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More-than-human politics in the new arctic landscape of youth : Atmospheric shifts at the shopping mall

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Introduction

In the darkness of the arctic winter, an oasis of neon light radiates warmth and comfort to its surroundings (Figure 1). It sends an invite into the air, calling you to forget the weather-world, the dozen synonyms for sleet, the flashes of windflaws, and the many months of frost. It presents a new, pleasant landscape for you to immerse yourself in. In this chapter, we will journey through this landscape, which has become axial in the everyday geographies of contemporary arctic youth.



Figure 1. Arctic weather pushes people to the shopping mall in Helsinki. Photograph by a participant, 15 years¹.

In the arctic, the success of the mall has to do with the harsh weather conditions, but another important factor supporting its triumph is the ideology of security in present-day Western societies. Many parents view the shopping mall as a safe, and therefore desirable, place for their kids to spend time

in. The dream of a zero-risk life heavily frames the lives of this ‘bubble-wrap generation’ (Malone 2007). Excessive attention to safety places young people in a peculiar position of being considered as possible victims, but at the same time, a potential threat to others when gathering in public: they are viewed as either ‘angels’ or ‘devils’ in need of control (Valentine 2004). Today, the ideology of security is used to back up thinking in diverse fields from immigration to education. Fear makes us seek the familiar, predictable and pleasant, and hence supports the projectification and commercialization of our world(s). It makes even childhood a closely monitored project of ‘human futures’ (see Lee & Motzkau 2011). Young people’s lives there and then are erased. At the same time, never-ending experience production creates a spectacle, in which life is in many ways reduced to representations (see Thrift 2011). The avant-garde Situationist, Guy Debord (1967/2004) predicted a society like this, and noted that ‘The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images.’ The illusion has materialized into a reality that seems to be a self-feeding cycle. The shopping mall is a safe and secure simulation of a city center. The mall mimics street life with numerous shops and cafes lining busy pedestrian ‘boulevards’, yet smoothens the experience by filtering, selecting, and safeguarding. There are neither dark corners nor shadows; it is all bright lights, reflections and transparency. The shopping mall mirrors the customers, it mirrors their wishes, it asks them to play with their own image, try on new selves, to shop a new ‘me’.

In this chapter, we probe the possibilities for politics in this context: within the powerfully designed and governed landscape of the mall. We use the term ‘landscape’ to refer to the materialities and sensibilities with which we view the world, and therefore a landscape becomes something more than merely an inert canvas to human action (Wylie 2006). Moving away from the idea of landscape as a background, it here refers to more than an ‘area’ where things take place. A landscape is the given spacetime, always in the process of transforming: it is a passage. This means that the actualization of politics at the shopping mall is dependent on multiple participants, human and non-human, present and absent (Pyry & Tani 2017). A more-than-human take on the issue gestates a relational political (human) subject. This subject becomes active in relation to the landscape with which it is continually becoming. This approach makes it possible to analyze encounters at the mall without characterizing young people through binaries of angel/devil, victim/rebel, consumer/activist etc. The new arctic landscape is then approached in its complexity.

We approach politics at the mall by looking into young people’s practices of hanging out (e.g. Pyry 2016a, 2016b; Matthews et al. 2000; Pyry & Tani 2017; Tani 2015). Our understandings are informed by fieldwork conducted in Helsinki with young people for prior research (Pyry 2015)¹. In most cases, young people in the arctic still have more freedom for independent mobility than youth in many other parts of the Western world (see Gill 2008). Yet, also here, a decrease in young people’s unscheduled and unsupervised free time can be detected. Meanwhile, functional urban planning is directing young people to spend even the limited leisure time in spaces specifically appointed for youth. Under these circumstances, it is important to pay attention to what happens when young people get to ‘just be’ in public. The unorganized relaxation of hanging out is a much-needed break for many teens in their highly scheduled everyday lives. While hanging out may appear as seemingly pointless and idle (in-)activity, spending time with friends free from continuous adult supervision gives young people an important opportunity to experiment with the world on their own terms – even when this happens in the controlled landscape of a shopping mall. Although the mall is monitored in many ways, it also allows for more maneuvering with the technologies of surveillance than many of the other everyday spaces of youth (schools, youth clubs, playgrounds, gyms). When hanging out, young people are generally open to encounters with new people and spaces: they are receptive to what is going on. This openness entails power to question ready-made positions and rules, and in the process,

imagine new ones (Pyry 2016b). Because of the non-instrumental character of hanging out, young people tap into the possibilities for play with their surroundings. They enter a ‘mode of being’ that works against the project-oriented life, and the instrumental character of the adult world, as we will portray in this chapter.

