this atmosphere are the actions and interactions of those frequenting these establishments. Dressing up, seeing and being seen, flirting and hooking up make the discotheque a site of to "work" on the sexual self. These cosmopolitan, alternative life styles are moreover embodied in the foreign visitors frequenting these establishments. The work on the sexual self, Farrer argues, is done in direct relationship with foreign visitors of these discotheques: these Western visitors function as an "audience", and to be watched and desired by these foreigners is a way to "be directly affirmed as desirable in the cosmopolitan sexual market of the disco." (ib id. 157)

The discotheque is hence a space within which Chinese youth perform, and hence constitute, cosmopolitan heterosexuality. Again – although Farrer does not draw this conclusion himself – the heterosexuality here is of a specific kind, i.e., a Chinese version of cosmopolitan heterosexuality practices within a certain (liminal) space. As such, this study speaks not only to debates about the globalization of youth culture, but is also able to contribute to the heterogeneity of (all too often homogenized) heterosexual space.

The third study I wish to discuss here is *Moving Beyond Conspicuous Leisure Consumption: Adolescent Women, Mobile Phones and Public Space*, by Foley, Holzman and Wearing (2007). With help of over 40 in-depth interviews, these scholars examined the various meanings mobile phones have for teenage girls. They approach the use of mobile phones from a theoretical angle indebted to the study of consumption in sociology, arguing that consumption enables individuals to create and negotiate identities. Striking is their finding that young women use their mobile phones to create for themselves a life-style informed by images of "sophistication, success, beauty, sexuality and popularity and easy of living," (2007: 182) modeled on Sex and the City-type narratives of femininity and female (sexual) assertiveness, contrasting heavily with more traditional notions of female teenagers as vulnerable and house-bound. Moreover, these young women also use their mobile phones to navigate their involvement in public space. Public space is perceived as acutely male-dominated by many of the teenage girls the authors interviewed: these girls often cite the presence of older, male teenagers, and these boys' cat-calling and sexual remarks as sources of annoyance, insecurity, and danger. Using their mobile phones in public – talking to other female friends, or texting them – for these girls is a way to deflect their own attention away from the sexualized space around them and create, as it were, private spaces of their own in public. This specific leisure activity, mobile phone use, hence becomes endowed with various spatial and sexual meanings: it can "impart a sense of self-confidence, sexuality and autonomy which defies the male gaze in public spaces and may reject allow adolescent women to reject traditional imaginings of femininity." (ib id. 189) Drawing attention to the spatial nature of these young women's contestations of the male gaze, these authors emphasize the way technologies mediate people's involvement in public space.

A point the authors miss out on is, of course, the fact that this strategy of desexualization of public space is not equally available to all girls. Indeed, the possibility to create safe and private space within the public is here predicated on

these women's (financial) ability to secure a mobile phone – a class-related point these authors do not, however, explore further.

4.4 References

- Bongardt, Daphne van de, Mouthaan, Ineke and Bos, Henny. "Seksuele en relationele Vorming in het Voortgezet Onderwijs." *Pedagogiek* 29.1 (2009): 60-77
- Buston, Katie and Hart, Graham. "Heterosexism and Homophobia in Scottish School Sex Education: Exploring the Nature of the Problem." *Journal of Adolescence* 24.1 (2001): 95-109
- Canaan, Joice. "Why is a 'Slut' a Slut: Cautionary Tales of Middle Class Teenagers' Morality." *Symbolising America* Ed. Vareen, Herve. London: Virago, 1984.
- Chambers, Deborah, Tincknell, and van Loon, Joost. "Peer regulation of Teenage Sexual Identities." *Gender and Education* 16.3 (2004): 397-415
- Connell, Robert W. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987.
- Connell, Robert W. "Cool Guys, Swots and Wimps: the Interplay of Masculinity and Education." *Oxford Review of Education* 13 (1989): 291-303
- Epstein, Debbie. "Sexualities and Education: Catch 28" *Sexualities* 3.4 (2000): 387-94
- Epstein, Debbie. "Boyz' own Stories: Masculinities and Sexualities in Schools." *Gender and Education* 9.1 (1997): 105-115
- Epstein, Debbie and Johnson, Richard. *Schooling Sexualities*. Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1998.
- Farrer, James. "Disco 'Super-Culture': Consuming Foreign Sex in the Chinese Disco. Cosmopolitan Dance Culture and Cosmopolitan Sexual Culture." *Sexualities* 2.2 (1999): 147-66
- Fields, Jessica. *Risky Lessons: Sex Education and Social Inequality*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008.
- Fine, Michelle, and McClelland, Sara I. "Sexuality Education and Desire: Still Missing after All These Years." *Harvard Educational Review* 76.3 (2006): 297-338
- Fitzgerald, Louise F. and Hesson-McInnes, Matthew. "The Dimensions of Sexual Harassment: A Structural Analysis." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 35.3 (1989): 309-26
- Foley, Carmen, Holzman, Caryn, and Wearing, Stephen. "Moving Beyond Conspicuous Leisure Consumption: Adolescent Women, Mobile Phones and Public Space." *Leisure Studies* 26.2 (2007): 179-92
- Furedi, Frank. *Paranoid Parenting*. London: Allen Lane, 2001.
- Garcia, Lorena. "'Now Why do you Want to Know about That?': Heteronormativity, Sexism, and Racism in the Sexual (Mis)education of Latina Youth" *Gender & Society*: 23-4 (2009): 520-41
- Hey, Valerie. *The Company She Keeps: An Ethnography of Girls' Friendships*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997.
- Hubbard, Phil. "Maintaining Family Values? Cleansing the Streets of Sex Advertising." *Area* 34.4 (2002): 353-60
- Hyams, Melissa S. "'Pay Attention in Class... [and] Don't Get Pregnant': A Discourse of Academic Success among Adolescent Latinas." *Environment and Planning A* 32 (2000): 635-54
- Kitzinger, Jenny. "'I'm Sexually Attractive but I'm Powerful': Young Women Negotiating Sexual Reputation." *Women's International Forum* 18.2 (1995): 187-196
- Lees, Sue. "The Structure of Sexual Relations in Schools." *Gender and the Politics of Schooling*.

