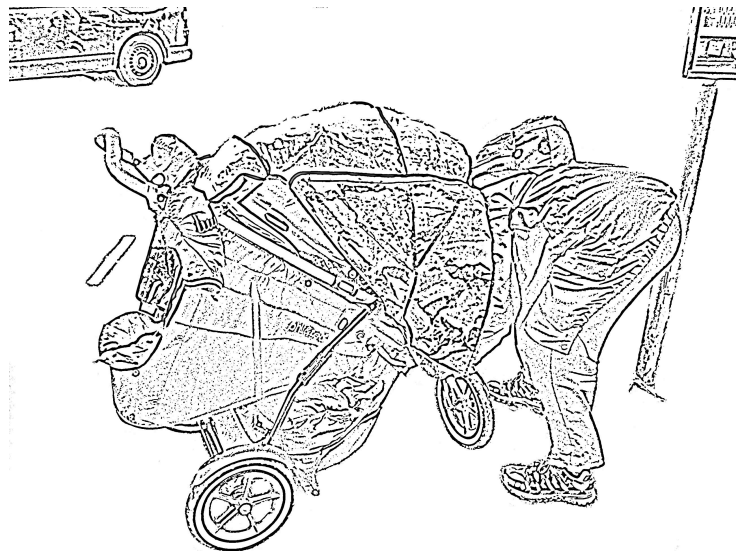# FROM COCOONING TO SKYPING

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF YOUNG CHILDREN'S EVERYDAY MOBILITIES IN AN ENGLISH TOWN

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Leeds

School of Education

By

Susana Rina Cortés-Morales

Supervisors:

Professor Pia Christensen

Professor Alan Prout

September 2015

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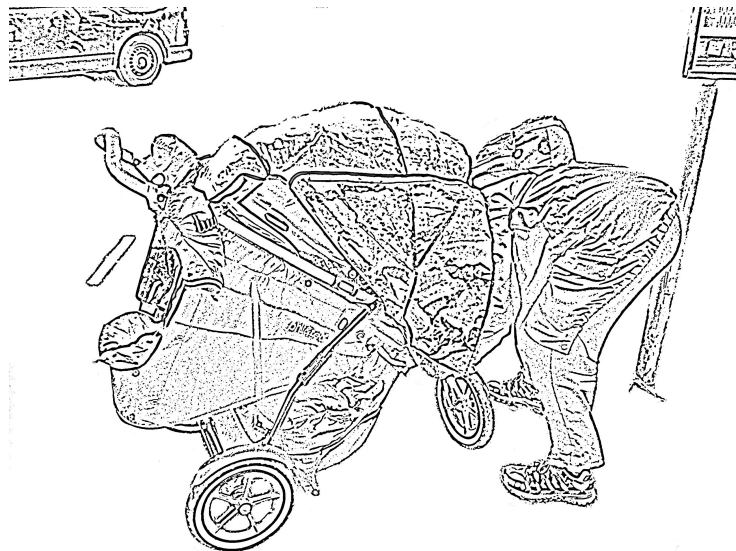By

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own, except where work which has formed part of jointly authored publications has been included. The contribution of the candidate and the other authors to this work has been explicitly indicated below. The candidate confirms that appropriate credit has been given within the thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.

Part 2 of Chapter 10 includes some data that has been previously discussed in Cortés-Morales and Christensen, 2014, in a similar approach to the one used here. this was a jointly authored publication in which the ideas were previously discussed by the two authors, so the whole of the paper is the product of this joint discussion. However, the candidate contributed directly to the theoretical discussion concerning ANT and technologies and its implications for the notion of children's agency and mobilities. The ethnographic account and analysis were also extracted from the candidate's PhD fieldwork data. The second author is responsible for the introductory section, and contributed to the editing and re-writing of the paper.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

'*From cocooning to Skyping: an ethnographic study of mobilities in young children's everyday lives in an English town*' posits the question of how the movements of people, objects, ideas, information and images through physical, virtual, communicative and imaginative means are practiced, experienced and represented by and in relation to young children, in a small English town that I will call Wishwell. This question involves identifying the manifold forms of mobilities that shaped young children's lives in this particular location: from babies bodily movements and everyday trips within town, to journeys to other countries, cards and parcels sent and received through the post, and videoconferencing on Skype. It also involves tracing the varied places, people and things to which children were connected through these mobilities, and the discourses and representation of childhood and mobility that gave meaning to young children's mobile experiences and practices. The research question acknowledges children as positioned in relation to phenomena beyond their immediate space of perception, but at the same time it highlights the necessity to empirically explore how these connections are made and experienced, rather than taking them for granted. Therefore, the '*from*' and '*to*' on this title do not denote a progressive and linear movement through life cycle stages. Instead, it highlights the diverse range of overlapping and interdependent means and scales of movement that I encountered.

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Abbreviations

ANT: Actor-network theory

CIM: Children's independent mobility

NRT: non-representational theory

WCC: Wishwell Children's Centre

Introduction

> "I write not as a trusted guide carefully laying out the links between theoretical categories and the real world, but as a point of impact, curiosity, and encounter" (Stewart, 2007: 5).

In the above quote Kathleen Stewart (2007) positions herself as researcher within the vast world of everydayness. The 'ordinary affects' that weave her accounts were encountered in manifold fields of her life – from the houses of her childhood to motorway stops where she randomly found herself in her adult life – rather than exclusively within predefined fields of research. Her researcher role is defined by her positioning as a "point of impact, curiosity, and encounter". In a similar way, the present study is the result of observations, questions and interests that emerged from various personal and academic contexts in my life. Making these points of departure explicit is necessary for positioning and understanding this research.

To begin with, my anthropological interest on young children's spatial experiences emerged from observations as ethnographer-mother, looking at my own son exploring the affordances of space. I was amazed by the contrast between the possibilities that the same space presented for him and for me. At the same time I became involved in a research project on everyday mobility and social exclusion in Santiago, Chile. Whilst this project directed my attention towards mobile experiences, I brought with me my impressions of how young children experienced space in particular ways. These perspectives merged resulting in a degree thesis on children's mobility and spatiality in Santiago, Chile. Although I was delighted to come across the literature on children's independent mobility, it did not seem to fulfil some of the aspects that I was observing: among the main conclusions that rise from that research, interdependency appeared as essential for understanding children and adults' mobile experiences. On the one hand, this referred to joint practices of physical mobility in which other people were fundamental. On the other hand, objects seemed to have a relevant position in children's experiences of moving across the city.

Searching for approaches to children's spatial and mobile experiences (which in Chile was not an already developed line of studies) that reflected what I was observing, I came across the new social studies of childhood, anthropology and geographies of children as developed in Europe. As a result, I made the connections that in the end allowed me to come to the UK to do a PhD. I was resolved to conduct my PhD research as an extension of the previous study in Chile. However, personal matters re-directed my approach. On the one side, the actual experience of moving from Chile to the UK with my husband and son made me reconsider the idea of carrying out fieldwork in Chile, as family logistics were too complicated and too much movement did not seem 'right' (according to our own parenting cultures) for a

young child. On the other side, observing how my son experienced this move opened up aspects of children's mobilities that I had not thought about before: the migratory experience of a four year old child was related to everyday people, objects and experiences in both the 'origin' and 'destiny' that connected both sides of the world. While still in Chile, the image of the Big Ben on a cartoon film became his referent of the place where he was going. When we arrived to London, the Big Ben became a local building in which he expected to find the film characters inside. Global and local, imagined and real, migratory and everyday mobility seemed tightly interrelated in his experience of 'migrating', which was as local and embodied as his everyday trips.

Commencing my PhD brought me into contact with approaches to childhood that already challenged the (recently known for me) new social studies of childhood, presenting theoretical resources for understanding children's agency as related to heterogeneous agents. From this perspective, the relevance of materiality and the notion of hybridity resonated with my previous observations. I also came across the mobilities perspective, whose idea of diverse forms of mobilities interrelated to each other made sense with what I was observing in my son's experiences of mobility. All of these aspects – from family logistics and experiences to theoretical frameworks encountered in books and discussions with my supervisors – came together in shaping the present study.

Based on the types of mobilities identified by Sheller and Urry (2006), '*From cocooning to Skyping: an ethnographic study of mobilities in young children's everyday lives in an English town*' posited the question of how the movements of people, objects, ideas, information and images through physical, virtual, communicative and imaginative means are practiced, experienced and represented *by* and *in relation to* young children in a small English town that I will call Wishwell. This question involved identifying the manifold forms of mobilities that shaped young children's lives in this particular location: from babies bodily movements and everyday trips within town, to journeys to other countries, cards and parcels sent and received through the post, and videoconferencing on Skype. It also involved tracing the varied places, people and things to which children were connected through these mobilities, and the discourses and representations of childhood and mobility that gave meaning to young children's mobile experiences and practices.

The research question acknowledges children as positioned in relation to phenomena beyond their immediate space of perception. At the same, time it highlights the necessity to empirically explore how these connections are made and experienced rather than taking them for granted. Therefore, the '*from*' and '*to*' on this title do not denote a progressive and linear movement through life cycle stages. Instead, it highlights the diverse range of overlapping and interdependent means and scales of movement that I encountered.

This thesis is structured in four parts. Part I, *'From children's mobility to mobilities in children's everyday lives'* constitutes a discussion of the approaches that have characterised the study of children's mobility so far and their theoretical underpinnings. It brings together diverse theoretical perspectives and concepts that assemble the theoretical framework within which the research is positioned. Part II, *'Cultures of communication, cultures of movement'* discusses the methodological implications of the theoretical framework assembled, and presents the particular ways in which this ethnography was conducted. In Part III, *'Wishwell and Wishwell Children's Centre: constellations of temporary coherence'*, the town in which this study was carried out is introduced from the various perspectives of secondary and historical sources of information, its inhabitants and the researcher. In doing so, an image of the town as made out of interconnections to other localities emerge. The town's children's centre from where this research departed is presented in similar terms, with an emphasis on the hybrid and dynamic character of its composition. This sets the scene for positioning and understandings the accounts of mobilities in young children's everyday lives that are presented in Part IV, *'From cocooning to Skyping: mobilities in young children's everyday lives in Wishwell'*. Here, the diverse places inhabited by young children through everyday mobilities are explored, as well as the aspects shaping their mobile practices and experiences and the discourses behind their representations. The chapters in this part resemble the types of mobilities identified by Sheller and Urry (2006), discussing their appropriateness for understanding young children's mobilities. The final chapter, 'From cocooning to Skyping and all things in between' presents a set of conclusions that touch on empirical, methodological and theoretical issues in terms of what the data emerging from this study suggests in relation to children's lives, childhood and mobilities.

PART I From children's mobility to mobilities in children's lives: a theoretical discussion towards the study of mobilities in young children's lives.

The present study is positioned within the fields of the social studies of childhood, children's geographies and, more precisely, within the study of children's mobility. However, it aims to make a twist in the way that children's lives, childhood and mobility/ies are usually understood and connected. This is reflected in the name of this part: from the study of children's mobility as a field of studies primarily centred on children's physical movement, the idea is to move towards an understanding of how diverse forms of mobilities shape children's lives, affecting children's positions in and relationships with the world they live in, and our understanding of what childhood is. In doing so, it is necessary to explore the ways in which children's mobility has been approached so far from diverse fields and angles. It is also necessary to discuss the theoretical underpinnings of these approaches. The theoretical and empirical strand I wish to develop throughout this study also requires bringing together resources from wider fields of studies such as the mobilities perspective; geographical discussions of notions such as space, place, global and local scales; and sociological discussions on circulation and hybridity in social interactions.

Part I consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 will refer to the origins of the study of children's mobility as an issue of concern among health and traffic studies. In this context, I will discuss the emergence of the notion of children's independent mobility (CIM) that has dominated the approach to children's mobile experiences across diverse fields of enquiry; its theoretical underpinnings, specifically a dualistic understanding of childhood that has characterised the new social studies of childhood in general (Prout, 2005) and the approach to children's mobility in particular (Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009); and the approaches that have critically addressed the notion of children's independent mobility. I will discuss the theoretical perspectives that underpin these critical views and how they impact the understanding of children's mobility, addressing its complexities but also how such studies have left unexplored some of its aspects and particularly how young children's mobilities have remained absent from these studies. In Chapter 2 I will unfold and bring together manifold theoretical resources that in my view contribute to a more holistic understanding of mobilities in young children's everyday lives. Here, I will focus on relational notions of space, place and geographical scale; actor-network theory (ANT), non-representational theories (NRT) and their impact, on the one hand, on childhood studies and, on the other, on the mobilities perspective. In chapter 3 the diverse perspectives discussed will be brought together delineating the theoretical framework for the study of mobilities in young children's everyday lives.

Chapter 1: The study of children's mobility

This chapter is divided in three sections. The first section introduces the study of children's mobility from the perspective of traffic and health studies, discussing how a focus on children's independent mobile practices became predominant. Section two refers to the study of children's mobility from the perspective of the social studies of childhood and children's geographies, presenting the manifold aspects that these approaches have highlighted, but also identifying some empirical and theoretical gaps. Section three discusses the critical approaches to CIM and the theoretical shifts that have allowed re-thinking the notions of children's agency and mobility as relational. I argue, however, that these approaches still focus exclusively on children's physical mobility and on school-aged children.

1. Children's independent mobility

The study of children's mobility became an issue of academic and public concern in Britain in the nineties, with the study carried out by Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg (1990) as a cornerstone. In this study the mobility practices of cohorts of school aged children at the beginning of the seventies and at the end of the eighties were compared. A questionnaire survey applied to parents and children at the beginning of the seventies in England was replicated at the end of the eighties in England and Germany. The focus was on different 'parental licenses' that the researchers identified as a progressive movement from dependent to independent mobility. These licenses were: to cross roads alone, to walk to places other than school, to travel home from school independently, to use buses, to go out after dark, and to cycle alone after dark. Hillman et al. (1990) reported an alarming decrease in children's independent mobility (CIM), understood as children's freedom to move around their neighbourhoods and cities without the company or supervision of adults (Shaw et al., 2013; Tranter & Whitelegg, 1994). An increase of the ages at which children were granted these progressive parental licenses was also reported. This was particularly dramatic in the case of England when compared to children's mobility twenty years ago, and compared to Germany at the time of the study. Both the decrease in children's independent mobility and an increase in the age at which licenses were granted were more dramatic among girls than boys, and among the younger children considered in the study.

The authors argued that increasing parental control and involvement in children's mobility was the reason why child traffic casualties had decreased in the United Kingdom during the last decades - and not the government's policies on traffic safety, as it had been claimed. At the same time, this decrease on children's independent mobility was developing in tandem with an increase in car use and the constitution of the 'school run' as a parental responsibility (Hillman, 2006). Children's increasing lack of independent mobility was considered to be detrimental for their general health and wellbeing. Particularly concerning

was the association between a decrease in children's independent mobility and physical illnesses associated with sedentary life-styles and lack of exercise, such as obesity, and socio-emotional issues related to a lack of opportunities for developing social skills and spatial orientation (Cordovil, Lopes, & Neto, 2014; Fyhri & Hjorthol, 2009; Mackett, 2013; Schoeppe, Duncan, Badland, Oliver, & Browne, 2014; Sherwin et al., 2012).