To probe the materialization of political events at the mall, we think with the theorization connected to our two key concepts: *dwelling with* (Ingold 2000) and *affective atmospheres* (Anderson 2009). By dwelling with, we refer to young people’s engagements with the landscape of the mall: the ways in which they play with the space that matters to them, becoming something different in this joint-participation (Pyry 2016b; see also Massumi 2011). This understanding relies on the idea of a relational human subject, one that has no clear boundaries or coherence (see Grosz 2005). Human intentionality is viewed as merely one form of power, and the capacities of any kind of body emerge from entanglements of different elements and energies *rhizomatically* (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1987). The subject, as well as ‘its actions’, emerge in *encounters* – that is, in surprising events of relation (Wilson 2016). Linked to this, affective atmospheres ‘emanate from but exceed the assembling of bodies’ (Anderson 2009, 77). They are turbulent circulations of affect that take place in-between, around, and alongside the constitution of human subjectivity. Affective atmospheres can be felt, their force envelops the subject, but their ambiguity makes it hard to capture them with words. In fact, affective atmospheres are as ambiguous as the experience of everyday life usually is. One way to approach this opaque phenomenon is to attend to the *rhythms* of the mall. The designed landscape of a shopping mall has its own rhythmic meteorological conditions that work on those who dwell with it. When entering the mall, one easily gets sucked into these flows. Yet, although part of the landscape, not everyone goes with its flow the same way. The movement is multidirectional: by dwelling with the mall, young people also work its rhythms and atmosphere. Something new emerges in the encounters of different elements. This is our starting point for probing the possibility of politics beyond representation in this landscape.

We will start our story by entering the shopping mall, which has become an influential new city center – not only in the arctic, but around the globe. From there, we will go on discussing the purification of urban public space, and the role of the shopping mall in this alarming development. We will then further probe the dominant rhythms and atmospheres at the mall, and the potential that hanging out holds for interfering with them. To explore the possibilities of politics in this designed space, we will discuss young people’s ways of engaging with what matters to them at the mall, i.e. their creative practices of dwelling with. We will then argue that events do not need to be serious, coordinated, or intentional to count as politics. Rather, reworking of a landscape stems from surprising encounters of different bodies. These events of transformation become political under certain circumstances: what is political here and now, might not be political there and then. Although difficult to detect, this more-than-human politics can be felt through changes in the rhythm and atmosphere of the new arctic landscape of youth.

Mall: the new arctic city center

The last three decades have witnessed a significant change in the Finnish retail landscape: commerce has concentrated in growing units with growing distances from the city center, to the detriment of in-town storefronts, department stores and local strip centers (where the retail outlets mostly face an open outdoor space). Retail parks and hypermarket centers surrounded by vast parking lots in the

outskirts of the city have come to epitomize this trend that mirrors, inter alia, customers' preference to park easy, buy in bulk and shop everything under one roof, without the disturbances of the weather. Keeping warm and dry is, namely, a privilege in the arctic context where winterly temperatures are the predominating ones, and where the summer season is not only short; weather-wise it is moody, too.

Shopping malls form an integral part of these arctic landscapes, yet they differ from the above-mentioned mega volume retail archetypes in two important senses: first, they are usually better connected to the public transportation network – it is not uncommon to find them in junctions where metro, bus and/or tram lines meet. This said, it is necessary to emphasize that despite their relative centrality, shopping malls do not tend to be seamlessly integrated to their surroundings, but are better described as isles within the city. Their layout makes them turn inside. They are somewhat detached from other everyday realities; they are worlds of their own, city centers in their own right. Second, they tend to have generous amounts of non-retail space that has both the density and openness of a 'traditional' public space. There are arcades, plazas, open vistas, multitudes of people, movement, in short, a setting for convivial street sociability. These – and other factors we will discuss in the following – make them appealing meeting and hang out places for young people and, therefore, the focus of our study.