- Eds. Arnot, Madeleine and Weiner, Gaby. London: Hutchinsons/Open University, 1987.
- Lees, Sue. *Sugar and Spice: Sexuality and Adolescent Girls*. London: Penguin, 1993.
- Luzia, Karina. "Day Care as Battleground: Using Moral Panic to Locate the Front Lines." *Australian Geographer* 39.3 (2008): 315-26
- Mac an Ghaill, Mairtin. *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994.
- Mahoney, Pat. *Schools for the Boys: Co-Education reassessed*. London: Hutchinson, 1985
- Mahoney, Pat. "Sexual Violence in Mixed Schools" *Learning Our Lines: Sexuality and Social Control in Education*. Eds. Mahoney, Pat and Jones, Carol. London: Women's Press, 1989.
- Nayak, Anoop and Kehily, Mary Jane. "Masculinities and Schooling: Why Are Young Men so Homophobic?" *Border Patrols: Policing the Boundaries of Heterosexuality*. Eds. Steinberg, Deborah L., Epstein, Debbie and Johnson, Richard. London: Cassell, 1997.
- O'Flynn, Sarah and Epstein, Debbie. "Standardising Sexuality: Embodied Knowledge, 'Achievement' and 'Standards'" *Social Semiotics* 15.2 (2005): 187-210
- Pain, Rachel. "Paranoid Parenting? Rematerializing Risk and Fear for Children." *Social and Cultural Geography* 7.2 (2006): 221-43
- Pain, Rachel. "Youth, Age and the Representation of Fear" *Capital & Class* 80 (2003): 151-71
- Pain, Rachel. "Place, Social relations and the Fear of Crime: a Review." *Progress in Human Geography* 24.3 (2000): 365-87
- Robinson, Kerry H. "Reinforcing Hegemonic Masculinities through Sexual Harassment: Issues of Identity, Power and Popularity in Secondary Schools." *Gender and Education* 17.1 (2005): 19-37
- Skeggs, Beverley. "Challenging Masculinity and Using Sexuality." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 12.2 (1991): 127-139
- Thomas, Mary E. "Pleasure and Propriety: Teen Girls and the Practice of Straight Space." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 773-789
- Timmerman, Greetje. "Sexual Harassment of Adolescents Perpetrated by Teachers and by Peers: An Exploration of the Dynamics of Power, Culture, and Gender in Secondary Schools." *Sex Roles* 48.5/6 (2003): 231-244
- Zgoba, Kristen M. "The Amber Alert: the Appropriate Solution to Preventing Child Abduction." *Journal of Psychiatry & Law* 32 (2004a): 71-88
- Zgoba, Kristen M. "Spin Doctors and Moral Crusaders: The Moral Panic behind Child Abduction Legislation." *Criminal Justice Studies* 17.4 (2004b): 385-404

5. REFLECTIONS AND RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

In the following, I aim to draw out some of the well-researched areas I have described in Parts 3 and 4, and discuss some of the underlying themes and assumptions characterizing these areas in part 5.1. In part 5.2, I will draw out some research suggestions.

5.1 Well-trodden Paths

The first area introduced in part 3, **youth and sexuality**, is heavily skewed in favor of socio-medical accounts of sexuality and has been demonstrated to largely focus on sexual practices among youth in connection to the success or failure of STD and HIV prevention programs. Another concentration is that on experiences of sexual coercion among youth. Large-scale, quantitative accounts dominate the socio-medical literature on youth and sexuality. While such approaches arguably contribute to our understanding of adolescent sexuality, I would argue they do little to explore the ways in which sexuality is a source of pleasure and discovery for youth. Moreover, survey-style research often sacrifices depth in favor of breadth, so that sexuality among youth on its more subjective and experiential level largely disappears from view. My objections – if not to this type of research, then to its dominance in this particular field – are hence two-fold: it treats sexuality among youth as primarily as a “danger”, and is largely unable to capture sexuality among youth in its more subjectively felt dimensions.

More sociological approaches to youth culture seem to often side-step the issue of sexuality in favor of investigating gender and its relation to youth culture. On an empirical level, however, these types of study have been instrumental in demonstrating the extent to which gender and youth culture are interwoven and that indeed, youth culture is a sphere that could enable young people to resist, subvert, or challenge hegemonic gender constructs.

Last, scholars working within cultural studies aim to understand how the category youth intersects with that of sexuality in cultural representations in the late 20th and early 21st century. This approach centering on the representation of sexuality and youth are informed by semiotic analysis of media “texts” or narratives. While illuminating the conflicted, Western attitude towards youth and sexuality, oscillating between an image of innocence and one of sexual corruption/corruptibility, this approach has so far done little to investigate the hold of such notions on youth themselves, and the extent to which such notions are reproduced and/or challenged among youth. However, we see fruitful endeavors made by, for instance, Hyams (2000) and O’Flynn & Epstein (2005), to connect the discursive embeddedness of (female) sexuality in schools to the way young women themselves experience their sexuality.