Hillman et al. (1990)'s research influenced the conduct of other studies replicating the original questionnaire survey or based on very similar methods and criteria in other cities, countries and times (Badland, Oliver, Duncan, & Schantz, 2011; Cordovil, Lopes, & Neto, 2014; Fyhri, Hjorthol, Mackett, Nordgaard Fotel, & Kytt|a, 2011; Mackett, Brown, Gong, Kitazawa, & Paskins, 2007; O´Brien, Jones, Sloan, & Rustin, 2000, among others). Many have further explored the correlation between CIM, physical activity and health, highlighting the importance of CIM for physical, cognitive and social development (Cordovil et al., 2014; Freeman & Quigg, 2009; Fyhri & Hjorthol, 2009; Fyhri, Hjorthol, Mackett, Nordgaard Fotel, & Kytt|a, 2011; Mackett, 2013; Schoeppe et al., 2014; Schoeppe, Duncan, Badland, Oliver, & Curtis, 2013). Regarding the correlation between CIM, physical activity and health, the vast array of studies focusing on these aspects generally agree that there is a positive association between CIM and physical activity, suggesting that "children who travel actively without adult supervision accumulate more physical activity than those who do not" (Schoeppe et al., 2013: 312). Here, children's independent mobility is understood as tantamount to 'active travel', therefore implying physical activity (Schoeppe, Duncan, Badland, Oliver, & Curtis, 2013; Sharpe & Tranter, 2010) and social interaction (Milne, 2009), while travelling with parents is conflated with passive car travel (Sharpe & Tranter, 2010), with no physical and social activity involved. However, as Schoeppe et al. (2013) conclude in their extensive review on this body of literature, it remains unclear whether children who travel without adult company are less sedentary or less overweight than others (Schoeppe et al., 2013: 317).

Among this strand of approaches to children's mobility quantitative methodologies have predominated, drawing upon theoretical underpinnings from environmental psychology, child public health and transportation policy (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009; Horton, Christensen, Kraftl, & Hadfield-Hill, 2013). However, the study of children's mobility also became a subject of attention within children's geographies. From this field, variously influenced by environmental psychology and the new social studies of childhood (Barker, Kraftl, Horton, & Tucker, 2009; Holloway, 2014; Holloway & Valentine, 2000, 2005), children's mobility was approached emphasising children's spatial and mobile experiences (Sarah Holloway & Gill Valentine, 2000a; Horton et al., 2013), resulting in a diversification of methods, with a trend towards mixed methods research (Christensen et al 2011). Also diverse have been the theoretical underpinnings and the aspects of children's mobility taken into account (Barker et al., 2009). In what follows, I will discuss in more detail how the new social studies of childhood relate to the study of children's mobility.

2. Children's mobility and the new social studies of childhood

The new social studies of childhood developed an understanding of children as agents capable of impacting the societies they live in, and of childhood and children's lives beyond universalist notions of development (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998). This perspective encouraged the understanding of children's lives in relation to social, cultural, historical and economic particular contexts, where categories such as age, gender, class, ethnicity and diverse forms of disability constituted diverse experiences of childhood (Barker et al., 2009; James et al., 1998). As addressed by Barker et al. (2009), these tenets were further developed by children's geographies that explored place in relation to children's and young people's diverse experiences of childhood and as co-constitutive of identities, giving further empirical material for the theorization of childhood in these terms.

The new social studies of childhood provided children's geographies with a theoretical background for interpreting, for example, the exclusion of children from public space or adult control over children's mobility in terms of adults-children power relations (Barker et al., 2009). The consideration of manifold social categories in relation to the patterns of children's in/dependent mobility revealed relevant associations between, for instance, age and mobility and gender and mobility. In the European context, for example, children under the age of 11 (which coincides in the United Kingdom with the transition from primary to secondary education), girls of different ages and children from higher socioeconomic classes have been identified as the most constrained groups in terms of space range and parental licenses for mobility (Brown, Mackett, Gong, Kitazawa, & Paskins, 2008; Matthews, 2003; Matthews, Limb, & Taylor, 2000; Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009; O´Brien et al., 2000). These studies have described the patterns of children's in/dependent mobility, assessing the spatial range and forms of movement in relation to variables such as age, gender and location (B. Brown, Mackett, Gong, Kitazawa, & Paskins, 2008; O´Brien, Jones, Sloan, & Rustin, 2000). Others have highlighted the consequences of children being transported by car for family life (Barker, 2009; Mattson, 2002; McQuaid & Chen, 2012) and for the environment (Freeman & Quigg, 2009; McLaren & Parusel, 2012; Sharpe & Tranter, 2010).

The body of work developed in this strand has generated detailed insights into children's experiences of mobility in different contexts: urban, suburban, rural and in varied countries such as United Kingdom (Mackett et al., 2007) and Germany (Shaw et al., 2013), Denmark (Christensen, Mikkelsen, Sick Nielsen, & Harder, 2011; Christensen, 2003; Fotel & Thomsen 2004; Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009), Finland and Norway (Fyhri & Hjorthol, 2009; Fyhri et al., 2011), Australia (Malone & Rudner, 2011), Italy (Tonucci, Prisco, & Tonelli), Spain (Prieto de Blas, 2008), Portugal (Cordovil et al., 2014), Japan (Drianda & Kinoshita, 2011; Malone & Rudner, 2011), Bolivia (Punch, 2000), Chile (Cortés-Morales, 2015), South Africa (Malone & Rudner, 2011; Porter et al., 2010), among others. In general, they have echoed Hillman et al. (1990)'s concern about children's lack of independent mobility, but also about a more generalised

exclusion from, or controlled use of public spaces. The situation has been conceptualised as the 'insularization' of children's lives: children's lives are said to develop within 'islands' of childhood in institutionalised and adult-controlled places for children, so that they are only visible in the cities as they move from one island of childhood to another (Zeiher, 2002). Behind this trend towards the institutionalisation and *insularization* of children's lives, and the decrease in their independent mobility, are overlapping social and historical processes affecting childhood in particular ways in different parts of the world. Among the central aspects that can be identified across diverse contexts, there are issues of fear and risk related to traffic, particularly auto-mobility, and 'stranger-danger', mainly as a consequence of the reporting of an increase of cases of abduction, paedophilia and bullying in the media (Hillman et al., 1990; McLaren & Parusel, 2012; Murray, 2009; Pain, 2006; Pooley, Turnbull, & Adams, 2005).

The *insularization* of children's lives constitutes a reality opposed to the ideal of the shared city in which children and adults live in 'the same world', as expressed by Colin Ward in *The Child in the City* (1979). However, studies that have closely engaged with children's everyday movements have also shown how children appropriate the spaces they have access to through their everyday mobility, generating place-making processes and re-arranging or negotiating time according to their own interests, many times in tension or conflict with adults' priorities, interests and rhythms (Christensen, James, & Jenks, 2000; Christensen & Mikkelsen, 2011; Horton et al. 2013; Katz, 2004; Punch, 2000).

As discussed so far, children's mobility has been approached from different theoretical perspectives. However, an emphasis on children's independent mobility has dominated the discussions in relation to the diverse addressed themes: from associations with health to patterns of mobility according to gender, the main thread has been the presence or absence of adults, or the ways in which they control the everyday travels performed by children, particularly between home and school (see for example Kullman & Palludan, 2011; McDonald, 2008; Prieto de Blas, 2008; Ross, 2007; Schoeppe et al., 2013; Sharpe & Tranter, 2010).

Lesley Murray summarises some of the possible reasons why the school journey has been the main focus of attention. She defines the journey to school as:

> "(…) an in-between space outside the familial constraints of the home and the institutional constraints of school. As well as providing an opportunity for physical exercise than can contribute to a healthier lifestyle for children (…) and enhancing the skills necessary to negotiate public space (…) it is also a space where children can develop socially and emotionally" (Murray, 2009: 475).

In addition to this, it is a fact that in the context of the industrialised world, what most children are expected to do is to go to school, in the same way that most adults under the age of retirement are expected to have a job, which leaves "few choices regarding where and when we travel and, in some cases, even how we travel" (Pooley et al., 2005: 139). There are, however, other destinations apart from work and school: "These range from essential travel like shopping for food that can be scheduled to fit with other activities, through travel that may be seen as a combination of duty and pleasure (for instance to visit relatives), to trips that are undertaken purely for pleasure, such as visits to a cinema or just going for a walk or ride" (Pooley et al., 2005: 139). These destinations have been generally overlooked by mobility studies, particularly by research focused on CIM. This is problematic because, on the one hand, it reduces children's mobile experiences to their journeys to and from home and school, with the implication of studying children's mobility only in relation to school-aged children. On the other hand, the same trend has been reproduced by measures or policies aimed at making children's independent mobility more likely, most of which focus on making the journey to school safer, without consideration of children's need to move to places other than school and home (Hillman et al., 1990). This issues, among other critical aspects related to the study of CIM, will be further discussed in the next section.

3. The critique of CIM

3.1 Companionship: beyond in/dependent mobility

Beginning with Mikkelsen and Christensen's influential question: 'is children's independent mobility really independent?' (2009), a wave of studies have followed and further developed a critical approach to the notion of children's in/dependent mobility. Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009) argued that most of the studies on CIM "uncritically accepted the notion of independent mobility without addressing its theoretical and conceptual underpinnings" (Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009: 39). In this regard, Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009) argue that studies focused on CIM to the date had tended to assume a developmental and universalist approach, while assuming independent mobility's positive value and not considering the possibility of control beyond adults' physical co-presence, for instance through rules and mobile communication technologies.

Independence is generally referred to as the absence of adults from children's mobile practices (Shaw et al., 2013; Tranter & Whitelegg, 1994). However, as Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009) argue, it could variously mean "not being dependent (on other people or things); not being controlled (by other people or things); or being separate or disconnected from others" (Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009: 40). Therefore, "it is unclear whether children's independent mobility must be understood in terms of relations of dependence, unequal power relations, or the physical distance between child and adult at any given time"

(Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009: 40). In any case, the idea of children's independent mobility, implies the notion of children as essentially and universally dependent beings, who are expected to grow out of relations of dependency through linear and progressive stages of development towards complete independence from parents and other adults, as expressed by Mackett et al. (2007):

> "There are stages of independence from adults that a child goes through. When very young a child will be always accompanied by an adult. At some point in his or her life, a child will be granted full independence and be allowed to go anywhere without an adult. Between these two stages a child may be allowed to go out with friends or older siblings, but not alone" (Mackett et al., 2007: 461).

A developmental approach to childhood has been widely and strongly criticised by the new social studies of childhood – which emerged partly as a critical answer to this dominant discourse. Developmental thought was criticised for positioning adulthood as the standard of rationality, making the growth stages defined by its very own discourse seem natural, with an implicit assumption of universality that ignored the historical, social and cultural aspects of childhood (Prout, 2005).

The notion of mobility was, according to Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009), had been usually as loose as that of independence: its scales and forms had not been issue of discussion. It is usually assumed as everyday trips within certain local scale, such as the neighbourhood or a broader area, often based on the relative distance between home and school. As a result of this focus on independence and a loose definition of mobility, studies focused on CIM have paradoxically centred on the perspective of adults, rendering "what children do together invisible" (Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009:40), with a focus on the absence/presence of parents, whilst what they do on their own, with other children, adults or animals remains invisible (Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009). However, this adultist perspective contrasts with Mikkelsen and Christensen's account of children's mobility in Denmark, where they showed how for children their mobile autonomy was not the main priority. They rather valued companionship: from adults, other children, pets, and so on. The authors call for a more precise definition and critical discussion of the key concepts in the study of children's everyday mobility, which takes into account children's perspectives in relation to their own mobile practices.

Regarding the notion of independence, the authors suggest a non-dualistic understanding that positions dependence and independence within a continuum: along their life cycle people move between the continuum's poles but not in a linear-progressive fashion. Instead, even at the same time people can be differently positioned in different arenas of their everyday lives, in relation to different people (Christensen, Hockey, & James, 1999). Therefore the authors suggest the notion of interdependence as a more

appropriate concept for describing and understanding children's relationships with their different travel companionships.

3.2 Dualistic childhood and children's mobility

The dichotomic way of understanding children and adults mobile relationships that Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009) identify in relation to in/dependency is part of a wider dualistic perspective that characterises dominant notions of childhood, mobility and space (Latour, 2005; Prout, 2005; Turmel, 2008). Dualistic thinking refers to the understanding of interactions through oppositional pairs of concepts. As Prout (2005a) explains it, this tendency:

> "(I)s well illustrated by modernist social theory, which proceeds by dividing the social world into discrete aspects each set in relation to its opposite: structure versus agency; local versus global; identity versus difference; continuity versus change… and so on" (Prout, 2005:39).

In his seminal work *The Future of Childhood*, Alan Prout (2005a) critically revised the origins of the new social studies of childhood highlighting the dichotomic underpinnings inherited from modern sociology on which the idea of children as social agents was supported. Prout explains how a place for childhood in sociology was mainly accomplished within a set of dichotomic pairs of concepts:

> "(…) two key elements in the sociology of childhood, the agency of children and the idea of childhood as a social structural form, are drawn directly from modernist sociology in a more or less unmodified form. This has led to some strange paradoxes. At the very time when social theory was coming to terms with late modernity by decentring the subject, the sociology of childhood was valorizing the subjectivity of children. While sociology was searching for metaphors of mobility, fluidity and complexity, the sociology of childhood was raising the edifice of childhood as a permanent social structure (…) The sociology of childhood established itself within and not beyond the oppositional dichotomies of modernist sociology" (Prout, 2005: 61-62).

The main dichotomies underlying the social studies of childhood discussed by Prout (2005a) are the nature-culture divide, agency and structure, individual and society, and being and becoming (Prout, 2005). The dichotomic idea of agency as opposed to structure has been particularly relevant in shaping the study of children's independent mobility. Also key have been concepts such as dependency and independency, children and adults, mobility and immobility, and local versus global. Independent mobility understood in this dualistic manner appears most of the time defined as a *capacity* that children can acquire or lose, be granted or forbidden by parents and other adults; and enabled or prevented by the environment. As I will argue now, this approach has problematic consequences in at least three senses: first, in terms of the

age-group in which studies have tended to focus, leaving an empirical gap of knowledge in our understanding of young children's mobilities. Second, studies on children's everyday mobility have focused exclusively on what children do on their own, leaving out of the picture a series of relevant actors and elements, with various methodological and theoretical implications. And third, the theoretical notion of mobility has been reduced to the physical movement of people, particularly children, not considering the manifold ways in which distance is overcome, as posited by wider discussions on mobilities (Urry, 2007).