However, it is not only the youngsters who have taken these commercial landscapes as theirs. A few figures give an idea of the speed and scope of the changes. Since the first two shopping malls, Helsinki's East Center Mall (Itäkeskus) and Turku's Hansa, were inaugurated in 1984, their number has grown to 99 in 2016, with an accumulated 2,08 million square meters of leasable retail area, 385 million annual visits and over 6-billion-euro-sales (see *Finnish Shopping Centers 2017*). For a population of 5,5 million these are considerable numbers. There is no end to be seen: the shopping mall sector has steadily increased its market share and performs well, even during years of stagnating purchase power and zero-growth retail market.

Indeed, shopping malls have marked a profound change in urban consumption cultures, centralities and imaginaries, and these changes are bound to be permanent. Each new shopping mall is an enormous, long-term investment that shuffles local economic and social geographies, a landmark, a hub. Malls have changed people's ideas of what shopping should be like, ideally: a pleasurable experience in itself. It should be easy, effortless, entertaining, a satisfaction for the senses. Moreover, this is, effectively, what these landscapes are made for: to increase the positive and decrease the negative emotions during a visit. The goal is to provide more non-retail uses by increasing leisure, mold the mall atmospherics to affect consumer desires and behaviors. Visitors should derive value from the shopping mall experience *per se*, i.e., the emphasis lies on the hedonic value of the visit, not on the utilitarian worth based on fulfilling 'needs'. And, of course, many of the needs have been manufactured by the same self-feeding spectacle.

The affective atmospheres created and maintained within these landscapes may also fundamentally change people's ideas on how a city should be, ideally – how it should look and feel: clean, safe, predictable, and always pleasant. The result is an interesting city-suburbia hybrid. These preferences go hand in hand with the tendency towards privatized, commercialized public spaces and the security-driven urban regimes and development agendas in Western city centers, which, in turn, have a detrimental effect on democracy. We will turn to these questions in the next section. Of particular

interest for us here is the fact that today's youngsters have grown up in and with these commercial landscapes, they have internalized them, naturalized them. What others might consider a rupture, a schism, or at least a change, is for them the ordinary, the commonplace, and familiar. For many young people, everyday arctic environments are illuminated by electrifying human design, rather than *aurora borealis*.

Purified public space

The notion of urban public space as the forum for people to meet up, exchange ideas – and do politics – lies at the heart of the history of democracy. Generally, public spaces are understood to include not only traditional squares, but also streets, parks and other green areas, as well as public buildings. In this way, 'public' is viewed to contrast that which is 'private'. The concept of 'public' can cause confusion in the context of urban spaces, taken that it is generally used to describe spaces that are, e.g. state related, accessible to everyone, of concern to everyone, and pertaining to a common good or shared interest (Fraser 1991). Each of these definitions corresponds to a different sense of 'private'. What is it then that makes a space public? Is it its accessibility, diversity and proximity, the components of a functioning public space, as Sharon Zukin (1995) defines them? Does ownership determine publicness, or is it rather the function that defines a space? Who is 'the public' these spaces are designed for?

A walk around almost any city gives cues on answers to the last proposed question: skateboard blockers, curved benches, surveillance cameras, and numerous prohibition signs from 'no loitering' to 'no skating' all speak of the *power-geometries* of everyday life (see Massey 2004). These are the sometimes visible, but most importantly *felt* boundaries in the city. Henri Lefebvre (1968/1996) has noted that, despite its often-good intentions, utilitarian urban planning that leads to overtly segmented and functional cities is a threat to democracy (see also Bickford 2000; Harvey 2003, 2006; Iveson 2013; Low & Smith 2006; Marcuse 2009; Mitchell 1997, 2003; Staeheli & Mitchell 2008). When young people, or any other groups for that matter, are kept in 'acceptable islands' appointed for their use, they are geographically outlawed by society (Aitken 2001). These spaces include playgrounds, skateparks, youth clubs, and supportive outdoor spaces for the elderly. When people spend their days at spaces designated to a single function, they can effectively use their time, but something gets lost in the process. This something is *urban play*, which includes encounters with strangers and the unfamiliar (Stevens 2007). This escape from the seriousness of everyday life consists of creative acts by which people shuffle the urban order. Through urban play *tight spaces* of single function can become *loose*, i.e. open to multiple use (Franck & Stevens 2007). It is the improvisation and imaginative nature of play that stretches the city toward more diversity. Loose spaces are welcoming to many, and they allow for unplanned encounters.