The second theme, **sexuality and public space**, concentrates by and large on the way adults negotiate and make (sexual) use of (sexualized) public space. Well-researched territory is the way gay men embed their lives sexual orientation in the urban landscape; the way lesbian, gay, and queer people negotiate their identities

and (re)negotiate heteronormative urban space in the process; and the sphere of sexual citizenship, or: if and how visibility in public space can contribute to the emancipation of Other sexualities. Theoretically, it has demonstrated that spaces and sexualities are mutually constitutive, that is: that sexual practices and performances of sexual identities affect, and are affected by, the experience of space.

The majority of this type of research is qualitative and interpretative, so that the use and meanings of space is researched with help of in-depth interviews, (participant) observations, and long-term ethnographic research combining these two methods to arrive at a more total immersion in a particular social environment. The handicaps of these qualitative approaches are evident: the results may lack external validity (the extent to which they can be generalized to other contexts). However, these studies are typically able to contribute to and refine existing theory, as well as pay more attention to the dimensions of sexuality that disappears from view so rapidly within a quantitative format, i.e., the meaningful and subjectively felt aspects to sexual identities and practices.

The following critical points are of particular relevance to this literature review. Firstly, and more generally, this type of research has largely focused on the spatial embeddedness of gay, lesbian, or queer people. In doing so, it has failed to engage with heterosexuality as an internally diverse, spatially embedded construct¹⁴. Indeed, self-identified “straight” people also construct their sexual identities and practices within various spatial contexts (the home, the educational system, the work place, the city). Secondly, research focusing on sexuality and the public sphere has scarcely paid attention to the way youth negotiate sexuality in public spaces. I will return to this point in part 5.2.

The third area, that of **youth and public space**, displays an acute awareness of the exclusions central to the constitution of public spaces. As such, this type of research often starts from the premise that youth’s participation in public is limited by parents and parental fears, by other youth, by the commercialization and privatization of public space, and sometimes, by legal prohibitions. The trope of resistance to such exclusions is particularly strong within this research tradition, yet it has been recognized that youth’s involvement in public spaces cannot be subsumed under the oppression vs. resistance binary; that, in fact, the meanings of participation in public spaces for youth are manifold and not to be reduced to either showing compliance (with adult oppression) or showing resistance (to same oppression). The question of agency is hence enriched by a more contextual focus on the involvement of youth in public space. Again, much of this research is

¹⁴ This point of critique is similar to those scholars creating space for the study of (multiple) masculinities in the early 1990s: while feminists were quick to point out the diverse forms of femininity, some scholars of masculinity implied, they had henceforth largely treated masculinity as a relatively homogenous and static construct. In doing so, these scholars failed to address the way constructions of masculinity are embedded in class, racial, and sexual relations of power. The point I am making is similar in the sense that I feel an exclusive focus on sexualities “on the margins of power”, so to say, risks reifying dominant notions of sexual “normality” or even “naturalness”, i.e., in our society, heterosexuality.

qualitative-interpretative, as ethnographic fieldwork and qualitative interviewing dominate the methods employed.

Two critical notes suffice here. While this research tradition concentrates on the contextual exclusions central to the constitution of public space, and the role youth are able to negotiate for themselves in public space, it is curious to learn that few of these scholars have explicitly mentioned a very specific type of exclusion of youth, i.e. exclusions based on sexual identity. Participation, or lack of participation, in public spaces – and more importantly, which public spaces, and why! – may be related to the sexual identities of those youth involved. I will return to this point in part 5.2.

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, we know little about how public space is used by youth in looking for and finding sexual partners. This is curious as youth often face parental controls and interference in their family homes, so that the “private” may not be that private to some youth at all. Especially those with more culturally conservative families may face controls on whom they are seeing in their spare time, and where. Within these constraints, public space may offer a more welcoming space to pursue certain sexual activities. There is no need to define sexuality here narrowly: it can range from merely flirting to “actually” having sex in (semi)public settings (e.g. schools, parks, swimming pools, abandoned lots or houses, etc.).

In part 4 on the intersection of research on sexuality, **public space, and youth**, I have briefly introduced schools as a (semi)public setting within which sexualities in their performative aspects are well-researched. The performances of heterosexuality (through homophobia) and masculinity (through misogyny) are central mechanisms that enable young men to assert their sexual identities. Young women of lower class and ethnically Other backgrounds are demonstrated to be positioned within several intersecting discourses, which position them as sexual beings whose sexual drives needs to be hold in check if they are to attain academic success. I have emphasized the relevance of these studies in the above, yet I here want to add that these studies could have benefitted from a wider focus incorporating several spaces, e.g. both the educational setting and the “private” setting of the family home. By contrasting these spheres, scholars might be able to investigate not only the constructions of sexuality of youth in one spatial setting, but also zoom in on the way youth negotiate and embody the move from one space to another. I will return to this point in part 5.2.

In part 4, I have also introduced a number of studies connecting youth, sexuality and public space that investigate how the (sexual) innocence of the category “youth” is evoked in heavily mediatized rhetorical appeals to establish heteronormative dominance in the public and semi-public sphere. Last, I have cited three studies that, in my opinion, approach sexuality, youth, and public space from fruitful angles, centering on how “straight space” is performed and created by young black women (Thomas 2004), on how (hetero)sexual spaces and performances are embedded within global youth cultures and global flows of images, texts, and sounds (Farrer 1999), and lastly, on how mobile telephones – and perhaps by extension,

technologies – have the capacity to transform public spaces perceived to be sexually threatening into private, “safer” spaces for young girls (Foley et al. 2007).