With a mainly historical and geographical comparative focus, the main body of research in children's mobility has focused on school-aged children, as if the acquisition of the *capacity* of moving independently was not expected before starting to attend school. Although the beginning of school varies across countries, the general trend has been to consider children above five years old. This has resulted in an empirical gap regarding research on young children. Their usually interdependent forms of mobility (in the context of the minority world at least) do not warrant them as suitable participants of research on CIM. The exclusion of younger children from the discussion of children's everyday mobility - and from children's geographies in general (Kraftl, 2013) - is implied in Hillman et al. (1990)'s six 'licences', for example. These licenses are relative to what children at a certain age are expected to do in a particular context and do not apply to the interactions observed in the mobility practices of parents and babies, toddlers or pre-school children. This is one of the most critical points for the present study, as most of the literature refers to children older than the age group addressed here. Very few studies have considered children under the age of five in terms of their mobile practices (but see for example Hackett, 2014), except from psychological studies in which young children's mobility is seen in terms of health and wellbeing (for example Zeekyk, 2008, and the wide field of motor developmental studies such as Chambers & Sugden, 2006).

A focus on what children do 'on their own' (either individually or collectively but away from adults) followed the initial call made by the new social studies of childhood (James et al., 1998) in a time when it seemed necessary to emphasise children's active status, voices and experiences. In this regard, Peter Kraftl (2013) has pointed out that relational geographies of age (Hopkins & Pain, 2007; Horton & Kraftl, 2008; Skelton, 2013; Skelton & Gough, 2013) have:

> "(…) on the one hand, questioned the privileging of certain groups in geographical research (principally 5-12 years-old) and, on the other, critiqued a widespread practice among children's geographers, in particular, to consider children on their own (Hopkins and Pain, 2007). To paraphrase, a curious effect of viewing children as independent agents has commonly been to efface the intergenerational relationships that not only constitute childhoods, but construct experiences of age-itself" (Kraftl, 2013: 14).

As in a Charlie Brown episode, studies on CIM present worlds in which we know adults exist but we cannot see them, at least not over their knees. We can only hear their distorted voices and have a clue of what they say through children's answers to them. What could be called the 'Charlie Brown Syndrome', observed among childhood studies and particularly in the study of children's everyday mobility, is related to the dualistic construction of children-adults differentiation (Lee, 2005; Prout, 2005). What was a key premise for the development of the social studies of childhood – that children's experiences are different from those of adults – has resulted in a dichotomy between these two categories as essentially different. As a result, strange paradoxes can be observed. For example, the idea that for children to interact with the 'adult world' in 'the public', they need to be unaccompanied by familiar adults, as suggested by Milne (2009). Milne studied children's interactions with stranger adults while moving 'independently' – without parents or other familiar adults. The study assumed that for children to interact with stranger adults they needed to be moving without adult company. Milne observes that "not all children are separated from the adult world", paradoxically meaning that not all children are accompanied by adults on their mobile practices: "The study (…) revealed children aged 10/11 years using swimming pools, cinemas, shops and buses without adult accompaniment" (Milne, 2009: 104). However, it remains unexplained why is it assumed that, on the one hand, children accompanied by adults cannot engage in encounters with adults other than their companions and, on the other, that being unaccompanied by adults necessarily implies the possibility of doing so? Why is 'independence' a requirement for children to constitute themselves as social beings in the public world?

This idea relates to the premise that children are essentially dependent on adults (Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009) and therefore children would not establish their own relationships with others if they were accompanied by a familiar adult - as they would rely on the adult for solving any issue along the trip. The same assumption is made every time that it is argued that children's lack of independent mobility necessarily reduces the possibilities for developing social skills and dealing with risk (Shaw et al. 2013). However, little is known about how children experience accompanied ('dependent') mobility, as the majority of studies have approached children travelling without adult company (but see Barker, 2009; Cortés-Morales, 2015; Cortés-Morales & Christensen, 2014; Kullman, 2010; Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009; Nansen et al. 2014). Recent studies have shown that even within the context of adult-led or controlled mobility practices, children still find possibilities for engaging in meaningful encounters and relations during their journeys (Kullman & Palludan, 2011).

The generalised association of children's *dependent* forms of mobility with negative values or outcomes – in terms of health, social, emotional and physical development as well as for the environment - has also been challenged by studies that, following Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009), show that children, in certain contexts, positively value the company of adults (and peers) along their journeys. For example, Benwell (2013) discusses how in the context of Cape Town, South Africa, children perceive adults'

presence as positive. In this particular case, this appreciation relates to high rates of violent and property crime, echoing Pain's (2006) call for 'rematerialising' risk and fear according to local and material experiences (see also Ross, 2007). This is not to say that children always appreciate the company of adults, but to point out that there is no inherently positive or negative value to be attached to particular forms of relationships in children's mobility.

Rather than based on empirical observations, the association between children's dependent mobility and a lack of opportunities for social interaction seems to relate, on the one hand, to the dualistic understanding of active and passive travel and, on the other, to a dichotomic notion of agency. In the first respect, Sharpe and Tranter (2010) argue that there is a tendency to ignore the difference between independent mobility and active transport, and to assume that dependent mobility necessarily means being driven in cars with parents, which perpetuates the separation of children from adults (Sharpe & Tranter, 2010: 284). However, Sharpe and Tranter claim, if there is to be a relevant change in the way societies deal with distance: "the active transport needs of both groups must be addressed simultaneously" (Sharpe & Tranter, 2010: 284).

The positive/negative interpretation of in/dependent mobility is also interwoven with a dichotomic notion of agency implicit in many of the approaches to CIM. Agency has been usually understood in terms of negotiation with others "with the effect that the interaction makes a difference -to a relationship or to a decision, to the workings of a set of social assumptions or constraints" (Mayall, 2002: 21). Within this understanding, agency is understood as opposed to the notion of structure. This understanding of agency and structure children relationships with adults are read in terms of a 'cat and mouse' depiction of power relations (Horton et al., 2013), where children either possess or lack the power to shape relationships according to their own needs and interests. Children's dependency in relation to adults is conflated with a lack of agency, whilst independency is constituted as synonymous of agency. This dualistic view permeated the study of children's mobility, so that a reduction of - or control over - children's independent mobility is read as a trend against children's status as agents (Kullman & Palludan, 2011).

3.3 Interdependencies, collaborations and compositions: new directions in the study of children's mobility

Partly inspired by Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009) but drawing upon diverse theoretical perspectives, some studies during the last decade have approached children's everyday mobility from a relational perspective that critically addresses the notion of CIM in the terms described above while suggesting new angles for approaching children's mobile practices (Barker, 2008; Barker et al., 2009; Horton et al., 2013; Kullman, 2010; Kullman & Palludan, 2011; Malone & Rudner, 2011; Nansen et al., 2014; Strandell, 2014). As put by Kullman and Palludan, the idea behind this perspective is that:

"(…) our capacities to move are enabled through attachments to surrounding people, spaces and technologies rather than through becoming independent from such attachments" (Kullman & Palludan, 2011: 354).

Within this understanding of mobility as relational, rather than *becoming* independent children and adults alike need to become skilled in negotiating their interactions with "environmental, social and technological rhythms that necessarily limit and enable their agencies in urban and traffic spaces", (Kullman & Palludan, 2011: 354). Drawing upon Winnicott's notion of transitional objects and spaces Kullman (2010) develops a framework for understanding mobility as shifting interdependent practices of movement. Such an approach to mobility and interdependence requires rethinking agency: from understanding it as an individual capacity, towards a notion of 'distributive agency' (Ansell, 2009; Bennett, 2010; Nansen et al., 2014; Prout, 2005; Turmel, 2008). Kullman and Palludan (2011) suggest the notion of 'rhythmic agency', stressing that: "children's agencies are often grounded in specific rhythms, including clocks, timetables and mobility technologies" (Kullman & Palludan, 2011: 352) and children (and humans in general) are constantly "shifting their capacities to act through encounters with other bodies, technologies and practices" (Kullman & Palludan, 2011: 357). For this reason, the authors claim, "there is too much diversity in children's mobility to be solely measured against the notion of 'independent mobility'" (Kullman & Palludan, 2011: 357).

In a similar way, Nansen et al (2014), drawing on Mikkelsen and Christensen's notion of interdependency and companionship, develop a notion of agency based on Lee (2005) and Prout (2005a) according to which agency is produced and distributed through relational arrangements. In this view, children's mobility is enabled and configured through diverse relations and materials that Nansen et al. analyse through the concept of 'composition' (2014). Within this analytical framework, there is a vast array of possible companionships in children's travels. The authors categorise them as: 'travel companions' (parents, siblings, friends and pets), 'companion devices' (such as mobile phones), and 'ambient companions' (children travelling along busy roads or populated routes where other people are present constituting a form of companionship) (Nansen et al., 2014). On the one side, the category of 'companion devices' highlights the significant functions that different agents, including forms of mobile technologies, play in children's mobile practices - subject that has been a focus of attention in some studies on children's mobility (Cortés-Morales & Christensen, 2014; Fotel & Thomsen, 2004; Kullman, 2010; Leyshon, DiGiovanna, & Holcomb, 2013; Strandell, 2014). On the other side, it argues that there are different forms in which children and adults can be connected when they are physically separated: adults can be part of children's everyday mobility through physical, mediated and absent forms, so that "mobile compositions involved physically present others, but also companionship that extends to the mediated or connected presence of others" (Nansen et al., 2014: 8). Supporting the idea that adults' presence in children's mobile practices should not be assumed as negative (Benwell, 2013; Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009) and

drawing on the notion of mobility as relational (Kullman & Palludan, 2011) or interdependent (Mikkelsen and Christensen, 2009), Nansen et al. (2014) propose the notion of collaboration for analyzing children and adults interdependent mobile relationships:

> "Collaboration, the act of working together for a common purpose, describes how children's mobility is neither controlled by nor autonomous from others. Instead, children's mobility is assembled through the cooperation and assistance of a range of people, objects and environments, working in concert with children to enable them to move about in public" (Nansen et al., 2014; 9).

The notions of collaboration, interdependent and relational mobility not only changes the way that children's mobility is seen, but it also impacts the way how mobile practices are analysed in general, for adults and children alike. For example, McLaren and Parusel (2012) consider mobility and dependency in relation to traffic and risk, arguing that "the concept of traffic safeguarding suggests the need to question the model of independent mobility that underlies transportation research and planning and to consider how everyone is safeguarded (e.g. by transport companies, planners or car organizations) when they travel" (McLaren & Parusel, 2012: 229).

Challenging the taken-for-granted differentiation between children and adults' relationships to the elements that allow them to be mobile implies a discussion about the relation between age and mobility. Age has been usually understood as a category that relates to mobility in a one-way direction, as a social category that "controls children's mobilities and immobilities" (Malone & Rudner, 2011: 255). However, Malone and Rudner (2011) argue, "(…) age is not an ongoing consistent indicator of growing independence" (Malone & Rudner, 2011: 255). Instead, as argued by Barker (2009), age and mobility are mutually produced along people's everyday lives, so that "life course itself is experienced as a shifting set of spatio-temporal mobilities that are both literal and metaphoric; material and aged (…) age and mobility are constantly produced in and through the experiential plane(s) of everyday life" (Barker et al., 2009: 5). Following this argument, Malone and Rudner (2011) discuss the notion of independent mobility in the context of the 'majority world', where many children are expected to carry out domestic or paid jobs and directly contribute to the household economy. Therefore, the discussion about children's independent mobility in terms of children's competence and capacity as the result of parental licenses (Hillman, 1990) is not appropriate. For this reason, Malone and Rudner conclude, "While the historical focus on European cities has been useful in providing insights for mapping the changing patterns and trends of CIM, these cannot be viewed as universal (…) CIM can no longer be understood as a normative, universal, hierarchical and predetermined relation between child and adult" (Malone and Rudner, 2011: 244, 255).

The approaches discussed here open up possibilities for conceptualising mobilities in children's everyday lives in a more holistic and complex manner than exclusively in terms of the presence, absence or intervention of adults in children's mobile practices. In an illuminating way of putting it, Kullman and Palludan reflect that:

> "(…) mobility is perhaps less about becoming entirely 'free' than becoming more entangled with the world, moving in steps with its rhythms" (Kullman & Palludan, 2011: 357).

This entanglement with the world, which is accomplished or hindered in different degrees through movement, is to great extent the focus of the mobilities perspective or paradigm (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007). This perspective has influenced some of the more recent approaches to children's mobile experiences (Barker et al., 2009). As I will discuss in the next chapter, the mobilities perspective positions movement and mobility at the very core of society and social interaction. In doing so, it acknowledges the existence of diverse and interdependent forms and scales of mobility apart from the physical movement of people between places. In this sense, although some of its tenets and vocabulary have permeated the study of children's mobility – for instance through the use of the concept of mobilities rather than mobility, the consideration of materiality and particularly technologies in children's everyday mobility, and the very idea of relational mobility – the plurality of mobilities has remained under-explored in relation to children. The study of children's mobile experiences has remained mainly focused on the physical movement of children between places. For example, studies that have explored the use of technologies in children's mobility have highlighted the usage of mobile phones within children's physical travel. They have also shown how children-adults relationships on the move are performed through diverse means, not always involving propinquity and not necessarily meaning more adult control (Leyshon et al., 2013; Strandell, 2014). However, these studies are still exclusively focused on how technology is affecting children's exclusively physical movement. As a result, other forms of movement other than travel performed by children themselves are not considered as part of or in relation to children's mobilities.

The exclusive focus on children's physical movements is problematic because it reproduces the dichotomic understanding of the scales of children's lives: whilst movements at a global scale are the focus of attention of studies on children's migration, the study of children's everyday mobility limits itself to the immediate spatial experiences of children within what is usually understood as a local scale. There is no dialogue or connection between these two realms. This situation echoes Nicola Ansell (2009)'s critique of children's geographies for focusing on children's local experiences without discussing how these are related to wider phenomena at a wider scale of influence. Overlooking the diverse forms and scales that constitute mobilities in children's everyday lives misses an opportunity for understanding how the immediate spaces of children's lives are entangled with places, peoples and processes 'near and far' (Ansell, 2009), therefore interconnecting scales.

Chapter 2: Theoretical resources for the study of mobilities in children's everyday lives

"Where would you draw the line around 'the grounded reality of your daily life'? (Massey, 2004: 6).

1. Space, place, perception and action: the scales of everyday life

Social Anthropology has approached the study of humans through the concept of culture. This enquiry initially took the shape of ethnographic studies about how people lived in different places of the world within diverse cultural groups. Ethnography's theoretical tenets as well as methodological focus on fieldwork have usually implied concentrating on place as coterminous with culture in the understanding that human life is lived locally (Casey, 1996; Christensen, 2003; Geertz, 1996; Low & Lawrence-Zuñiga, 2003; Ong & Collier, 2005a). As put by Casey (1996):

> "To live is to live locally. And to know is first of all to know the places one is in (…) There is no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place and being in a position to perceive it" (Casey, 1996: 18).