In this chapter, we want to keep in mind the disputable nature of urban public space, as well as the alarming privatization of our cities, but as noted, will treat the shopping mall as the new city center that it functionally is: a public space (see also Thomas 2005; Vanderbeck & Johnson 2000). However, in the case of the mall, exclusion of the unwanted is a fundamental factor in its success (see Sorkin 1992; Staeheli & Mitchell 2006). In this pleasant but tight landscape, there is very little space for dirt, chaos or friction. Certain groups of people are 'planned out' in the name of security (see Skelton & Gough 2013). This process of selecting the 'public' has been called *the purification of space* (Sibley 1988 cit. Mahtani 2011). Due to this process, the terms 'customer' and 'client' are replacing 'citizen'

in health care, education, living and employment (Harris 2004, 164). If a homeless person seeks comfort at the mall, most people will not notice him/her before the person is quietly back on the street. If young people are being too loud, or just too visible, a security guard will quickly show them the door (Pyyry 2016a; 2016b). More subtle ways of uninviting young people are also used, e.g. the *Mosquito* device produces a high-pitched sound only audible to young ears and makes staying in the space uncomfortable (see Walsh 2008). But whether the eviction happens in the form of direct prohibition, an unwelcoming glance or the playing of classical music, much of the politics takes place through the *affectual*: it is felt (see Thrift 2004). So, when we approach the shopping mall as a functional(ly) public space, we want to pay special attention to the affectual intensities that set up encounters in this landscape, and which need to be somehow settled in these encounters. For that reason, we will now turn to discuss the affective atmospheres taking shape within the landscape of the shopping mall. We will then discuss encounters and improvisations that make dwelling with possible, and carve space for more-than-human politics at the mall.

Weather worlds at the mall: rhythms and atmospheres of hanging out

Amin and Thrift (2002) sketch cities as *moments of encounter*. By this, they point out that cities are continuously evolving, unfolding before our eyes. Cities provide endless possibilities for directions, turns, and surprises. Public spaces are at the core of this eternal movement: this is where people encounter difference (particularly of their own species, but also beyond), and can themselves become somehow otherwise with the landscape. However, as noted earlier, fear leads to restrictions in experimentation with the world. Fear pushes us to turn to the predictable. Fear supports a segmented city of obedience. This is the current trend under the ideology of security: the creation of spaces with an atmosphere of a ‘zero risk society’ and agreeable conformity. Here, the shopping mall is a perfect solution to a created need. But, what kinds of possibilities do these spaces provide for life? What kinds of encounters and how much movement (i.e. change) do they allow?

To be able to think of these questions, we pay attention to two connected dimensions of life in this designed space: *rhythm* and *affective atmospheres*. From heartbeat to footsteps, our daily lives are constructed through various rhythms. These often pass unnoticed, yet strongly affect how everyday life is experienced. We move with the rhythms of the landscape, or more precisely, we continually become with those rhythms. They set us up to a certain mode of being-in-the-world. It could be argued that we *are* rhythms. When entering the shopping mall, one quickly settles into the rhythm(s) of the space. Music does a lot, but it is not the only or even the most important element in the creation of an affective *atmosphere of consumption* that seems to envelop the subject there. Without notice, your body becomes a site of biopolitical techniques: it is intervened by spatial regimes of not only sound, but light, scent, color and imagination (see Miller 2014). This atmosphere tells you to forget time. It encourages you to go on ‘autopilot’, not to mind or count your steps. It aims to make your movement through and in it as effortless as possible, your stay as pleasurable and long as possible. The ground under your feet is sleek, uniform, clean, and allows your senses to focus on other things. An escalator offers a stand-by ride to another floor you decide to have a look at – and yet another floor, and yet another – for the mere sake of easiness. The steady slow stream of people takes part in giving form to this landscape. Often what ‘takes over’ is something vague, difficult to put in words, yet palpable. At the shopping mall, we can feel it, the rhythms make up a landscape clearly different from the outside world. It is a landscape of controlled surprise, pleasant and cozy atmosphere, a ‘non-place space’ that somehow seems to suppress time (Augé 1992/2008).