In the following, discuss the research questions that are meant to fill some of the hiatuses I have identified in the above. I aim to engage the three sub-areas of study (youth and sexuality, sexuality and public space, public space and youth) with each other, meaning that I will try to illuminate what lessons the study of public space, for example, may bring to that of youth and sexuality, or what the study of youth may mean to the field of sexuality and public space.

5.2 The “Known Unknowns”: Suggestions for Further Research

In order to do justice to a wider variety of sexual practices, sexual identities, and their contextual, spatial embeddedness, I feel the following research question is of importance to researchers seeking to contribute to the – barren – field of research on youth, sexuality, and public space. In essence, this question is that of the **spatiality of sexual practices and sexual identities among youth**, or: an investigation into the interaction between specific spaces, bodies, and (performative) action, and the subjectivities, identities, and sexualities emerging from such (inter)actions. This question is informed by a more socio-geographical approach to sexualities that is summarized in the dictum that “space matters” and as such yields the following research question:

How do youth negotiate their sexual identities and sexual practices within various spatial contexts?

On a theoretical level, this overarching question is able to speak to debates about the differential use youth and adults make of public space and the way sexuality affects, and is affected by, these different involvements in public space.

In the following I will suggest several subquestions, some of which are broad and encompassing enough to serve as main research questions themselves. In doing so, I aim not to sketch a detailed outline of a research agenda; rather, I will highlight several inroads and perspectives that have the capacity to speak to theoretical as well as societal debates about the intersection of youth, public space, and sexuality.

Spatial Contexts of Youth and Sexuality

In combining youth, sexuality, and public space, one of the most important sub-question pertains to the exact settings within which youth negotiate their sexualities. Aside from schools, little is so far known about what other public spaces lend themselves to the construction of sexual identities and engagement in sexual acts by youth. This sub-question is meant to map these spaces, as well as investigate in more detail the embodied practices and discursive tactics youth employ in such spaces:

In what spatial contexts do youth negotiate sexual identities and practices for themselves? How do these spaces lend themselves to the construction of sexual(ized) identities?

Aside from schools, such spaces could, for instance, be places like *hangplekken*, the *jeugdthonk*, parks, swimming pools, malls, abandoned lots, parking areas, etc. This question can be slightly reformulated if we assume that the construction of sexual identities and practices have their consequences for the meanings of spaces within which they take place:

How do youth construct these spaces as sexual? Through what practices are these spaces imbued with sexual meanings by youth?

To exemplify this question I can here draw on the observation I made doing research among unmarried, young women in Sana'a, Yemen. While unmarried women are supposed to remain virgins until marriage, various spatial settings were created and employed by these unmarried women to nevertheless have sex (i.e. cars or hotel rooms), while other settings proved conducive to their discursively constructing themselves as sexual beings, for instance the gatherings revolving around qat consumption I focused on during my research (qat is mildly stimulating drug consumed on a large scale in contemporary Yemen). Gathering in groups of five to ten women, these qat chews served a host of purposes, one of which is the exchange of information surrounding boyfriends and sexuality. The girls in the qat chew update each other on their sexual lives, exchange information about sexuality, and speak of their pleasures (and sometimes sorrows) accompanying their sexual lives. While some of these women were circumcised, and all of these women would face substantial social stigma if openly pursuing relationships and sex before marriage, the qat chew served as the only spatial setting within which to construct themselves as (hetero)sexual beings and desiring bodies. This example also sensitizes us to the way a transgression of social norms opens up possibilities for the negotiation of non-normative sexualities. As such, transgressions are not merely negations of an existing social order but always have a productive dimension. Like the Chinese youth in Farrer's study (1999), these women create new meanings and identities in and through the transgression of society's norms.

It is here also worthwhile to ask how youth move between several spheres, for instance, how they negotiate the movement from one (potentially sexual) space to another. An example of this type of process seems at work in the way the young women in Sana'a I worked with would make the move from their a-sexual status as unmarried daughters in their family homes to a more sexually mature identity in the qat chews. This move was facilitated by spatially congregating together in the living room of a woman whose parents may not have been present, or, for instance, by applying make-up and taking off their niqaab in the hallway (of course a very liminal space in itself!) of the woman in whose house they were meeting up (after all, they could not be seen in public, i.e. taxis or streets, wearing heavy make-up!). A follow-up question would hence read as follows:

How do youth negotiate their transition across several (sexualized) spaces?

Another question is how youth confront space that they perceive as already sexualized (“made sexual”) by other youth or adults. This would lead to the following questions:

What spaces are perceived as sexual, or sexualized, by youth? How do these spaces affect young people’s negotiations of their own identities and practices? And how does the perceived sexualization of certain spaces affect their practices and movements through public space?