Within this framework, perception and place are tightly related in a 'dialectic of perception and place', according to which as place is sensed, senses are placed, and as places make sense, senses make place (Feld, 1996). However, this understanding of the emplaced perception and experience of culture has seen the forces of globalization and space-time compression processes (Bestor, 2003; Geertz, 1996; Low & Lawrence-Zuñiga, 2003; Ong & Collier, 2005b) – implying an accelerated movement of capital, increased velocity of transportation and telecommunications (Bestor, 2003) and therefore new intensities and scope of social interactions, places and cultures (Massey, 1995) – as a threat for local cultures and for the notion of places as local, coherent and bounded entities opposed to space and the global (Massey, 1995).

This constitutes, on the one hand, a dualistic notion of culture and geographical scales, within which ethnography has been associated to the local side of the global/local binary, as people's perception and experiences are supposed to be bounded to the immediate spatial surroundings (Ansell, 2009). On the other hand, a sedentary logic (Clifford, 1997; Cresswell, 2006; Urry, 2007) underpins such an understanding of culture as geographically fixed and bounded, in which place is essentially and universally meaningful (Massey, 2004). Among the most influential critiques of this way of thinking, James Clifford (1997) argues for a displacement in the analytical focus of anthropological enquiry from 'roots' to 'routes', emphasising that:

"(…) cultural centers, discrete regions and territories, do not exist prior to contacts, but are sustained through them, appropriating and disciplining the restless movements of people and things (…) Contact approaches presuppose not sociocultural wholes subsequently brought into relationship, but rather systems already constituted relationally, entering new relations through historical processes of displacement" (Clifford, 1997: 3-7).

The relational understanding of cultures implies, according to Massey (1998), a re-imagination of the geographical constitution of cultures:

"here they are not closed but open, not ingrown ('pure') products of relative isolation but the outcome of incessant processes of social interaction. Here is much more difficult to distinguish the local from the global (…) the geographies of cultures themselves cut across many of the most commonly accepted hierarchies of scale" (Massey, 1998: 123).

For this reason, Massey critiques the idea of place as essentially meaningful, because: "The 'lived reality of our lives', so often invoked to buttress the meaningfulness of place, is in fact pretty much dispersed in its sources and its repercussions" (Massey, 2004: 6). For Clifford (1997), a relational way of conceptualising cultures does not make them global or universal, but rather suggests the notion of 'translocal' for imagining culture. Importantly, for Clifford (1997) as well as Massey (1998), the constitution of cultures as translocal or relational is not novel or a consequence of new information and transport technologies, but it is the way that cultures have always been shaped, in different scales and degrees, so that what we call 'Europe', for instance, has been constantly re-constituted and "traversed by influences beyond its borders" (Clifford, 1997: 3). For Massey, the relational constitution of cultures is made explicit through materiality, as she illustrates with the position of tea in English culture:

"'Englishness' did not somehow grow out of the soil but rather is a complex product of all the peoples who over the centuries have settled that part of the British Isles, of all their contacts and influences. The quintessential cup of tea could not be sipped without plantations in India, Opium Wars in China and – if you take sugar – a history of slavery in the Caribbean" (Massey, 1998: 124).

In this view, a 'local' culture is seen as "a particular articulation of contacts and influences drawn from a variety of places scattered, according to power-relations, fashion and habit, across many different parts of the globe" (Massey, 1998: 125). This understanding of culture is intertwined with a notion of space in which the social relations that constitute it are not organised so much into scales as into 'constellations of temporary coherence' (Massey, 1998), among which we find local cultures. Space is, within this framework, the result of such relations and interconnections, "from the very local to the intercontinental"

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(Massey, 1998: 124-125). Materiality has a key function in making and tracing these connections – which resonate with the way in which archaeology treats material culture. In Massey's conceptualisation, materialities are also key for expanding people's 'activity spaces' beyond the boundaries of immediate perception. Activity space is defined as "the spatial form of the links and activities, connections and locations, within which a particular agent operates" (Massey, 1995: 63). It is in this sense that Massey asks the question: "Where would you draw the line around 'the grounded reality of your daily life'?" (Massey, 2004: 6), highlighting the impossibility of pre-defining a scale such as local or global for people's everyday lives. Place is understood here as:

> "a meeting-place, the location of the intersections of particular bundles of activity spaces, of connections and inter-relations, of influences and movements (…) both local ones and those that stretch more widely, even internationally. And every place is, in this way, a unique mixture of the relations which configure social space" (Massey, 1995: 59-61).

What Massey calls 'a global sense of place' (Massey, 1991) implies a very different approach to Casey's notion of emplaced experience and challenges his claim that "to live is to live locally" (Casey, 1996: 18). Space, within Massey's framework, is defined as interactional space in which:

> "(…) there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished (…) these are not the relations of a coherent, closed system within which, as they say, everything is (already) related to everything else. Space can never be that completed simultaneity in which all interconnections have been established and in which everywhere is already linked with everywhere else (…) This is a space of loose ends and missing links" (Massey, 2005: 9-12).

Spatiality therefore is referred to as a positioning in relation to other entities, stories or trajectories (Massey, 2005: 12). Casey's (1996) notion of emplaced perception can be seen in a new angle if we think about place in Massey's (1995; 1998; 2005) terms. Bearing in mind that spaces of action are expanded by materialities, perception is not necessarily limited to people's immediate 'local' surroundings. And if place is understood as "a meeting-place, the location of the intersections of particular bundles of activity spaces, of connections and inter-relations, of influences and movements" (Massey, 1995: 59), and mobility is constituted by practices related to the change of position within place or between places, mobility also acquires a different connotation: rather than necessarily or exclusively involving the corporeal displacement from one point to another, mobility refers to the practices through which connections are established, maintained or activated.

2. Actor-network theory: hybridity and a metaphor of circulation

A relational concept of place and scale, as well as the consideration of materialities within this theoretical perspective, resonates with the tenets and concepts developed by the diverse perspectives coined under the name of actor-network theory. Although these have not been developed neither exclusively nor primarily in relation to space, place and scale, their particular ways of conceptualising society have implications for these aspects, as I will discuss in this section.

Actor-network theory (ANT), a concept initially coined by authors such as Bruno Latour (1993, 1999a, 1999b) and John Law (2009), constitutes a form of relational materialism (Prout, 2005) that aims at understanding social life as produced through material relations between diverse agents, avoiding conceptual shortcuts such as power and structure that usually characterise sociological explanation. It draws upon the notion of circulation and network. Among its main tenets are the principles of heterogeneity and symmetry, according to which actors can be of different kinds: human but also non-human as organisms, artefacts and technologies (Prout, 2005: 71), without a taken-for-granted hierarchy between them, as:

> "all actors are understood as networks even though they may appear and act as points. Behind every actor, whether a child or the State or a media company, lies a complex, more or less held together, network of people and things" (Prout, 2005:71).

According to this line of thought, these diverse actors are constituted as agents not because they posses in themselves a capacity for agency, but because they are mustered into assemblages through which these heterogeneous entities inter-act. Although the concept of assemblage is not straightforward and it is subject to discussion (Anderson, Kearnes, McFarlane, & Swanton, 2012; Anderson & McFarlane, 2011), it is agreed that the concept emphasises gathering, coherence and dispersion, highlighting spatiality and temporality: "elements are drawn together at a particular conjuncture only to disperse or realign, and the shape shifts (…) according to place and the 'angle of vision'" (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011: 125). One of its possible definitions, and among the most influential, comes from Deleuze and Guattari (1988), who argue that: "an assemblage is a 'constellation' of elements that have been selected from a milieu, organised and stratified" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, in Anderson & McFarlane, 2011: 125).

Within ANT, assemblages constitute hybrids in the sense that they are made out of heterogeneous entities – meaning human and non human; natural and cultural, social and biological and so on (Kraftl, 2013). These entities are mustered through circulation, constituting *circulating entities* that *mediate* what we usually know as social interactions. They are, therefore, considered under a principle of symmetry, according to which there is no pre-defined hierarchy in the way diverse actors are analytically treated. This

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principle aims at registering differences or asymmetries in the social fabric, unveiling the practical means through which some collectives dominate others (Latour, 1993), but it does not take for granted unequal power relations or a particular hierarchy between entities: "inequalities should appear as a result of sociological empirical enquiry, not as the starting point for them" (Cortés-Morales & Christensen, 2014: 13, based on Latour, 2005; Prout, 2005; Turmel, 2008). Heterogeneous entities are also treated symmetrically in terms of their explanatory power.

As mediators, circulating entities have the "capacity to translate what they transport, to redefine it, redeploy it, and also betray it" (Latour, 1993: 81). They are part of the collective – or social world – because they are what attaches humans to each other, forming, defining and disarming bonds (Latour, 1993). They are, therefore, enrolled or induced into the collective; mobilized within it, thus adding new resources to it and creating new hybrids; and generate change or displacement to the collective assemblage, which takes a new direction as a product of the enrolment and mobilisation of new circulating entities (Latour, 1993; Turmel, 2008). Related to this is the concept of '*immutable mobiles*', a concept to describe displacement through transformation (Latour, 2005), defined as "a technoscientific form that can be decontextualized and recontextualized, abstracted, transported, and reterritorialized, and is designed to produce functionality comparable results in disparate domains" (Ong & Collier, 2005a: 11).

Among the many implications of ANT in relation to the dichotomies that have usually explained the social, it questions the local/global dualism, among others. Latour suggests rethinking local and global interactions through the exercise of "localizing the global" and "redistributing the local". By 'localizing the global', local sites that 'manufacture' global structures are visualized and the global or macro no longer refers to a larger site embedding the micro or local (Law, 2004; Law & Mol, 2008). Instead, it refers to many equally local and micro places connected through some medium (Latour, 2005). At the same time, 'redistributing the local' means that local interactions are the articulation of many other local interactions distributed in time and space, which have been brought together in one particular interaction through the relays of diverse human and non-human actors (Latour, 2005). Relating the notion of assemblage to the debate between the local and the global, Ong & Collier (2005a) argue that

> "In relationship to 'the global', the assemblage is not a 'locality' to which broader forces are counterposed. Nor is it the structural effect of such forces. An assemblage is the product of multiple determinations that are not reducible to a single logic" (Ong & Collier, 2005a: 12).

This line of argument challenges the discussion about the predominance of the local over the global or vice versa that concerns geographers and anthropologists in general and the study of children's lives in particular (Ansell, 2009) – resonating with Massey's understanding of space as social relations organised not into scales, but through complex interconnections or "constellations of temporary coherence" (Massey,

1998: 124). The status that ANT assigns to heterogeneous artefacts as circulating entities, mediators or immutable mobiles also resonates with the way in which Massey treats materiality in relation to culture and place.

Materiality has played diverse roles in the study of society and culture according to different materialist approaches. There are, at least, three different but interdependent ways in which materiality can be treated in relation to geographical scale, culture and society: in anthropology, a classic approach to the study of objects has been a focus on the cultural value and meanings attached to them, in what has become an anthropology of consumption (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979) and the affective aspects of materiality (Miller, 2008). A second approach to materiality delineated by Massey (1995, 1998) and taken forward by 'follow the thing' studies aims at tracing the hidden interactions involved in the circulation of goods of consumption (Cook, 2004). A third approach to materiality is through the notion of affordances, as developed by Tim Ingold (1995, 2000). Here, the materiality of things allows far more possibilities than what its culturally defined function dictates. This approach brings us closer to a perspective such as Latour's (2005) and Bennett's (2005, 2010) in which *things* participate of compositions of agency too: "any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor – or, if it has no figuration yet, an actant" (Latour, 2005: 70). Jane Bennett (2010) takes this idea forward, promoting a distributive understanding of agency based on the concept of assemblage as developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1988). A distributive notion of agency means, in Bennett's words, that:

> "Bodies enhance their power in or as a heterogeneous assemblage. What this suggests for the concept of agency is that the efficacy or effectivity to which that term has traditionally referred becomes distributed across an ontologically heterogeneous field, rather than being a capacity localized in a human body or in a collective produced (only) by human efforts" (Bennett, 2010: 23).

This is not a product of new forms of interaction. Human agency has always involved 'interfolding' heterogeneous networks. However, Bennett acknowledges that today "this mingling has become harder to ignore" (Bennett, 2010: 31). In Bennett's notion of distributive agency, matter is endowed with vitality. She refers not only to tangible natural and technological artefacts and beings such as microorganisms, metals and technological infrastructure, but also to more abstract entities such as the weather and electricity. Bennett reflects on Darwin's and Latour's consideration of the 'small agencies' of worms in human history, which through their processing of soil transform the shared environment in key ways for human inhabitation of the planet. In this regard, Bennett reflects that:

> "We consider a political act, for example, when people distribute themselves into racially and economically segregated neighbourhoods, even if, in doing so, they are following a cultural trend and do not explicitly intend, endorse or even consider the impact of their movements (…) There are

many affinities between the act of persons dragging their belongings to their new homes in the suburbs and the acts of worms dragging leaves to their burrows or migrating to a savannah-forest border" (Bennett, 2010: 98).

In this sense, Bennett argues that a multitude of non-human entities has been misrecognised as context or tools, whilst a 'vital materiality theory of democracy' aims at transforming the divide between: "speaking subjects and mute objects into a set of differential tendencies and variable capacities. I think this is what Darwin and Latour were trying to do when they told their worm stories" (Bennett, 2010: 108). This coincides, indeed, with Latour's argument about action as not necessarily performed in a complete conscious manner: "action should rather be felt as a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled" (Latour, 2005: 43). This notion of distributive agency, however, with action not necessarily being the result of conscious human will, raises an important question about responsibility: how and to which degree the heterogeneous agents of an assemblage can be accountable for the effects of the actions undertaken through the assemblages they are part of (Bennett, 2010)? Massey (2004) refers to the same problematic when she critically reflects on Latour's notion of the global and her own notion of space as relational:

> "then 'global space' is no more than the sum of relations, connections, embodiments and practices. And those things are utterly everyday and grounded at the same time that they may, when linked together, go around the world (…) But (…) how can that kind of groundedness be made meaningful across distance?" (Massey, 2004: 9).

This is problematic, Massey argues, in the context of a 'Western hegemonic notion of responsibility' in which a territorial idea of nearness is set in terms of care: from home to nation and so on, as a 'nested set of Russian dolls', taking for granted that "we care first for, and have our first responsibilities towards, those nearest in" (Massey, 2004: 10).

While the concepts of hybridity and distributive agency have had a strong impact in the so-called 'new wave' childhood studies (Kraftl, 2013; Ryan, 2012), those of circulation and circulating entities have been key in the development of the mobilities perspective. A relational notion of space, place and geographical scale has been relevant for both fields. In what follows, these arguments and concepts in relation to both childhood studies and mobilities will be revised, in order to discuss what the emphasis on circulation of the mobilities perspectives could bring to the study of childhood in terms of children's positions and connections with the world, without getting trapped by the boundaries of pre-defined binary geographical scales.