Even though very much connected to the surrounding world by culture, ideology and much more, the shopping mall feels like an isolated and insulated, weather-void leisurely landscape to meander through, to escape in. It tells you to free your hands from the pockets, unzip the jacket, stuff the beanie deep in a bag and lift your eyes to browse the surroundings. Its air is tamed, still, conditioned to fade out seasons and the day's weather (also Healy 2014). The shopping mall has its own weather world: it makes you desire what it offers, it influences who you are. A young person hanging out at the mall does not just 'decide' to shop for something new, the landscape encourages him/her to do so, the things at the store window speak loudly, suggesting pleasure and an improved 'you'. In this atmosphere, it is more acceptable to say that you are 'shopping' than to just be hanging out (Pyyry 2015). This is true even though young people are more and more often welcomed to shopping malls, and hanging out has now been written into the script of the mall's function. In Helsinki, the Kamppi shopping mall works closely with the nearby Walker's youth center to find ways of integrating youth work to the mall's operation.

As a commonplace space for today's teenagers, the shopping mall with its designed atmosphere of consumption obviously shapes the subjectivities of the generation. Nevertheless, the picture is messier than that, since hanging out is part of the landscape. Although it may seem that the dominant rhythm(s) and the taken-for-granted code of conduct of a shopping mall, just as the one of a factory, totalizes its elements, there is always more going on. Deleuze & Guattari (1980/1987) use the concept of *refrain* (orig. *la ritournelle*) to theorize the assembling of a landscape. The refrain is not a single, separate entity with clear boundaries. Rather, something has come together as an expressive system: a landscape that seems to move with its specific rhythm. This system is never stable, although it may appear as if it was repeating the same designed pattern. The world does not move in flawless circles. Jane Bennett (2010) talks about 'spiral repetition' when she refers to the possibility of change that a repetitive rhythm and movement always holds. Every dominant rhythm, then, entails potential of alternative expression. Rhythm is a quality of the difference produced by periodic repetition. This reiteration creates the passage from landscape to landscape, but at the same time also creates those landscapes (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1987, 346). Difference inserts itself into the 'melody', and something else emerges.

Therefore, although hanging out may seemingly go along with the rhythms of the mall, be repetitive, and even boring, the replay of movement itself holds potential for change. As noted, improvisation is an elemental part of repetition: rhythm is change. Repetition is also key to creating new worlds through re-cognition. This does not need to mean 'rational' or verbal reflection about the world; rather, the event of re-cognition is a passing moment that attunes us to the world *differently*. This knowledge arises from being engaged with one's landscape, from being moved by something. It is felt as small alterations in how things stand. Hanging out with friends is an affectually intense event. Moreover, while hanging out at the mall, young people engage not only with their friends, but also with things and spaces that matter to them. Sitting at the same sofas or hanging out at the usual corner, 'actively doing nothing', carves space for re-cognizing the familiar (Pyyry 2016a). Without ready-made plans, it becomes possible to open to the unpredictable in the everyday, and engage with one's surroundings in creative and playful ways. It is important to note here that playfulness is not so much a detectable form of behavior, but receptivity to what is going on. This openness is due to the non-instrumental character of hanging out, and it supports engagement with the landscape. This engagement happens in the form of 1) intentional acts or 2) habitual involvement with the space. In both cases, young people momentarily break away from the project-oriented life, and in the process,

claim the landscape as *theirs* by making temporary ‘hangout homes’ at the mall (Pyyry 2016b). These momentary bursts of joy – or just aimlessness – invoke a different rhythm and atmosphere at the mall, if only for a moment. Hereby, hanging out makes space for re-imagining the future – which is generally presented to us as one option – it fosters sensitivity toward the spacetime of the not-yet.

As emphasized before, young people do not rework the world alone: different elements of the landscape call them to play, to engage with. Whether it is a lovely hand lotion inviting teenagers to play with it, a scent that calls for a giggle, or a sofa asking for a wrestle, non-human bodies take part in the passing moments of engagement that make up the urban play at the mall (see Pyyry 2016b). This is *intra-active play*, an event in which the boundaries of different bodies are fused – young people and the things they engage with are ‘in it’ together (see Rautio & Winston 2015). In these playful encounters, both the landscape and young people’s subjectivities are formed, again and again. Ergo, in hanging out, young people invent new worlds by dwelling with the one they have been thrown to. By disturbing the rhythms of appropriate movement and creating atmospheric turbulence, hanging out produces difference even when seemingly incorporated into the system of consumption.