The spatial contexts in which these processes take place can be fruitfully compared with each other, too. One can think here of contexts as diverse as the educational setting, the family home, the streets and other leisure-oriented spaces like malls, restaurants, etc. The question is here what types of spaces youth seek out or actively avoid for sexual reasons. Certain spaces may be conceived of as welcoming to youth looking for sex or constructing sexual identities, while others may be perceived to be less suitable. Or, some spaces may be perceived to be sexualized, but not in a way that is conducive to the expression or creation of their own sexuality. These “geographies of sexual exclusion” among youth have scarcely been researched, while I have shown that this particular type of study is rather common among socio-geographical approaches to public space and the sexuality of adults. It is here that attention should also be paid to the way spaces may be subject to resistance and subversion on the part of youth. The agency of youth in claiming space for their own (sexual) use is central to this line of reasoning, so that we can formulate the following question:

How do youth challenge or subvert others’ sexual definitions of space? Through what embodied or discursive tactics are they able (or unable) to impose their own definition of space onto certain spatial settings? And exactly whose definition of space are they resisting anyway?

As elaborated upon in this literature review, space and its meanings are constituted through a complex interplay of more or less powerful actors. In schools, for instance, such actors are pupils themselves, but also teachers and the more abstract school regulations. In other settings, parents, the police, and youth workers may attempt to impose their definitions of space onto whatever spaces youth move in. The question as to what and whose version of space youth are resisting is hence of great importance here. Attention should here also be paid to the exact ways these actors impose their meanings onto space. For instance, the school regulations pertaining to appropriate attire and behavior cited by Hyams (2000) are an example of an institutional actor (the school) defining educational space as an ideally a-sexual space.

Youth and Sexual Citizenship

I have identified the focus on sexual citizenship as one of the strong points of the research tradition on public space and sexuality. Researchers seeking to speak to these debates here face a relatively underexplored area of sexual citizenship, i.e., the sexual citizenship of youth, here referring to the extent to which youth are granted voice, influence, and autonomy in their sexual development and sexual wishes. I believe an additional focus on public space could contribute significantly to the question as to how, and where, young people are able to negotiate sexual citizenship for themselves. Formulated as a research question, this question is as follows:

How do young people negotiate their sexual citizenship in various spatial settings?

In speaking of sexual citizenship, this question is also able to investigate structures of inequality and as such speak to societal debates as well. Indeed, knowing more about the way youth give shape to their sexuality and the constraints they face is invaluable if we are to understand how this society can provide youth with the opportunities to develop themselves into adults capable of engaging in satisfying, pleasurable, and not to mention safe, sex. Moreover, it can illuminate some of the processes at work in various settings (like schools) that challenge queer, lesbian, and gay youth's claims to sexual citizenship and as such enable policy makers to more successfully intervene in such harmful processes.

Youth as an Internally Diverse Category

Bearing in mind the internally diverse nature of the category youth, it is imperative here to take into account the various matrices of power in which youth negotiate their sexual identities, practices, and rights, i.e., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and the like. Another sub-question could then read as follows:

How are the negotiations of sexual practices and identities embedded in larger social structures of power? In other words, how do race, gender, class, and sexual orientation affect the way youth are able to negotiate their sexual identities and practices (in various spatial settings)? Also, how do race, gender, sexual orientation, and class affect the way youth negotiate "sexualized" spaces?

A good example of this type of study is, again, Hyams' (2000), who questioned the way educational demands and institutional discourses of Latina, female sexuality inform the way young women conceive of their own sexualities, and the ways in which young Latina women were able to negotiate their sexual practices in dialogue with these. Another question of interest is how youth define and negotiate certain spaces that confront them as "made sexual" by others in class-specific, gendered, or racialized, ways, so that another research question hence becomes:

How do race, gender, class, and sexual orientation affect the different ways youth navigate “sexualized spaces”?

For instance, certain spaces may be experienced as more welcoming to youth from certain classes, youth of a certain gender, sexual orientation, or ethnic group in Dutch society. E.g., a street that feels safe and comfortable to a heterosexual couple may not feel the same way for gay youth. Or, certain areas in the city may be perceived of as sexually threatening to certain youth: Gay districts, for instance, may be profoundly unsettling spaces for young, heterosexual males, while dimly lit street corners populated by ethnic Others may be conceived of as sexually dangerous to young (white) women.

The different demands and constraints gay, lesbian, and queer youth face here is also of particular relevance. Of course, the choice whether researchers want to focus exclusively on one type of youth is not mine to make, yet I would suggest that some populations may be more theoretically and socially relevant, for instance racially marginalized youth, or lesbian, gay, or queer youth. Not only can their experiences tell us something new about how various forms of oppression intersect, but might also enable us to inform policy initiatives working with, and for, these populations. However, it must be borne in mind that researchers risk normalizing heterosexuality in focusing lop-sidedly on “deviant” sexualities.

Youth Culture

If we furthermore assume that “youth culture matters” for the ways youth conceive of, and express, their sexual identities and practices, another question would read as follows:

How do youth draw on various youth cultures in negotiating their sexual identities, practices, and rights (in various spatial settings)?

For instance, some youth cultures are known for their gender-bending (such as the shoe-gazing, androgynous crowds of New Wave concerts in the late 1980s), while others create and invent “new” masculinities and femininities in drawing, for example, on globalized musical trends (the gangsta-rapping, multiple-partnered, male “player”, for instance). The question scholars of these types of masculinities and femininities may want to consider is the extent to which these gender-identities inform not just these youth’s sexual identities or even their sexual practices. Without arguing there is a causal relationship between belonging to X or Y youth culture and pursuing certain sexual acts, it may be worthwhile to explore the links between sexual practices, sexual identities, and gender-related values typical to certain youth cultures. Moreover, youth cultures are demonstrated to be increasingly “global”, that is, created in dialogue with increasingly mobile images, sounds, and texts. An awareness of the global, as well as local embeddedness of youth cultures and sexuality informs the following research question:

How do “global” images, texts, and sounds affect the way youth negotiate their sexual identities, practices, and rights (in various spatial settings)?