3. Hybrid childhood: a 'new wave' of childhood studies

In *The Future of Childhood*, Alan Prout (2005a) suggested ideas for an 'included middle' of the oppositional dichotomies that have shaped childhood studies: "they should not already inscribe a set of dichotomies within the field but to see childhood as a complex phenomenon not readily reducible to one end or the other of a polar separation" (Prout, 2005: 68). Among the theoretical resources that Prout suggested in the search for this included middle, he drew mainly upon actor-network theory:

> "Using the metaphor of 'network' (…) childhood could be seen as a collection of different, sometimes competing and sometimes conflicting, heterogeneous orderings (…) new forms of childhood arise when new sets of network connections, for example between children and technologies such as TV and the internet, are made. Such new networks may overlap and coexist with older ones but they may also conflict. A key questions, therefore, is what makes up the network that produces a particular form of childhood?" (Prout, 2005: 71).

In other words, Prout is suggesting to observe how the different circulating entities that come into the assemblages that constitute childhood are induced into the collective, and what new directions these assemblages take once these entities have been mobilised.

Following this theoretical perspective André Turmel (2008) analysed graphs, charts and tabulations of children's measurements in medicine and psychology as technical mediators that operate in a network of relationships, of both human and non-human entities, treated symmetrically at an analytic level (Turmel, 2008: 47). His enquiry followed the question "What does this circulation/mobilization introduce or interpose into the social fabric? What does a chart or graph bring up and muster in a network of relationships?" (Turmel, 2008: 49). Turmel takes from Latour the notion of 'inscriptions', defined as operations that allow the production of plain facts, thus entailing everything that works as "traces, points, diagrams, numbers, histograms and figures" and that relates to the "transformation of matter into writing, into visual writing most of the time" (Turmel, 2008: 66). Turmel defines the notion of 'social technology' as having "the form of a material object such as a chart or graph possibly sustained by a discourse. It's a device of some type that has the capacity of being a mediator between categories of social actors" (Turmel, 2008: 117, 118). In his study of the historical development of these social technologies in relation to childhood, he argues that: "(…) the unit of study is neither the paediatricians, nor the children (or their parents) nor solely the technologies in themselves, but the socio-technological network of their relationships" (Turmel, 2008: 120). At the same time, he argues that "(…) children experience social life and expand their capacities and abilities, hence their competences, mainly through embodiment" (Turmel, 2008: 34). However, Turmel refers to embodiment in the context of "notions of heterogeneous materials and hybrids, central in actor-network theory, which enables us to understand the relationship between

bodies and technologies" (Turmel, 2008: 34) as mutually interwoven.

In a similar way, Brown and Middleton (2005) analyse babies as 'virtual objects' within a neonatal intensive care unit, discussing Marilyn Strathern's notion of 'cutting the network' (1996) and the debate about difference among heterogeneous entities when treated symmetrically. They use the concept of 'quasi-object' or 'blank object' to describe an entity that appears to contain its own differences:

> "(…) that do not depend upon the collective through which it circulates (…) in neonatal care it is the baby rather than any other entity who truly acts as a quasi-object. The baby – who has no 'history', no firm 'identity', who mixes up 'technology' and 'nature' – is the most blank object of all. It is the neonate around which the whole network revolves. The identities of each member are defined – sometimes moment to moment – by the relationship he or she has with the neonate (…) the neonate, then, in a way can be said to recruit members and materials around it, who become its attributes (…) Perhaps this makes the baby appear to be the most powerful element in the network. That is an interesting paradox, because, of course, the baby is the weakest element, and it is the neonate's very fragility that is at stake in neonatal care" (Brown and Middleton, 2005: 708).

This perspective raises the issue of agency as having an ambiguous aspect rather than only having an essentially positive value (Bordonaro & Payne, 2012). It also raises the issue, again, of responsibility among a network of heterogeneous agents, this time in relation to networks that involve children's care (Brown and Middleton, 2005).

Kevin Ryan has critically coined the notion of 'new wave' childhood studies referring to the body of work that has followed Prout's (2005) call, "characterized by an attempt to break with the past and forge a line of flight towards a future whereby the structures of biosocial dualism have been effaced" (Ryan, 2012: 443). Children's geographies, coming from different theoretical traditions that the new social studies of childhood, are said to have avoided the more dichotomic understanding of childhood in terms of scale and actually challenged this dichotomic understanding of children's lives (Holloway, 2014). Nevertheless, the notions of relational space and hybridity have also had a relevant impact on children's geographers (Kraftl, 2013). In this regard, Peter Kraftl asks: "(…) what are the implications for children's geographers (and studies of the family and intergenerational relations more broadly) for acknowledging more-than-social processes that are more commonly the realm of neuroscience, genetics or development psychology" (Kraftl, 2013: 19). Kraftl refers to Bennett (2010) arguing that "it might be possible to admit the genetic, chemical and electrical processes through which human lives (and attachments) are formed. This is to emphasise the role of the more-than-social in the constitution of the social in ways that most social studies of childhood do not" (Kraftl, 2013: 20). This perspective opens up the possibility of overcoming the 'wall of

silence' (Holloway, 2014) between social studies of childhood and developmental psychology, finding common grounds in a more complex and less dichotomic understanding of childhood, as suggested by Prout (2005a) and Ryan (2012).

In the task of 'unfolding the black box' of childhood ('what is a child from a sociological standpoint?'), Turmel refers to the notion of 'totality' - developed by Karsenty (1997) drawing on the work of Marcel Mauss - as a way of:

> "integrating into specific complexus of relationships scientific domains so crucial to understanding the child: biology, psychology and sociology as well as ethnology, history and linguistics in a general anthropology whose aim is to maintain the total unity of the human figure in all of its dimensions (…) Social reality must then be viewed in the plurality of its dimensions, each playing a legitimized part in the composition of the whole" (Turmel, 2008: 28).

The idea of totality is also useful in integrating childhood into the notion of personhood, challenging the "homogeneous and unidimensional form of personhood that is still prevailing in sociology" or 'adultism': the idea of totality applied to personhood means that "childhood becomes an essential part of its conceptualization as well as ageing, so depriving adulthood of its monopoly" (Turmel, 2008: 29). Thinking about childhood through the notion of totality, Turmel argues, allows the possibility of conceiving the child both as a material and representational entity.

Such a complex notion of childhood underpins Ansell (2009)'s approach to children from the point of view of a 'flat ontology' (based on Marston et al. 2005): socio-spatiality conceptualised in material and non-hierarchical terms (Ansell, 2009), also partly influenced by ANT. Ansell departs from the dualistic debate on the local versus the global dimensions of children's lives, arguing that:

> "It is important not to underestimate children's spatial mobility (…) Nonetheless, children's direct experience of the world is often spatially restricted. Given that research with children has focused largely on that experience, it is unsurprising that it emphasizes the local scale" (Ansell, 2009: 193).

Ansell's position in this regard is that research about children does not need to focus exclusively on children's direct experiences of the world, and the fact that it continues to do so reflects, in her view, the influence of the new social studies of childhood and its tenets about focusing on children's own experiences. For Ansell, this focus on the local dimensions of childhood does not take into account the processes that affect children at scales wider than their immediate spaces:

"This is not to equate scale with importance, but to recognize that it is not only locally occurring processes, practices and events that impinge on children's lives. Economic globalization and neoliberal policies are transforming life for many young people, but they remain untouched by the small-scale participatory projects that are the focus of much research" (Ansell, 2009: 191).

For the same reason, she criticises the methods usually deployed by children's geographers that tend to focus exclusively on the immediate material environment, "leaving relations with unobserved places unexplored" (Ansell, 2009: 193). In their everyday lives, however, children encounter 'far more than immediate surroundings'. Here, Ansell draws upon an approach to materiality as the one suggested by Massey (1995, 1998), acknowledging the origins of the materials that children interact with. She also refers to 'face-to-face' interactions always involving relations with other places: "most of which escape children's conscious awareness":

"The world with which children interact is the product of events, policies, discourses and decisions with diverse origins in time and space. Sensory perceptions thus provide children with very incomplete descriptions of the world they encounter (…) children's perceptual space is rarely confined to the proximate" (Ansell, 2009: 200-201).

This argument relates to the nature and limits of children's spaces of perception and action: while perception may be more spatially restricted, action can be traced to wider spatial scales of impact and influence, as in Massey's 'action space'. In this sense, Ansell wonders:

"what happens to the scaling of children's geographies if children are seen as nodes of material connections to places near and far – nodes that are embodied, perceiving, acting, expressing, connected with other humans and objects, both natural and social beings, but not fully aware autonomous agents" (Ansell, 2009: 199).

Although Ansell's statement partly reproduces a dualistic logic in which it is necessary to choose sides, between the micro and local or the macro and global aspects of children's lives, the way forward that she suggests overcomes an initially fixed and bounded notion of space, and of mobility as exclusively physical travel. Considering relational notions of space and place such as Massey's (1995, 2005) and Latour's (2005) concept of agency and materiality, children's immediate experiences of the world are connected to wider spaces that, as Ansell argues, children (or indeed parents, teachers and other adults) may not be directly aware of. What research about children's lives needs to do therefore, is to extend its focus towards what Ansell calls the 'unobserved places' in relation to which children are mutually entangled:

"Perception of distant people and places relies on technologies – transport of individuals, or technologies that move information and artifacts to within the field of perception. Such technologies may be less available to children (particularly young children) than to adults (…) While they allow personal relationships to be maintained across space, and knowledge to be gained of distant places, they do so through the less intimate senses of sight and hearing (…) Children (very young children in particular) may therefore encounter distant places and people less intimately than adults. Nonetheless, drawing a line around their live reality (Massey, 2005) is not an option" (Ansell, 2009: 201).

Although not explicitly referring to the mobilities perspective, in this paragraph Ansell points in that direction as a way of answering Massey's question in relation to children: "Where would you draw the line around the grounded reality of (children's) daily life? Drawing a line may not be an option, but through the notion of mobilities we can aim at sketching their 'constellations of temporary coherence' (Massey, 1995).

4. Mobilities: a 'movement-driven' approach to childhood

John Urry has argued that social sciences have tended to be a-mobile in their approach to society, minimising the significance of manifold forms of movement for "the very nature of work, schooling, family life, politics and protests, that is, within crucially important social institutions. And yet families, for example, depend upon patterns of regular visiting, schools are chosen in terms of catchment areas and so on (…)" (Urry, 2007: 19). Social sciences have drawn on a 'metaphysics of presence': the immediate presence with others as the basis for social existence (Urry, 2007; 46). At the same time, they have ignored the "underlying physical or material infrastructures that orchestrate and underlie such economic, political and social patterns" (Urry, 2007: 19), namely paths, railway tracks, public roads, telegraph lines, transport means, communication technologies and so on. Drawing upon concepts and ideas derived from ANT, among other theoretical influences, the term mobilities has been coined to highlight the mobility turn in social sciences and geography, as well as to refer to:

"this broad project of establishing a 'movement-driven' social science in which movement, potential movement and blocked movement, as well as voluntary/temporal immobilities, practices of dwelling and 'nomadic' place-making are all conceptualized as constitutive of economic, social and political relations" (Buscher & Urry, 2009: 100).

According to the mobilities perspective, social relations entail diverse connections at relative distances, speeds and intensity, involving physical movement in diverse degrees. These relations are not fixed or located, but are constituted through "circulating entities", in the sense discussed in section 3. Urry

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identifies five kinds of interdependent mobilities: the *corporeal travel of people*; *physical movement of objects*; the *imaginative, virtual* and *communicative travel* (Urry, 2007). Rather than focusing on one particular type, the mobilities paradigm aims at identifying the complex ways in which these different forms of mobilities are interdependently linked in making and maintaining social connections.

As expressed by the consideration of the physical movement of objects among the types of mobilities, this perspective situates materialities in a key position:

> "(…) the powers of 'humans' are always augmented by various material worlds, of clothing, tools, objects, paths, buildings and so on (…) What the mobilities paradigm emphasizes is that the objects that are ready to hand are highly varied, providing different affordances, especially many variably enabling or presupposing movement" (Urry, 2007: 45).

Within this conceptualisation, humans are understood as "sensuous, corporeal, technologically extended and mobile beings" (Urry, 2007: 51). Objects as well as other human and non-human entities act as 'circulating entities' (Latour, 1999b) that "bring about relationality within and between societies at multiple and varied distances", constituting, sustaining, interrupting or blocking social relations (Urry, 2007: 46). One of the main tenets of the mobilities perspective is, therefore, that it does not intend to focus exclusively on the physical aspects of movement, but to attend to the economic, social and cultural organisation of distance as a whole (Urry, 2007: 54). Consequently, mobilities entail all forms and scales of movement, performed not only by humans but also by all sorts of beings and artefacts.

Apart from considering these manifold forms and scales of mobilities performed by various entities, Tim Cresswell coins the notion of 'constellations of mobilities' referring to the "historically and geographically specific formations of movements, narratives about mobility and mobile practices" (Cresswell, 2006: 17). Mobility is treated as a threefold notion: facts of movement; discourses and representations producing meanings; and as embodied practice and experience:

> "Often how we experience mobility and the ways we move are intimately connected to meanings given to mobility through representation. Similarly, representations of mobility are based on ways in which mobility is practiced and embodied" (Cresswell, 2006: 4).

What connects these different aspects and forms of mobility, according to Cresswell, is meaning: "(…) it is this meaning that jumps scales", and "It is this issue of meaning that remains absent from accounts of mobility in general, and because it remains absent, important connections are not made (…) connections need to be made between determinedly different approaches applied to the different facets of human mobility" (Cresswell, 2007: 6-7).

However, the mobilities paradigm has been criticised for privileging certain kinds of mobilities over others (Merriman, 2014). These usually emphasize the large scale and subjects that are usually 'hyper-mobile', unencumbered and 'solitary mobile subject(s)' (Manderscheid, 2014). This leaves the objective of integrating the diverse forms of mobilities and immobilities still as an aim to be accomplished. In this sense, not only has the mobilities perspective something to add to the study of childhood, but also the latter can contribute to a more complete understanding of mobilities. As Tracey Skelton has pointed out:

> "Young people and the mobilities that they practice make important contributions to the production, creation and alteration of city spaces. They are a distinctive kind of 'mobilee' and hence can broaden and strengthen theorisation and conceptualisation within mobility studies of the city" (Skelton, 2013).

The question is, then, how can the theoretical resources provided by the mobilities perspective and the empirical and theoretical resources of childhood studies complement and enrich each other?

Chapter 3: Mobilities in children's everyday lives: constellations of mobility, constellations of childhood

The issues raised and discussed in the previous chapters provide the theoretical resources for the study of young children's mobilities. In chapter 1, I have discussed the diverse angles from which children's mobility has been approached. An emphasis on children's independent mobility and its associations with taken-for-granted positive and negative values in relation to health, development and autonomy were identified and critically addressed. Among its main features, the study of CIM highlighted children's mobile practices as characterised by particular conditions and as different from those of adults. Although a differentiation between children and adults' mobile practices should not be taken for granted or essentialized, this is a relevant point in terms of acknowledging that mobile practices are differentiated according to the different subjects that experience them. At the same time, mobile practices constitute cultural identities such as those of age and gender. Discussed in chapter 1 were also the main critical approaches to CIM, most of them referred to its dualistic understanding of children and adults, dependency and independency. In this regard, an understanding of mobility as interdependent or relational was suggested. Here, children and adults' mobile interactions were seen as performed through the collaboration of heterogeneous agents such as mobile technologies. This notion of mobility is based on re-conceptualisations of agency from non-dualistic points of view that have been developed by critical strands of the social studies of childhood and children's geographies, generally based on non-representational theories.