With the concept of refrain, it is possible to think of the alter-rhythms and atmospheric changes at the mall. No landscape is ready, there are always twists and turns to be made. Hanging out allows for creativity when the circumstances call for it. Improvisation with the limits that the landscape positions young people with can produce questioning of established rules, and rework the commercial space. Creativity here is not just a form of human cleverness, but a joint-participation and refusal to settle with normalized patterns of being. This resistant playfulness that emerges from encounters with different bodies and materials at the mall may create momentary *micro-atmospheres of play* (Pyyry 2016b). It opens the door for a different weather. In these ephemeral alternative ‘shopping malls of friendship’ it is possible to be otherwise. More importantly, joy can work as an ontological energy that confronts the capitalist framing of life (see Braidotti 2013). As Bennett (2001, 4) wisely notes, joy is an ethical force: ‘you have to love life before you can care about anything’. Here lies the power of friendship and urban play.

More-than-human politics in the new arctic landscape

“Great movements, vast rhythms, immense waves – these all collide and ‘interfere’ with one another; lesser movements, on the other hand, interpenetrate. If we were to follow this model, we would say that any social locus could only be properly understood by taking two kinds of determinations into account: one the one hand, that locus would be mobilized, carried forward and sometimes smashed apart by major tendencies, those tendencies which ‘interfere’ with one another; on the other hand, it would be penetrated by, and shot through with, the weaker tendencies characteristic of networks and pathways.” (Lefebvre 1974/1991, 87)

As Lefebvre describes in the quote, a space, or a landscape, is produced in the encounters of movements, greater and lesser. Although he refers to the formation of ‘social’ space, his words link to the idea of landscape as an expressive system, a refrain: an entity that moves with a particular rhythm. Landscape is a repetitive theme, continuous and enduring, yet always open to new relations and expressions. This entity is never stable, rather it is punched and shot through by numerous

‘molecular’ acts (see Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1987). In contrast to the dominant wave(s), this is movement towards difference. The landscape of a shopping mall may feel like a closed system, and as we have pointed out, the commercial atmosphere seems to envelop you when entering its innards. But, not only is the shopping mall very much connected to the vast global movement of products, ideas, and capital – it is also continuously penetrated by minor disturbances. These can be felt in the atmosphere of the mall. In an event like this, a new rhythm joins the dominant one, new pathways open.

As noted before, we approach politics as something that arises in encounters: it is always a more-than-human event (see Pyyry & Tani 2017). An encounter here refers to a gathering of different materialities that have joined to form confederations when faced with a common problem. With the concept of encounter, we refer to these felt gatherings of bodies, spaces, and affects that make up the given ‘spacetime’ (see McCormack 2013). Encounter is always more than just two things meeting. When a shopping mall is understood as an event of encounter, it is viewed as a landscape that is always in the making. It is complex and continually changing, made of encounters of different kinds. Actions emerge *from* these encounters, and there are always multiple origins to any event. Our two issues of concern, rhythm and affective atmospheres, prompt thinking about politics in a way that does not prioritize the ‘subject’ over ‘space’ or the other way around. The shopping mall and its political life are approached as a relational matrix, a landscape that sets us to designed rhythm and desires. However, as with everything designed, cracks will appear to shift the planned movement.

In today’s Western societies, biopower functions heavily through affect, which Thrift (2004) calls the ‘push of life’. As described in the previous section, a change in the affective atmosphere of the mall can attune people to *be differently*, and create ontological energy that fights the heaviness of the neoliberal framing of life. When hanging out, young people often follow the lead of the landscape, yet simultaneously probe the processes of normalization at work (on ‘affect and biopower’, see Anderson 2012). They may be a little too loud, not consuming, eating their own snacks in a food court area, jumping over fences playing tag, or just ‘loitering’. They take part in intra-active play with things and spaces familiar to them. They are working with the ‘tightness’ of the space by sensing and improvising with it. In the commercial landscape, these negotiations are not always easy to detect – rather, they often take place through minor changes in the carefully designed atmospheres of the mall. Often, young people’s actions are cleverly incorporated into the designed system (e.g. by commercializing ‘girl power’ or graffiti art): they are de-politicized. They are then sold back to a larger audience as ‘lifestyle choices’, and as such, they end up supporting the capitalist system. Yet sometimes, young people’s creative practices disrupt the governing forces, and open space for being differently. Most often it is not an either/or case, but both, and more happen. Most often, these shifts pass unnoticed.