In answering this question, the researcher might be able to contribute to debates about the globalization of youth culture(s) and the way they intersect with “local” youth and parent cultures, as well as local class-, race, and gender-based inequalities.

Youth and the Spatiality of Pleasure

Another question I feel research should attempt to foreground revolves around the way youth are able to negotiate pleasurable sex for themselves in various spatial settings. The girls’ pleasure in the spatiality of sexual practices, creating intimacy and privacy, as described Thomas (2004) should serve as a sensitizing case to researchers aiming to take the spatiality of sexual pleasure for youth seriously. Questions in line with this concern could be the following:

In what spatial settings are youth able to negotiate pleasurable sex? In what spaces do they feel they do not? Does having sex in certain spaces add to the enjoyment of sex?

These questions, of course, are wide-ranging: the question as to what specific sites and contexts as well as categories of youth are to be studied should be motivated by not only theoretical concerns but also by choices as to what societal debates the researcher aims to contribute to. Methodological and ethical concerns, I believe, have a role to play in making these choices. For this reason, I have included a brief discussion of the methodological and ethical aspects of researching space, youth, and sexuality in part 6.

5.3 References

- Farrer, James. “Disco ‘Super-Culture’: Consuming Foreign Sex in the Chinese Disco. Cosmopolitan Dance Culture and Cosmopolitan Sexual Culture.” *Sexualities* 2.2 (1999): 147-66
- Hyams, Melissa S. “‘Pay Attention in Class... [and] Don’t Get Pregnant’: A Discourse of Academic Success among Adolescent Latinas.” *Environment and Planning A* 32 (2000): 635-54
- Thomas, Mary E. “Pleasure and Propriety: Teen Girls and the Practice of Straight Space.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 773-789

6. NOTES ON METHOD AND ETHICS

The following three characteristics of the research questions outlined in part 5 each have implications for the methodological and ethical approach taken. The first is that they all revolve around the use of space, i.e., how certain identities and practices are spatialized, and how the meanings of certain spaces are constituted in dialogue with these practices and identities. The second characteristic is that we are looking for negotiations of sexual identity and sexual practices; the third is that we are researching youth. While the first characteristic has important implications for – mostly – the methods employed in answering these research questions, the latter two aspects of these research questions point to substantial ethical dilemmas. In the following, I will briefly introduce both these methodological and ethical concerns.

6.1 Space and Method

There are a couple of methods that can shed light on the processes through which youth engage with various spaces in constructing sexual identities and practices for themselves. Considering the *spatial nature* of these processes – or rather, the theoretical focus on the spatiality of such processes - the observation, or perhaps even participant observation, of youth in various settings can shed light on how sexual identities and practices are spatialized. Structured observations, in which the researcher merely reports the frequency of certain (a priori defined) behaviors or actions are not the most desirable option here, however, as relatively little is known about the (sexual and sexualized) actions and behaviors of youth in certain spaces. In this scenario, the researcher's observations risk limiting or even distorting their picture of social reality the researcher aims to sketch. An open-ended approach to various spaces is hence in order, here. Complementing these observations could be in-depth interviews with youth themselves, the people involved in various spatial settings (teachers in schools, for instance, or youth workers in youth clubs), or with their parents. Questions could range from the factual (e.g. "how often, would you say you are in space X?") to the more theoretically interesting questions as to what meanings certain spaces have for youth. Focus groups, the prime method to explore the way groups of people construct meaning in relation to one another, are also an option here. In this setting, the researcher has the option of using visual materials (pictures or short clips of certain urban spaces) to gauge their responses. A more ethnographic approach, characterized by an immersion in a specific social sphere, could also provide important data, as it allows the researcher make use of the "opportunities [for research] that arise in the spaces between structured activities or institutional contexts" (Chicam Report 2005: 44).

If the researcher aims for more generalizability, the data yielded with these three methods could also contribute to the design of, for instance, a survey that can be distributed more comprehensively. However, considering both the spatiality of the processes involved and the dearth of research on these processes involving youth, sexuality, and public space, I would strongly suggest qualitative methods are used if not throughout the entire period of research, then at least throughout its early stages.

The research proposed here also offers researchers the opportunity to engage with more recent additions to social scientists' methodological toolkit, for instance, the use of visual and audio-visual material in the research process. Youth may, for instance, be engaged with the research process by keeping visual diaries, by taking pictures of the spaces within which they move and recounting their feelings and motivates for moving in these spaces, or by making short movie clips about their lives. Not only would such a research method directly engage (perhaps even empower!) the youth in question, but it would also enable the researcher to better understand the lives and spatial embeddedness of these youth as "seen through their own eyes" (Cf. Chicam Report 2005; Buckingham and Harvey (2001).

6.2 The Ethics of Research on Youth and Sexuality

The type of research here engages with "vulnerable" people in two important ways. Firstly, it deals with youth whose power in relation to adults is limited in many ways. Secondly, it may come across youth whose sexuality is marginalized in their own social settings as well as society at large. It is for these reasons that I will here briefly a small set of articles explicitly dealing with the complexities of doing research with youth and with sexual minorities.