Both in the study of CIM and within critical approaches to children's mobility, a tendency to consider mobility exclusively in terms of physical travel was identified. In this sense, I suggested to draw upon the mobilities perspective for widening the notion of mobility, considering diverse forms of movement as interrelated in children's lives. In chapter 2, I gathered together different but interrelated concepts and ideas that contribute to the understanding of mobilities in children's everyday lives in the manner suggested. First, notions of place and space were discussed as interconnected entities, constituting "constellations of temporary coherence" (Massey, 1995). Two main implications for this study emerged from here: on the one hand, spatial perception and action spaces are extended by mobilities, particularly through the circulation of materiality. Therefore, people's perceptions and actions are not necessarily restricted to the immediate 'local' surroundings. On the other hand, mobilities refer not only to human and corporeal movement between or within places, but also to the heterogeneous forms through which connections between and within places are made, sustained or activated. This idea led to the discussion of some of ANT's main notions, such as hybridity, heterogeneity, symmetry and circulating entities. Materiality emerged here as playing a key part in circulation and as constitutive of agency. Actor-network theory also provided a lens through which the global and local can be reconceptualised in a similar way to Massey (1994; 1995; 1998; 2005). The various implications of these notions were then explored in relation

to how they have influenced social studies of childhood and children's geographies and the mobilities perspective.

In relation to the social studies of childhood and children's geographies, actor-network and non-representational theories have resulted in an understanding of childhood as a hybrid assemblage of nature, culture and society (Prout, 2005). In this context, childhood emerged as heterogeneous assemblages (Prout, 2005) and children as "nodes of material connections to places near and far" (Ansell, 2009). Children (and more generally humans) are not necessarily conscious of their manifold connections and are not always purposeful agents, as argued by Ansell (2009) and, not particularly in relation to children, Bennett (2010) and Latour (2005).

In terms of the mobilities perspective, one of its most relevant tenets for the study of mobilities in young children's everyday lives is that distance is organised and overcome not only through the physical travel of human bodies, but also through the movement of heterogeneous agents or circulating entities, through manifold means. Also important here is the notion of 'constellations of mobility' developed by Cresswell (2006).

Now, I would like to expand on the notion of constellation, as it has appeared in different senses and it will be key in the discussion of mobilities in the lives of young children's in Wishwell. Different authors have metaphorically employed the notion of constellation, for example Massey (1995) when defining place, and Deleuze and Guattari (1988) when defining assemblage. Cresswell (2010) refers to constellations of mobility as historical compositions of mobility made out of discourses, practices and experiences that make sense in certain time and place for certain group of people. This notion takes into account the possible overlapping between constellations. The idea of childhood as heterogeneous assemblages or networks (Prout, 2005) also resonates with the metaphor of constellation which, as I will argue now, has some aspects that make it appropriate for the understanding of childhood and children's lives from the perspective of hybridity.

The original meaning of constellation is: "a group of stars that form a pattern, and are given a name" (HarperCollins, 2010). In this connotation, constellations are not *something* in themselves, but they constitute a unity from the point of view of an observer. The idea of constellation acknowledges the possibility of different constellations overlapping or sharing elements, as well as the plurality of possible perspectives and groupings. As used in Massey's definition of place, constellations are a coherent unity but in a temporary and emplaced sense. It is interesting, then, to think about childhood in terms of constellations, which still retains the idea of heterogeneity, assemblage and network, but emphasising the fact that the assemblage can be dismantled if perspective changes, or if elements are added or taken away. In *The Future of Childhood*, Alan Prout (2005a) concludes that:

"Childhood should be seen as (…) a variety of complex hybrids constituted from heterogeneous materials and emergent through time (…) Childhood is not seen as a unitary phenomenon but a multiple set of constructions emergent from the connection and disconnection, fusion and separation of these heterogeneous materials" (Prout, 2005: 143).

The constructions that emerge from the connection and disconnection, fusion and separation between diverse materials is what I argue could be understood through the metaphor of constellation. However, differently to the fixity of the images that have been identified in the sky resembling human characters and myths, the constellations that compose childhood are dynamically shifting in tandem with new connections established between elements. As Prout (2005a) exemplifies, one could explore what happens to one assemblage – or constellation - of childhood when new elements like television or other technologies are enrolled into that collective. In addition to this, the constellation is made out of connections between elements – the stars – that are not necessarily conscious of or actively performing those connections. In this sense, the metaphor also resonates with Ansell (2009)'s approach to children as nodes of material connections.

Therefore, following Cresswell (2006)'s idea of constellations of mobility and drawing upon Prout (2005a)'s notion of childhood as heterogeneous and hybrid assemblages, I suggest the notion of constellations of childhood. These are historically and geographically particular discourses, practices and experiences of childhood, materially constituted. Among these discourses, practices and experiences about childhood, there are some that relate to children's mobilities, overlapping with constellations of mobility and partly defining childhood in any given constellation. The particular ways in which specific constellations of mobilities and constellations of childhood overlap, shape the ways in which children are positioned in relation to other elements within the collectives they are part of (or in relation to other constellations), intermittently connected and disconnected, constituted as nodes of material connections. If we think of mobilities as the manifold ways in which distance is tackled by society, then understanding children's lives from the point of view of their engagement in different forms of mobilities is key for understanding the ways in which children are involved in the world at different scales and through diverse means.

The movement from *children's mobility* to *mobilities in children's everyday lives* means a shift of focus from children's 'own' physical travel, to the consideration of their interdependent physical, virtual, imaginative and communicative travels, and also the diverse forms of movement performed by manifold agents related in different forms to children' everyday lives: artefacts, animals, information, images, and so on, all of which are part of what constitutes – or not – children as agents. In this regard, it is interesting to think about the concept of *'denizen'*: "a person, animal, or plant that lives or grows in a particular place" (HarperCollins, 2010), as a useful way of conceptualising children's (and more widely humans') agency and interactions with the world – bearing in mind a relational notion of place. The notion of distributive

agency is extremely relevant for generating accounts that do not posit children as essentially different from adults, and humans as essentially different from other actors, and as opposite categories, but as interdependent agents. Through this we can overcome the 'Charlie Brown' syndrome without simply going back to subsuming children into family, school or any other categories and social institutions. This theoretical approach has methodological implications that will be discussed in Part II.

PART II Cultures of communication, cultures of movement: methodological issues in an ethnographic approach to children's mobilities

'From cocooning to Skyping' was defined from the beginning as an ethnography of mobilities in children's everyday lives. This decision was related on the one hand, to my background and experience as a social anthropologist. On the other hand, ethnography has been highlighted as a particularly key and suitable methodological approach both for the social studies of childhood (Christensen, 2004, 2010; Corsaro, 2011; Hardman, 2001(1973); James & Prout, 2000; Prout, 2005a; Van der Geest, 1996) and for the mobilities perspective (Clifford, 1997; Fincham, McGuinness, & Murray, 2009; Ingold & Vergunst, 2008; Jirón, 2009b; Merriman, 2014; Lesley Murray, 2009; Urry, 2007; Vergunst, 2011), as I will discuss in chapter 4. It has also constituted one of the main approaches to the study of children's mobility (Christensen, Romero Mikkelsen, Sick Nielsen, & Harder, 2011; Drianda & Kinoshita, 2011; Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009; L Murray, 2009; Lesley Murray, 2009; Nansen et al., 2014; Porter et al., 2010; Ross, 2007, among others). In addition to this, following recent ethnographic approaches to materiality, movement and circulation (Cook, 2004; Czarniawska, 2007; Latour, 1999b, 2005; Ong & Collier, 2005), ethnography seemed to afford manifold possibilities for the study of mobilities in young children's everyday lives, which will be explored in chapter 5.

Although ethnography today is a methodological approach widespread not only within anthropological studies, but also among diverse disciplines and fields of study such as sociology and geography, the minutiae of what it means to carry out ethnographic research is often concealed under familiar concepts such as participant observation or ethnographic interviews. In this chapter I will follow the call from various scholars towards making ethnographic practices more visible in ethnographic accounts (Aull-Davies, 2007; Behar & Gordon, 1995; Clifford, 1990; Crang & Cook, 2007; Lather & Smithies, 1997). This implies unfolding the many and complex relationships that ethnography involves and the means through which these are made and maintained. It also entails making visible the researcher's roles and positions beyond what Susan Leigh Star called the 'silence of footnotes' (Susan Leigh Star interviewed in: Bauchspies & Puig-de-la-Bellacasa, 2009). These aspects will be the subject of chapter 6, where the ways in which this methodological approach was taken to fieldwork in Wishwell will be discussed. This will also involve a discussion of how the field was defined, linking to Part III, *'Wishwell and Wishwell Children's Centre'*.

Chapter 4: Ethnography and mobile methods

1. Anthropology, place, culture and multi-sited ethnography

In chapter 2 the association between place and culture was discussed in terms of its theoretical implications for the study of mobilities in young children's lives. In this section I will return to this argument, this time in terms of its methodological implications. The ethnographic approach to place is key in how the field is defined and how ethnography becomes – or not - a suitable method for understanding mobile practices.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) define ethnographic research in terms of what it entails for the researcher, who participates overtly or covertly in people's everyday lives for an extended period of time: "(...) watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007:3). All of these imply the researcher "being there" and taking part of the studied contexts so that the ethnographer, with all her senses, skills and experiences, constitutes the main research instrument (Christensen, 2010; Fetterman, 1989; Wolcott, 1999). Within this definition, the idea of fieldwork predominates as an essential aspect of ethnographic practice: "being there", in the field or site of research for an extended period of time; participating in people's everyday lives, watching, listening, asking questions and writing fieldnotes.

Since ethnography was constituted as the main distinctive method of anthropology, a very close relation between culture and place was formed through the concept of ethnographic *field*. Fieldwork became the essential matter of ethnography, and *doing* or *going* on fieldwork the main ethnographic practice. The constitution of the ethnographer as a participant of people's everyday lives is mainly related then to the exercise of dwelling within the boundaries of that place that is defined as *the field* of the research, in the attempt of getting to know a group of people that is supposed to embody a particular culture (Clifford, 1997). In traditional ethnography the field was an 'exotic' location. As Wolcott puts it, it is "essential to recognize not only the importance of place in the evolution of ethnography but to recognize as well that until recently it did not matter where the place was *as long as it was dramatically different from one's own*" (Wolcott, 1999:24). Anthropology and ethnography have gone through manifold changes during the last century in relation to the constitution of its *field*. These primarily refer to processes of decolonization and the consequent re-territorialisation of the ethnographic field. These processes have been differently called "bringing it all back home", "anthropology in reverse" or "homework, not fieldwork" (Behar & Gordon, 1995; Hannerz, 2003; Marcus, 1995; Visweswaran, 2008), in which the places, subjects and topics of anthropological enquiry have certainly changed and expanded the possible fields.

The image of the village as the ideal ethnographic field – as a manageable cultural and research unit – was transferred to the constitution of a more metaphoric Western and urban idea of village (Clifford, 1997). However, as James Clifford argues, "despite the move out of literal villages, the notion of fieldwork as a special kind of localized dwelling remains" (Clifford, 1997:21). The same applies to newer constructions of ethnography that have aimed to adjust to new phenomena or ways of understanding social interaction. For example, in response to the global scale of some of the phenomena studied by ethnography (such as transnational migration), new conceptualisations of place (as discussed in part I), and to the impact of the mobility turn in social sciences (Fincham et al., 2009; Jirón, 2009a; Urry, 2007), approaches such as multi-sited ethnography were developed. In this approach, research is not situated in one single place or field; rather different sites are seen as connected to one another (Hannerz, 2003). The emphasis put on these connections is what makes this approach different to, for instance, comparative studies of localities (Hannerz, 2003). According to Marcus, multi-sited ethnography can be classified according to the different actors being followed: following the people, the thing, the metaphor, the plot, the story or allegory, the life or biography, the conflict, and so on (Marcus, 1995). Although the traditional idea of a single field of study is challenged, the notion of fieldwork as the in-depth study of localized cultures remains.

Clifford argues that the construction of ethnography as fieldwork entails certain negative outcomes such as the confusion of disciplinary practices (spatial and temporal constraints) with "the culture", and the separation of the discourse of ethnography as "being there" from that of travel: "getting there". This, at the same time, conceals the complexities of the relations and locations involved in the ethnographic practices: "all those places you have to go through and be in relation with just to get to your village or that place of work you will call your field" (Clifford, 1997:27). In this regard, Clifford suggests understanding location not as a bounded site, but as an *itinerary*: "a series of encounters and translations" (Clifford, 1997:11). This implies, on the one hand, a different approach to the idea of the site or field of study in terms of its inhabitants' location, paying attention to how people got there, in which part of their itineraries are they, and so on; on the other hand, it entails the necessary self-location of the ethnographer in relation the site of study and the people encountered there. As Clifford argues:

> "A degree of self-location is possible and valuable, particularly when it points beyond the individual toward ongoing webs of relationship. Hence, the struggle to perceive certain borders of my own perspective is not an end in itself but a precondition for efforts of attentiveness, translation, and alliance" (Clifford, 1997:12).

Clifford's critique of ethnography as fieldwork suggests taking into account travel in addition to dwelling; routes and roots, rather than only roots; itineraries rather than exclusively fixed locations (Clifford, 1997). This applies for the location of the people being studied as well as to the researcher's own routes and travels involved as part of ethnographic practices. This kind of critical approach to ethnographic field, in

tandem with particular ethnographic approaches and techniques such as multi-sited ethnography (Hannerz, 2003; Marcus, 1995), 'follow the thing' (Cook, 2004), go-along (Kusenbach, 2003) and shadowing technique (Czarniawska, 2007; Jirón, 2011) have challenged ethnography's traditional attachment to fixed localities and enabled this methodological approach to be taken as one of the favourite in research on mobility and the mobilities perspective, as I will show in the next section.

2. Mobilities and mobile methods

In his book *Mobilities* (2007) John Urry called for the necessity for research methods to be 'on the move': "in effect to simulate in various ways the many and interdependent forms of intermittent movement of people, images, information and objects" (Urry 2007:39). This entails, on the one hand, a call for researchers to track through diverse means - including the researchers physically travelling with their research subjects - the interdependent forms of mobilities of people, objects, information, images etc. On the other hand, and as a consequence of "allowing themselves to be moved by, and to move with, their subjects" (Buscher & Urry, 2009: 103), researchers should be "tuned into the social organization of 'moves'" (Buscher & Urry, 2007: 103), so that:

> "By immersing themselves in the fleeting, multi-sensory, distributed, mobile and multiple, yet local, practical and ordered making of social and material realities, researchers gain an understanding of movement not as governed by rules, but as methodically generative. This makes it less interesting to find and define 'underlying' grammars, orders, rules or structures but rewarding and challenging to describe the methods that people (but also material agencies, e.g. through design) use to achieve and coordinate grammatical orientation and the making of orders" (Buscher & Urry, 2009: 103-4).