From a Foucauldian perspective, critique is a mindset of paying attention to the limits of everyday life (see Foucault 1969/2002). This resonates with the idea of playing with the ‘tightness’ of a space. In the landscape of a shopping mall, politics could then be understood as happening in the form of playful contestation of established rules of behavior or resistance to the ways of eviction. Aitken (2001, 2014) points out that in its radical imagination, risk-taking and resistance, play becomes political. A more-than-human perspective to the issue directs attention to the circumstances in which the play takes place. ‘Loitering’ only becomes loitering in the context of project-oriented life. Hanging out becomes resistance in the context of life as a personal journey of ‘development’. From this point of view, politics is always connected to the landscape in which actions emerge. And, these

actions always originate from multiple directions as a joint-participation of past, present, and future agents. Every political event is framed by the prevailing political structures that limit the potential of any radical act. Still, even though revolutions are rare, small ruptures are repeatedly felt in everyday life. When these ruptures shake the biopolitical control of a landscape, the space becomes gradually 'looser'.

Through both 1) intentional acts of transgression, and 2) habitual engagement with the landscape of the mall, young people enter intra-active play with their environment of hanging out. Often it is the repetitive nature of hanging out that opens space for difference. A security guard shows young people the door, they leave but enter again, they are thrown out another time, come back again from a different entrance that invites the hush-hush move (Pyry 2016a). It is an endless encore. This movement does not need to be intentional to count as politics: it becomes political in the given spacetime, within the neoliberal frame of productivity and progress. By affectually engaging with their hangout spaces, young people form an intense relationship with the landscape. They follow its suggestions and listen to its invites, but stay open to changes of direction. This noncompliance can often be sensed around them. The receptive way of being deepens young people's relationship with the landscape: they are dwelling with it. When the tight space of the shopping mall is encountered in the joyous mode of hanging out with friends, the seriousness of the adult world is being challenged. This is resistance to the dominant wave of the present that always constrains the potential of any event, but is not in full control of them. Revolutions or big political acts are easily recognized as important, but in hanging out the negotiations are much subtler – nonetheless, these creative shifts in rhythm and atmosphere shape both young people's subjectivities and the landscape with which they dwell. Just as much of everyday life, these shifts are often nonrepresentational, but deeply felt. By approaching politics at the shopping mall as something that actualizes in encounters, we conceptualize politics beyond representation. This politics precedes decision-making and reflection. Here, politics is approached beyond the subject-object divide: it is an affectual response to the prevailing circumstances that emerges from the joint-participation of diverse materialities (Pyry 2016b; Pyry & Tani 2017). This more-than-human conceptualization of politics takes into consideration the complexity of forces at work in any encounter. It emphasizes the geographical nature of nonrepresentational politics.

Conclusions

In spaces designed for consumption, a feeling of pleasant openness is created. The landscape of the shopping mall seems to say: 'Welcome everyone!' It is the new town center, a cozy meeting place for people. The global trend of spending time at these new city centers is strengthened by the arctic weather conditions, which push people to seek for a retreat in engineered climates. The mall has become especially important for young people, who feel the need for space free of adult gaze in the age of 'security talk'. Young people hanging out in groups, drifting from one scene to another, has become an elemental part of life at the shopping mall. However, instead of being the welcoming living room for all that it seems at first sight, the shopping mall functions through the logics of consumption. This often labels young people hanging out at the mall as 'less desirable' than adult dwellers, and they therefore need to continually negotiate their rights to the space. Even when young people are welcomed to the mall as appealing (future) clients, they need to justify their rights to the space by demonstrating their viability as consumers. In the new city center, then, citizenship is determined by purchasing power, and conforming to the dominant movement of the landscape.