6.2.1 Researching Youth

In response to criticism targeting the alleged "adultist" bias of much research on children, sociologists have become increasingly occupied with findings ways to not just work on, or for, children, but *with* them (Matthews et al. 2001; Cf. Bushin 2008; Gallagher 2008; Cahill 2008). These attempts locate agency in the hands of children and youth themselves, and operate under the assumption that children and youth engage with their environs in meaningful and sophisticated ways. The researcher has to take them seriously in their capacity as agents in their own right, so that research projects facilitating a sense of group ownership and collective, shared power in the research process are favored by some researchers (Cahill 2008). However, researchers are warned to always remain sensitive to the power-relations inherent in the relationship between researcher and researched, and adult and child/youth. According to Gallagher (2008), the negotiation by both researcher and researched child/youth of this power-relationship is a continual process throughout the research.

To reflect the shift in assumptions adhered to (i.e. from an adultist focus on children as merely "lacking" adulthood to a notion of children as actors in their lives in their own right), increasing attention has been paid to the methodology and ethics of doing research with children. Valentine (1999) outlines several areas within which the researcher has to be particularly sensitive to both the power-dynamics underpinning the relationship between researched child/youth on the one hand, and researching adult on the other. While she concentrates on children, these lessons are of particular relevance to our purposes as well. The first complexity she identifies is arriving at informed consent, i.e., giving the researched youth the chance to make a conscious decision to be part of the research process.

Important here is the difference between giving children to change of “opting out” and “opting in”, with the latter being preferable to the former. The second complexity is related to acquiring access to youth and the “structure of compliance” arrived at in the researching process. Especially when working within organizational or institutional contexts like schools, it may be difficult to speak to children outside of parental and institutional constraints and settings. In such research scenarios, she argues, parents, teachers, social workers etc. may act as “gate-keepers”, barring access to children or forcing children to participate. Moreover, institutional settings may contribute to what Ireland and Holloway (1996) describe as “rule following behavior” among children, i.e., the tendency to comply with the authority structures of a certain institutional settings. The researcher may moreover be identified with these authority structures, so that situations of “unintended coercion” arise within which children feel unfree to “opt out” of the research. The third area of importance to researchers aiming to ethically engage with children in their research is, of course, that of privacy and confidentiality, which are additionally important in the case of children as their privacy is more circumscribed to begin with than that of adults. In practice, this is also made more difficult when interviewing children or youth in the family home, where family members may overhear, or barge into, conversations between the researcher and the family member in question (Bushin 2008; Punch 2008). Fourthly, Valentine argues that it is necessary for researchers to critically approach the methodologies they are using for their “fit” with the respondents’ understanding of verbal, written, and hearing levels. Adopting some of the alternative methodologies introduced in part 6.2 may be a way to navigate learning, speaking, or writing difficulties, and in the process engage the children as agents in the researching process. Last, Valentine argues that researchers may want to involve the children not only in the data gathering process, but also in the dissemination and advocacy of its findings. Researchers may help children to become part of working committees (in urban planning, for instance); warning us, however, that “there is a danger that these forums can become merely another way in which adults appropriate children’s’ voices.” (1999:151). These suggestions appear relevant when researching youth more generally as well, although peer-group dynamics and norms may play a larger role in the case of youth, while the influence of parents on the research process can be expected to be more marginal.

Matthews et al. (2001) contribute to this list of concerns in more (practical) detail, supplying a list of suggestions for “good practice” when working with children. Important aspects of an ethical approach to research on children (and, I argue, with youth more generally) are for instance making active attempts to create comfortable settings when interviewing and communicating the projects’ goals and findings clearly. They also stress the importance of listening well and responding to concerns the children voice, of encouraging openness in children, of being able to deal with distress and trauma on the part of children (Cf. Gaskell 2008), and of displaying flexibility scheduling- and planning-wise.

6.2.2 Researching Sexuality

Much like research on children and youth, sound ethical practice in research on sexuality starts with an acute sensitivity to the biases the researcher, by virtue of her embeddedness in a society with historically entrenched notions of sexuality, brings to her research. As such, sound ethical practice is connected to sound epistemological practice, treating various sexual practices and identities as equally “natural” – or more precisely, as sexuality is conceived of as a social accomplishment, as equally “un-natural”. Heterosexist bias can also be manifested in other epistemological and theoretical choices the researcher makes: for instance, studies may adhere to developmental models implicitly treating an heterosexual orientation as the “normal” outcome of human development, or may treat gay women or men as homogenous groups or ignore the salience of sexual orientation altogether (Martin and Knox 2000). Last, the question as to how we should define various sexualities is one that merits attention. In quantitative, survey-styled research, researchers will be working with *a priori* defined categories of sexuality, e.g. “heterosexual”, “homosexual”, etc. According to Martin and Knox, researchers need to consider whether they will largely focus on sexual behaviors or on people’s identifications. Various scales have been defined as measuring people’s sexual orientation as a function of their identifications (as straight or gay, for instance), on their affectational thoughts and feelings, and sexual behaviors and histories, attributing different “weight” to these three aspects of sexual orientation. Examples of these are the Multidimensional scale of sexuality (Berkey, Perelman-Hall and Kurdek 1990), the Klein Sexual orientation grid (Klein, Sepekoff and Wolff 1985) or the Gay identity Questionnaire as developed by Brady and Busse (1994). In the case of youth, Martin and Knox (2000) suggest focusing on sexual identifications rather than on sexual practices, as many (heterosexual and homosexual) youth lack much sexual experience, while in the case of communities known for their homophobia the researcher is better off focusing on behavioral cues. Of course, this advice begs the question what the researcher is to do with youth from or in exactly such communities or social spheres (like secondary schools, demonstrated to be veritable arenas of homophobia).