This emphasis on the performativity of everyday mobile practices meant an emphasis on observing and participating of them. Consequently, a vast array of studies have taken a phenomenological ethnographic approach aiming at grasping people's mobile experiences by researchers experimenting themselves the mobile practices of particular groups or subjects through mobile participant observation (Barker, 2009; Fincham et al., 2009; Horton, Christensen, Kraftl, & Hadfield-Hill, 2013; Jirón & Iturra, 2014; Spinney, 2011; Vergunst, 2011) or what some has been called 'go-along' (Kusenbach, 2003) or 'shadowing' (Czarniawska, 2007; Jirón, 2011). In addition to participant observation, ethnography also gives the space for using diverse sets of techniques within the context of ethnographic relationships, such as interviews, diaries, GPS tracking, mobile phone surveys, map, photo and video elicited interviews, audio and video recording and so on (Buscher & Urry, 2009; Christensen et al., 2011; Jirón, 2011; Lesley Murray, 2009;

Spinney, 2011), developing mixed-methods approaches to mobilities Murray describes some of the advantages of this kind of approach:

"The use of different methods and in different contexts, therefore, provides insights into the everyday mobility of young people that would not have been possible using static methods (...) rather than using the different results in a triangulation process that seeks validation, the different sets of data were considered to enrich the overall data. Mobile research is therefore not about finding "truth" but about investigating places narratives (...) such mixed method mobile research is more likely to capture the taken-for-granted, mundane elements of everyday life. Mobile research can enhance knowledge about how we "do" and how we experience what we do in different contexts (...) Mobile methods allow the exploration of the emotionality of everyday mobile life while it is taking place. The researcher becomes immerse in the mobile experience along with the participants, a process that is both legitimising and productive in allowing an appreciation of the more intricate sociality and emotionality of the journey" (Lesley Murray, 2009: 23-4).

'Mobile ethnography', according to Buscher and Urry (2009), "draws the researchers into a multitude of mobile, material, embodied practices of making distinctions, relations and places" (2009: 105). It is worth noting, however, that although the approaches grouped under the notion of 'mobile ethnographies' especially highlight these mobile aspects, ethnography has always involved many forms of mobilities: beginning with the arrangements before departure and physical travel of the researcher when the field was necessary away from home; keeping in touch through letters, emails or telephone between the field and home or academic institutions; and the corporeal movements of the researcher following the people around their houses, towns or cities. As argued by Jo Vergunst (2011), "ethnographers have always had to be concerned with the movements of their informants", which highlights "the importance of bodily technique and skill in fieldwork from a mobilities perspective" (2011: 203). In this sense, Vergunst posits a critical argument in relation to the call for mobile methods to simulate the various mobilities observed in the world. In contrast, he argues, "we need methodological tools or paradigms which can respond to modern systems of mobility but do not in themselves necessarily reify such systems" (Vergunst, 2011: 204). His argument is one among an emerging body of literature that had begun to critically analyse the methodological implications of research in mobilities.

Peter Merriman (2014), for example, follows Vergunst (2011) in arguing that the so called 'mobile methods' – among which ethnography in its more 'mobile' forms is central – present rather problematic assumptions that have not been addressed until recently. Merriman identifies, among other problematic issues, the assumption and 'illusion' of 'first-handedness' that phenomenological- qualitative methods attach to physical proximity between researcher and subjects. In addition to this, he argues, there is sometimes an overreliance on some forms of technologies, such as video recorders or GPS devices that

are supposed to "provide a more accurate and close apprehension of practices and experiences of movement" (2011: 179). This, as also argued by Vergunst (2011), generates a problematic sense of validation (Merriman, 2014; Vergunst, 2011). Merriman observes as well the prioritisation of certain (qualitative) methods over others in mobilities research. This is problematic because it runs the risk of making essential certain methods and because there is an assumption that all mobilities research is a strand of social sciences (Merriman, 2011).

Related to the latter argument, Katharina Manderscheid argues that there are two main strands in mobility research. One focuses on movement as a meaningful social practice, with an emphasis on the subjective experience of mobility. This strand has tended to use qualitative methods, particularly ethnographic approaches. Manderscheid is critical of this strand because:

> "Micro-sociological approaches try to excavate especially (…) subjective elements, but (…) by collecting narrated data, they tend to focus mainly on the active experience of mobility. since actions and interpretations emerge most compellingly through narration, these methods tend to privilege intentional practices, action and activity over more fragile ways of being mobile (…) their focus tend to be more on the textual representation of meaning at the expense of attention to corporeal sensualities of mobile practices (…) only the conscious aspects that can be verbalised by the studied individual are captured" (Manderscheid, 2014: 190).

This is problematic, according to the author, because patterns of mobility cannot be fully grasped as the product of rational decisions made by autonomous subjects (Manderscheid, 2014: 193). The other strand focuses on the macro level of flows and movements, "The material, political and economic macro conditions" that "constitute the necessary preconditions for objects, information and people to move" (Manderscheid, 2014: 189). This kind of studies, Manderscheid argues, run the risk of analysing social forms as separated from social life. Although the mobilities perspective aims at connecting these two realms, she argues, they have mainly remained separated in mobility research. As a consequence, Manderscheid observes, there is a methodological blind spot in relation to "the systematic links between social and spatial structures on the one hand and practices of mobility and immobility on the other hand" (Manderscheid, 2014: 190). To this respect, one of the main present challenges for the mobilities perspective is: "the systematic unbundling and formalization of research protocols, methods and analyses that can integrate macro and micro components, rather than allowing these to continue developing separately" (D'Andrea, Ciolfi, & Gray, 2011).

Whilst acknowledging this challenge, ethnography should not be associated with an exclusively micro and subjective focus. For example, partly addressing this challenge, the use of ethnography has expanded

from a traditional ethnographic focus on humans to a focus on the circulation of non-human actors as well, as animals, food and objects, but also policies, information and ideas, challenging the notion of ethnographic field at the same time (Cook, 2004; Cresswell, 2010a, 2010b; Spinney, 2011; Urry, 2007; Watts, 2008). An ethnographic approach that focuses its attention not only on humans but also on the manifold agencies and materialities involved in social interaction and circulation is in tune with an understanding of mobilities as interdependent forms of circulation of people and non-human beings and materialities (Urry, 2007) and the different scales and dimensions of these mobilities. Vergunst also refers to this issue when he asserts that it would be mistaken "to equate a close-grained ethnography with merely the study of the immediate and close-at-hand (or foot). Exploring the way that walkers interact with different kinds of technology allows the 'macro' generalisation to be made in a particular way: each journey creates a certain kind of sociality and a continuous recreation of social form" (Vergunst, 2011: 216). Another illustrative example of this is the 'follow the thing' approach developed by Cook et al. (2004), in which the focus on something like papayas being sold in UK markets allows a series of interrelations between people, food, transport means, work chains and so on in disperse parts of the world to emerge.

The methodological debate around micro and macro levels of study is not exclusive from mobility studies, but relates to a dichotomic understanding of social phenomena that permeates diverse fields of enquiry, as discussed in Part I. The same sort of critique towards ethnography understood as tantamount with micro-level studies has emerged among childhood studies and children's geographies (Ansell, 2009; Qvortrup, 1999), as I will address in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Ethnography and childhood studies

1. Anthropology, ethnography and childhood

The relationship between ethnography, childhood and children can be seen from two perspectives. One is in the relation between anthropology and childhood, both in the sense of how children have historically appeared in general anthropological accounts, and in a more specific anthropology of childhood. The second is in relation to how ethnography has been taken up as one of the main methods for researching children's lives from social, spatial and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Whilst traditional and contemporary anthropological accounts about diverse phenomena have not paid particular attention to children among its subjects of study (Hardman, 2001(1973)) – and the same has been argued in relation to sociology (Prout, 2005; Turmel, 2008) – there were relevant exceptions such as the work of Margaret Mead in which children and young people were given a central place for understanding culture (Mead, 1973). Although the form in which children were conceptualised and engaged in research has been critically addressed (Christensen, 1994; Hardman, 2001(1973)), Margaret Mead left a precedent that flourished later on in the outline of an anthropology of childhood or children's anthropology (Christensen, 1994; Hardman, 2001(1973); H. Montgomery, 2009; Van der Geest, 1996). In this context, children were not addressed only as a way of further understanding particular cultural features and as future adults, but with the aim of understanding children's perspectives in their own right (Christensen, 1994). This made an important difference in relation to previous (and still ongoing) approaches to children in social sciences in which mothers, teachers or other relevant adults were consulted about children whilst children's views remained muted (Christensen, 1994; Van der Geest, 1996). As Christensen (1994) put it:

> 'By adopting a phenomenological approach we take as the basic unit of analysis the experiences, perceptions and actions of the child, and follow the tradition of giving a voice to the subjects of study through our academic discipline. The ethnographic method particularly aims towards amplifying the voice of social groups who have not yet been heard, whether these be ethnic groups, women, ill persons or children. But to date the roles and representations of children as they are depicted even in ethnographic studies are problematic" (Christensen, 1994: 1).

Positioned in relation to anthropology, questions emerged about whether an anthropology of childhood was possible (Hardman, 2001(1973)) and, in that case, how were children constituted as research subjects or as a 'cultural other' (Christensen, 1994). Important methodological implications emerged from these questions. For example, whether an anthropology of childhood was possible depended, centrally, on

particular conceptions of children in terms, for instance, of consciousness and experience (Danaher, 2005). Rendering children as different from adults resulted, in some cases, in the development of 'child-friendly' methods that took for granted children's developmental stages and their consequent inability to engage in research in the same ways as adults. Christensen and James critically addressed this position arguing that rather than especial methods for working with children, ethnographers – or other researchers working with ethnographic approaches – should pay attention to particular 'cultures of communication' with which the researcher needs to engage in order to create meaningful relationships with participants (Christensen & James, 2000a). This point will be further developed in the next chapter in relation to this particular study.

2. Ethnography and the new social studies of childhood, children's geographies and children's mobility

Ethnography was addressed as a key methodology in the development of the new social studies of childhood (Corsaro, 2011; James & Prout, 2000). It constitutes a methodology that brings the researcher closer to children's lives and relationships, so that compared to experimental or survey style research, gives children a more direct voice in the data produced in research (Christensen, 1994; James et al., 1998; James & Prout, 2000). This was particularly relevant in relation to the notion of children as social actors (James et al., 1998; James & Prout, 2000), whose actions constitute a potential source of social change (Christensen, 1994). This idea was held not only in relation to children in society, but also and in relation to children and research practices (Christensen, 2010; Christensen & James, 2000a, 2000b; James et al., 1998; James & Prout, 2000). As a consequence, this changed the way children were being engaged in research, from passive subjects of study that were not usually consulted about their views and experiences, to more or less active research participants whose perspectives and experiences were key in order to understand their lives and positions in culture and society - as well as for understanding societies themselves (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; James & Prout, 2000; Turmel, 2008).

What made the knowledge produced through ethnographic research so unique, is that it depends on "the researcher taking part in close social interaction with informants over extensive periods of time" (Christensen, 2004:166). This close interaction has spatial and temporal implications, allowing:

> "(…) in-depth and detailed insight into questions of children's lived experiences and practices, including into connections and interactions with their material, social and cultural worlds" (Christensen, 2010:145).

Therefore, ethnography makes visible aspects of children's lives that otherwise may remain hidden for

many adults, including childhood researchers (James & Prout, 2000). This argument was illustrated by children's geographies take on ethnography. In this context, children's spatialities have been visualised, allowing researchers to focus on *children's places* rather than exclusively on *places for children* (Fog & Gullov, 2003). This has resulted in diverse interdisciplinary research endeavours and various detailed accounts in which space, place-making, memory, policies, economy, intergenerational relationships and childhood are interwoven in children's spatial experiences (Christensen, 2003; Gallacher, 2005; Horton et al., 2013; Katz, 2004). This has been particularly the case of ethnographic approaches to the study of children's mobility: whilst the more quantitative research on this field has produced important information about children's scope, frequency and kinds of mobility (Badland, Oliver, Duncan, & Schantz, 2011; Hillman, Adams, & Whitelegg, 1990; Mattson, 2002; O´Brien et al., 2000), qualitative and particularly ethnographic research has widened our knowledge about how children experience mobility and our understanding of their own perspectives on issues affecting their mobile practices (Barker, 2009; Barker et al., 2009; Christensen & Mikkelsen, 2011; Christensen et al., 2011; Christensen, 2003; Drianda & Kinoshita, 2011; Kullman, 2010; Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009; Milne, 2009; L Murray, 2009; Nansen et al., 2014; Porter et al., 2010; Punch, 2000; Strandell, 2014, among others).

Ethnographic approaches to children's lives have been also criticised in the fields of social studies of childhood and children's geographies. The main critical points relate, just as in relation to mobile methods, to the micro-macro or horizontal-vertical dimensions of social life. It is generally assumed that ethnography is concerned exclusively with the micro or horizontal dimensions of life, leaving unexplored macro, vertical or structural issues. This relates, on the one hand, to a dualistic conception of agency and structure that permeates diverse social sciences and has been many times the main critique against ethnography in general. Christensen (1994) has argued that, in order to avoid this one-dimensional focus, ethnography needs to tackle both the 'horizontal' and 'vertical' dimensions of social phenomena. This is, on the agency of people and the social structures in relation to which these agencies are performed. In doing so, it is key for ethnography to pay attention not only to the individual subjects but also to their interactions with institutions that represent social structures in people's everyday lives (Christensen, 1994). These are, however, dualistic understandings of society that the theoretical framework discussed in Part I aims to overcome through the notion of assemblage, network and circulation, and the re-conceptualisation of agency and structure, the global and the local, among other dichotomic pairs.

On the other hand, this critique is reinforced in relation to ethnographic approaches in childhood studies. Their emphasis on children as social agents has been said to be translated into exclusive focus on children's immediate spaces and interactions (Ansell, 2009; Qvortrup, 1999), and on what children do 'on their own' (Kraftl, 2013) or what I described in Part I as the 'Charlie Brown Syndrome'. In this regard, it is not a problem with ethnography or with the notion of children as agents, but with the way in which this idea is interpreted and methodologically applied. Here, I agree with Christensen (1994) when she argues that:

"The focus on children's practices and constructions does not mean (…) that their life world can be understood in isolation from the life world of adults (Prout, 1989). An ethnography of children and childhood must be seen as acknowledging the interplay between the adult's and the child's perspective on culture. Thus, acknowledging the child's perspective does not imply an interest in the isolated worlds of the 'other'" (Christensen, 1994: 10).