So, even though young people are increasingly welcomed to the mall, their life is heavily influenced by the limits this landscape imposes on them. In Western societies, time for hanging out is scarce, since young people's lives are often scheduled around school and organized activities. In this atmosphere, hanging out emerges as a rare chance for spontaneity, and time to just be. When young people relax with their peers at the mall, they are generally open to new encounters with people and spaces: they are open to improvisation. In hanging out, one easily enters a different mode of being-in-the-world: a drifting, non-instrumental mode of playfulness. In hanging out, playfulness oftentimes emerges from encounters that have to do with repetition, engaging with the same spaces over and over again. There is no rush, no plan to go somewhere else. Moreover, hanging out with friends is a deeply moving event, which cultivates engagement with the landscape: it supports dwelling with. Although their styles and actions, and even the offbeat rhythm, are generally very much absorbed into the dominant system, we argue that the non-instrumental mode of being makes it possible to re-cognize the familiar. When hanging out, young people then *both* go along with the designed cues of the mall *and* rework the landscape.

As the shopping mall implicitly marks some ways of being as deviant, it can be characterized as a 'tight space'. Although pleasure and certain ways of play are even promoted, improvisations linked to hanging out are easily labeled as undesirable. Negotiation with the limits of the space can provoke questioning in the form of re-cognizing the familiar, and open up (political) space for being differently, i.e. make it 'looser'. The changes can be felt in the designed rhythms and atmospheres of the mall. It is important to note that the negotiations do not arise from human activity alone. Diverse bodies, human and non-human, call for involvement and playfulness: a fence suggests a jump, smooths surfaces invite sliding, liquidity asks for touch, and so on. Playfulness in hanging out emerges from encounters of absent and present agents, histories and memories, taken-for-granted notions of accepted ways of being. It is a messy confederation of humans-with-the-space – indeed, no clear division can be made between the human body and its continuation in the landscape, they are part of the same assemblage. In their entangled movement, play is a break, a shift, an opening for something new. It creates 'loose spaces' through atmospheric changes, even if just for a fleeting moment. But, when do these changes count as politics?

A more-than-human frame makes it possible to look at young people's practices at the mall beyond the binaries of victim/resistance or consumerist/activist, and without framing them as either angels or devils (in need of control). They can be both, and more. Just as young people's subjectivities, also their actions emerge in surprising encounters with multiple 'others'. Here, an encounter is not just a meeting of two parties: they are affective formations of diverse bodies that enable or disable movements. When politics is approached as an encounter, it is always linked to the landscape in which it forms. An act becomes political in relation to the circumstances within which it takes place: it is a joint effort of probing the limits of existence *there and then*. An act is then not political *per se*, but becomes politicized in a certain atmosphere, as hanging out does within the current ideological climate of project-oriented, consumerist life.

In this chapter, we have wanted to stress the importance of nonrepresentational and 'non-serious' politics. By thinking of fleeting changes in the rhythms and atmospheres at the mall, we have discussed the politicization of events of hanging out within the neoliberal landscape. When politics is understood to take place in encounters, value is given to small unorganized acts of resistance to the

prevailing present. Value is given to playfulness and engagement with urban space, also within the new arctic landscape of the shopping mall. Acknowledging the more-than-human politics that arises from young people's practices of dwelling with the commercial landscape is a step towards building playful, more diverse arctic cities. It is a step towards re-cognizing the spectacle within which we live, and questioning the grounds on which our relations with others are built. If the shopping mall presents itself as the new city center, it should then be treated as a public space – instead of the pleasant community it now is. And public spaces, by definition, are complex and diverse. Public spaces are chaotic, surprising, sometimes dirty and unappealing. We are not suggesting that the mall needs to be all this, but to keep with the fundamentals of accessible, democratic public spaces, the right to this new city center should cover all people.

Finally, given the importance of shopping malls in young people's everyday lives today, we encourage educators to somehow deal with this new arctic landscape at school. This could be done with learning projects in which young people would critically reflect on their everyday geographies with the help of artistic methods, such as photography, mental mappings or role plays. Building young people's geographical competence can inform their everyday practices and make them 'street wise' in this contemporary environment. Attending to their urban landscapes at school would tell young people that education both links to their lives, and that their interests and acts indeed matter.

Footnotes

¹The participants of the study in Helsinki were 15 to 16 years of age. The research was conducted with the help of a 9th grade geography teacher and partly in connection to school work. The idea was to link young people's everyday geographies of hanging out to their formal education and recognize their spatial-embodied knowledge of the city.

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