However, such an approach has its handicaps. In *a priori* defining a range of sexual identities, researchers may miss out on sexualities that have a tangible and meaningful reality for the people involved yet are not incorporated in the categories researchers are working with. For instance, in various non-Western contexts, the notion of sexuality as defined by people’s choice for partners of a certain biological sex is alien to the way people may conceive of their sexual lives, identities, and practices. Imposing Western labels such as homosexual and heterosexual on these practices is not just unhelpful – it ultimately distorts social reality. More generally, such *a priori* impositions on the side of the researcher risks doing injustice to the contextual, fluid nature of sexuality. The question qualitative researchers are in a better position to ask is what qualifies as sexuality at all for the people involved in the study; what meanings certain sexual acts or identities have for them; and how, through an interplay with other social actors, such meanings are historically situated.

In more practical terms, researchers focusing on sexualities have several duties to their respondents. Like all researchers, they have to be able to ensure confidentiality and anonymity – a concern that acquires particular urgency in light of the fact “being outed” as homosexual, for instance, is socially penalized in people’s social circles. Fears of “being outed” may also make certain populations very difficult to access. Negotiating access then can be done through “community leaders”, or: those people with connections in a social circle that can vouch for the researcher’s goals and ethical standards. If the research has tangible benefits to the researched population at hand, these benefits can also be leveraged in acquiring the cooperation of community leaders as well as regular participants (Silvestre 1994). However, some communities or populations may be rather loosely-knit (in contrast, for instance, to white, urban gay men, whose involvement in the community may be more stable) and lack “community leaders”, posing additional problems for the researchers.

Valentine, Butler, and Skelton (2001) outline additional difficulties with working with gay or lesbian youth specifically. Facing intense peer-pressure in school as well as potential parental prejudices, researchers face additional practical as well as ethical problems when attempting to research sexual identities among youth. Accessing lesbian and gay youth in the family sphere can be particularly difficult, as invitations and further communication cannot, for instance, be sent to participants’ family homes (where it can be read by family members), while at schools the problem for the researcher in terms of access is exacerbated by lesbian and gay youth’s hesitance to participate in research projects on sexuality lest they be “outed” as gay. Finding safe settings to conduct interviews as well as appropriate ways to communicate with participants is of central importance in navigating these difficulties. It is almost needless to say that confidentiality and anonymity assume central importance in such cases as well.

6.3 References

- Berkey, Braden R., Perelman-Hall, Terri, and Kurdek, Lawrence A. “The Multidimensional Scale of Sexuality.” *Journal of Homosexuality*, 19.4 (1990): 67-87
- Brady, W. and Busse, W. J. “The Gay Identity Questionnaire: A brief Measure of Homosexual Identity Formation.” *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26.4 (1994): 1-22
- Buckingham, D. and Harvey, I. “Imagining the audience: Language, Creativity and Communication in Youth Media Production.” *Journal of Educational Media* 26.3 (2001): 173-184.
- Bushin, Naomi. “Interviewing with Children in their Homes: Developing Flexible Approaches and Techniques” *Doing Children’s Geographies: Methodological Issues in Research with Young People*. Eds. Van Blerk, Lorraine, and Kesby, Mike. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Cahill, Caitlin. “Doing Research with Young People: Participatory Research and the Rituals of Collective Work.” *Doing Children’s Geographies: Methodological Issues in Research with Young People*. Eds. Van Blerk, Lorraine, and Kesby, Mike. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Chicam Report. *Children in Communication about Migration*. European Commission, Directorate-General for Research, 2005.

- Gallagher, Michael. "Rethinking Participatory Methods in Children's Geographies." *Doing Children's Geographies: Methodological Issues in Research with Young People*. Eds. Van Blerk, Lorraine, and Kesby, Mike. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Gaskell, Carolyn. "Isolation and Distress? (Re)thinking the Place of Emotions in Youth Research." *Doing Children's Geographies: Methodological Issues in Research with Young People*. Eds. Van Blerk, Lorraine, and Kesby, Mike. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Ireland, Lorraine, and Holloway, Immy. "Qualitative Health Research with Children." *Children and Society* 10 (1996): 155-164
- Klein, Fritz, Sepekoff, B, and Wolf, T. J. "Sexual Orientation: A Multi-Variable Dynamic Process." *Journal of Homosexuality* 11.1-2 (1985): 35-49
- Martin, James J. Knox, Jo. "Methodological and Ethical issues in Research on Lesbians and Gay Men." *Social Work Research* 24.1 (2000): 51-60
- Matthews, High, Limb, Melanie, and Taylor, Mark. "The Geography of Children: Some Ethical and Methodological Considerations for Project and Dissertation Work." *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 33.3 (2001): 311-324
- Punch, Samantha. "I Felt They Were Ganging Up On Me': Interviewing Siblings at Home." *Doing Children's Geographies: Methodological Issues in Research with Young People*. Eds. Van Blerk, Lorraine, and Kesby, Mike. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Silvestre, Anthony J. "Brokering: a Process for Establishing Long-term and Stable Links with Gay Male Communities for Research and Public Health Education." *AIDS Education and Prevention* 6 (1994): 65-73
- Valentine, Gill, Butler, Ruth, and Skelton, Tracey. "The Ethical and Methodological Complexities of Doing Research and 'Vulnerable' Young People." *Ethics, Policy & Environment* 4.2 (2001): 119-125
- Valentine, Gill. "Being Seen and Heard? The Ethical Complexities of Working with Children and Young People at Home and at School." *Philosophy & Geography* 2.2 (1999): 141-155