I would add, however, that an ethnography of children and childhood must also acknowledge the interplay between diverse children and adults differently positioned in relation to each other, but also between people, animals and landscapes (Taylor, 2013; Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015), technological artefacts and systems (Prout, 2005' Turmel, 2008), natural and culturally organised rhythms (Kullman & Palludan, 2011), information, images ((Latour, 2005, 2013) and so on. The particular ways in which I have aimed at putting in practice this ethnographic approach to mobilities in young children's everyday lives will be the subject of chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Studying mobilities in young children's everyday lives in Wishwell

The notion of 'cultures of communication', as developed by Christensen (Christensen, 2004; Christensen & James, 2000a), questions the necessity of developing particular methods for working with particular groups of people, particularly in ethnographic research with children. Christensen argues that no particular methods should be required when working with children (or adults), but rather a methodological approach sensitive to the particular 'cultures of communication' that the researcher encounters or identifies among the people she is working with. This position challenges the essentialism that has characterised many approaches to the study of childhood and children (Christensen & James, 2000a), giving a step back in the idea that research with children requires specific 'child-friendly' methods. Christensen argues that fieldwork can be seen "(…) as a practical engagement with local cultural practices of communication" (Christensen, 2004:170). In this context, she describes her own experience in terms of how "(…) by observing children's language use, their conceptual meanings and their actions" she "pieced together a picture of the social interactions and the connections between people. Through getting to know about different codes of conduct and communication, contexts and timing" she "learned how to behave and interact with and among children" (Christensen, 2004:170).

Observing cultures of communication implies a double exercise of creation of knowledge: on the one hand, the knowledge that the research aims to produce; on the other hand, the knowledge and sensitivity that the researcher requires in order to perform her role and generate the appropriate fieldwork relations and conditions for the creation of the other, which is the matter of methodology. In ethnography, both exercises and types of knowledge are intimately interwoven, and this is what I would like to illustrate throughout this chapter.

Following Clifford (1997)'s idea of the importance of *getting there* as well as *being there*, in the field, I would argue that as important as getting and being there are the ways of *staying there* and *going beyond*. In all of these exercises, paying attention to the particular cultures of communication in place is key. In my experience of fieldwork, however, I also observed the importance of looking at the particular 'cultures of movement' that shaped people's everyday lives. This was not only relevant as the subject of my research, but also in terms of the methodological implications of moving myself and with the people with whom I was working with. In what follows, I will discuss diverse aspects encountered in fieldwork in terms of getting, being, staying there and going beyond, and how all these dimensions are tied up together on the anthropological exercises of talking with people, walking or riding a bus or car with them, calling on the phone, sending a text or email for arranging meetings, writing, collecting, and registering data.

1. Observing and participating of young children's mobilities

At the beginning of fieldwork I defined three stages of involvement with participants, or three ways in which people could participate of the study. The first one was the observation of children and families within the boundaries of Wishwell Children's Centre, where I was carrying out observation in some of the drop-in play sessions. The second stage would be interviews with some of the parents I would meet there, the ones willing to take part of the study in this way. This would ideally take place outside the children's centre. A third stage involved a deeper level of engagement, with children and families inviting me to take part of some of their everyday activities, either at home, trips or elsewhere. In practice, these forms of engaging with people were performed in a chronologically messy way: some families invited me from the beginning of our relationships to have an interview at home or join in a trip somewhere else, during which observation was part of the dynamic. With other families we developed more or less long-term relationships that remained based in the children's centre.

In addition to the different spaces and modes in which I observed young children's mobilities, I observed a wide range of practices considered as diverse forms of mobilities, and a wide range of actors considered as part of these mobile practices. The theoretical definition of mobilities (Urry, 2007) shaped the kinds of phenomena that I was initially observing: physical, virtual, communicative and imaginative forms of travel performed by or in relation to young children. However, at the same time the observations I conducted questioned these categories and raised other aspects or forms of movements to focus on when observing, interviewing and so on. The tension between these theoretical and empirical aspects is discussed in Part IV. Although the general structure of the chapters follows the categories of mobilities posited by Urry (2007), the chapters and their interrelated accounts question the possibility and necessity of these analytical categorisations, while raising aspects of mobilities that are not covered by these categories. This analytical iterative process is the result of the way in which theory and methodology were interrelated throughout the research process, with fieldwork and analysis constituting an intermingled and continuous exercise. This is discussed in more detail in the introduction to Part IV.

1.1 Finding and choosing the participants: a snowball or a constellation?

The selection of the site of study, Wishwell, related in part to its apparent boundedness and features in common with many other towns in the UK, as it will be discussed in Part III. The group of children that participated of the study can be defined as a non-probabilistic sample (O'Reilly, 2009) that corresponded to the criteria of being between 0 and 4 years old, therefore defined as young children or pre-schoolers, living in or around Wishwell. Although the sample did not intend to be representative of the whole of Wishwell and its surroundings, it was important to include a diversity of family circumstances in terms of their mobilities and connections to people and places near and far. Therefore, some participant families

had most of their meaningful relationships within a close spatial range, whilst others had family, friends or work networks that extended beyond the town, national and even continental boundaries. This implied a diversity of national and ethnic origins within the group of participant families. However, I did not intentionally look for 'big' or extraordinary spatial ranges in their everyday lives. I aimed at including participants from the different areas in which the site was divided – administratively, but also in the perspective of its inhabitants.

The way in which I contacted potential participants was mainly casual and following the networks of the people I met in fieldwork, sometimes coinciding with what is called 'snowball sampling' (O'Reilly, 2009: 198). However, the metaphor of a snowball does not reflect the relevance that the connections between participants had in this study. Rather than creating an ever-bigger snowball or an ever-bigger sample of participants, what I aimed for was to extend my acquaintance with the networks that composed the participants' constellations. Therefore, this 'sampling' mode had an empirical purpose but also a theoretical base that is better expressed by the metaphor of constellations, to which I have referred in Chapter 3. A constellation is made out of connections between its elements. In the case of young children's everyday lives in and around Wishwell following their constellations implied observing not only children but also their connections and interactions with a range of other actors located at various distances that were also considered as participants. These included other people such as the children's mothers, fathers, siblings, grandmothers, and also family friends or neighbours, and also other kinds of actants such as objects, mobility artefacts, policies, animals, and so on. This wide spectrum of participants responded to the idea that children do not live isolated from adults – what I have referred to as the 'Charlie Brown syndrome' – and other agents. Considering all these entities as actors involved a turn in relation to the widespread understanding that:

> "It is a distinctive feature of social research that the 'objects' studied are in fact 'subjects', in the sense that they have consciousness and agency. Moreover, unlike physical objects or animals, they produce accounts of themselves and their worlds" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 95).

From the perspective of non-representational theories that inform many of the 'new wave' social studies of childhood (Kraftl, 2013) there are three arguments that are relevant to point out in relation to this methodological approach. First, actors involved in social relations are not necessarily humans (Bennett, 2010; Prout, 2005; Latour, 2005; Turmel, 2008). Second, actors, either human or of other kinds, are not necessarily conscious of all their actions and effects (Bennett, 2010; Latour, 2005). And third, agency is accomplished through the joint action of heterogeneous actors through the assemblages they become part of (Bennett, 2010; Prout, 2005; Latour, 2005; Turmel, 2008). Therefore, the distinction pointed out by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) between objects and subjects, and humans, objects and animals, is challenged.

The inclusion of these participants varied according to children's routines. This depended particularly on who were the people the children shared their everyday mobilities with, and the materialities that mediated, performed or were the aim of their connections and interactions. This sampling approach, therefore, constituted an ongoing process that I carried out along fieldwork, rather than an initial and definite phase of the research.

1.2 Interviews, observation, documents and diaries

Some of the participants were co-present in our encounters. Others were physically absent but were present through virtual or communicative travel, or they were part of the accounts narrated by the co-present participants. Relating to these manifold participants implied the interrelated use of interviews, participant observation, informal conversation and in some cases participants' diaries. The inclusion of objects, artefacts and policies that were part of the constellations being studied required the use of techniques such as collecting and organising information leaflets, doing online research searching for policy documents or information about certain artefacts, and taking pictures of objects. These were all part of the array of fieldwork techniques employed in the making of the network (Latour, 2005) that I was studying.

After having some kind of first encounter with children and families at the children's centre, and usually after giving a research information leaflet, I would ask parents or grandparents for an interview. This was, in some ways, a cornerstone in the research relationships. The possibilities were that parents refused to have an interview; that they agreed to have one in the centre, in a park or café, or that they invited me to do the interview at their home. In the cases that my request was accepted, a first gesture was for people to give me their phone numbers or email addresses so that we could arrange the date later on – an issue to which I will return when discussing the role of technologies in fieldwork.

 In most cases the interviews took place at the participants' houses, so it was also an instance for observation and development of the research relationships. In some other cases interviews took place at alternative locations, such as park benches. In both cases agreeing on the interview location and time was an important negotiation where many aspects emerged, such as family relationships, housing circumstances, work, routines, and natural phenomena such as the weather, seasons, illness or women's menstrual cycles. Interviews were audio-recorded and later on transcribed.

Through the interviews I aimed at exploring children's everyday routines and interactions as they were perceived and organised by parents. Questions about origins and relationships abroad were fundamental in bringing to the fore children's connections beyond the immediate surroundings and physical co-presence. Even people who started saying they had 'very dull' or 'very local' lives, ended up talking about

Skype sessions with a brother living abroad, a present that came through the post all the way from Australia, pictures sent to grand-grandmother in India, etc. These questions were also key in positioning children's lives in a historical and temporal context.

Through the interviews I explored the reasons why these children lived in Wishwell, and the links between residential location, raising children and understandings of childhood. Talking about children's everyday activities, trips, visited people and places allowed me to visualise the movements that connected children to diverse localities, people and institutions. In tandem with this, I looked at the manifold mechanisms through which these connections were established in the first place. In this regard, the interviews revealed, for example, the relevant role of the leaflets that I had been collecting. The interviews aimed at identifying some of the connections and affects (Harker, 2005; Kraftl, 2013) that were part of children's everyday lives and mobilities. They reflected, in this regard, the conscious aspects of families' routines and mobilities, those that respondents were able and willing to talk about. In this sense, their content was analysed and their validity understood in relation to other forms of data such as participant observation experiences, fieldnotes, information leaflets, policy documents, and so on. In some cases interviews led the way towards other actors, for example travel artefacts, companies offering private antenatal classes, the NHS and its staff and medical centres, traffic regulations or other people. In some cases, for example in relation to the rationale for choosing certain forms of joint mobility (for example, wether to use or not a child leash), interviews led to regulations and policies (i.e. the Highway Code) that in turn became explanatory frames for the decisions and concerns expressed in the interviews. Parents, regulations, documents and artefacts were all seen in these cases as actors in the assemblage of child-adult mobility practices in Wishwell.

Who was interviewed depended on a series of aspects. First, I did not aim at conducting interviews with young children, as conversation was not their main culture of communication. Interviewees were mainly parents or carers that had a close insight into children's everyday lives, people who shared their everyday lives with them. in addition to this criterion, there was also an issue of access that partly shaped the group of people I interviewed. On the one hand, I encountered what the literature on social policies and particularly Sure Start in the UK has defined as 'those hard-to-reach' (Garbers et al. 2006; Gustafsson & Driver, 2005; NESS & Anning, 2007)– issue that I discuss in Chapter 8. These were people that for diverse reasons I was not able to engage with into meaningful exchanges conducive to research involvement. Although these were in general people who were very involved within the children's centre activities and seemed very close to the centre staff, seemed wary of a stranger like me. I was not able to overcome this distance with many people, which can be due, among other reasons, to my lack of confidence in English, my cultural background and so on. On the other hand, among the people I did engage with in meaningful interactions, access to their time varied according to their personal circumstances. For example, many of the participant mothers were in maternity leave or did not have

regular paid jobs. Therefore, they had time for doing an interview at home and were able to invite me to some of their daily activities without me being an inconvenient company.

I conducted eighteen recorded interviews, ranging from 25 to 112 minutes long. The parents interview guidelines can be found in Appendix 2, and transcription conventions in Appendix 4.

Participant observation was carried out in diverse spaces and situations, sometimes within a closed place such as the children's centre, houses or soft-games centres; sometimes going somewhere with the participants, on the car, bus or walking on the road, to places such as a park, farm or shops. Observation was recorded mainly through hand-written notes but also through Evernote (on the mobile phone or computer), and through pictures, videos and some audio-notes.

Participant observation, especially within the children's centres, allowed me to complement the accounts provided by interviews, informal conversation and diaries, with many 'naturally occurring' and 'unsolicited oral accounts' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 99) that were part of the conversations between the children's centre attendants – many of whom participated of the study in other ways as well – and sometimes involved me too. This was the case, for example, of mothers chatting about babies' sleep patterns, mobility-developmental milestones and health concerns, or volunteers discussing the boundaries of the town. These accounts were many times the source for new research questions, observation focuses and interview topics, so that different forms of data 'illuminated each other' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 103). The accounts were registered in fieldnotes as part of the participant observation register.

Participant observation on different settings also allowed me to directly observe children's mobile practices. Although observation was initially shaped by the theoretical categories of mobilities (Urry, 2007), the very observation of children's mobile practices challenged these categories. This tension between theory and empirical observation was at the core of the research analysis. For example, the impossibility of clearly categorising observations and accounts in relation to the types of mobilities that they implied made explicit that the analytical separation of forms of movement did not match the empirical reality that I was observing. This was the case, for example, of the account of Horace discussed in Chapter 11, in which physical, virtual and communicative travel converge in a child and his father's experience of long-term separation and intermittent communication. Another example was the emergence of forms of mobilities that did not match any of the categories described by Urry (2007), for example babies' movements within the boundaries of a blanket, which also challenged these categories and the definition of mobilities as travel. Observation, therefore, was conducted with initial guidelines based on the forms of mobilities defined by the mobilities perspective, but these categories were not a fixed frame for observation. Each observation would raise new questions and points to focus on future observations, interviews and document collection.

Participant observation was also shaped by the idea of looking at children as nodes of material connections to places near and far, whose agencies were – or were not – accomplished through joint action with many other actants. This implied changing my focus during observation, for example from the babies to the toddlers, who would lead me to the toys and musical instruments in their hands, following these in their trajectories towards other children and places, to mothers and back to the babies; or from the children's centre to a policy document that led me to another far away children's centre (although not through direct observation) and back to WCC. This form of participant observation implied many forms of mobilities for me as a researcher.

Written documents and material artefacts have not received as much attention in ethnographic methodological accounts (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) as interactions between people – participants and researcher. In this study, however, manifold documents became part of the data. They ranged from textual material produced by Wishwell's inhabitants – such as opinion letters to the local newspaper, the town's regular magazine, letters and ads displayed in the local boards and in the children's centre, etc – to leaflets, maps, statistics and forms produced by local authorities, the NHS or other national government departments, private companies and groups that were found in diverse settings in Wishwell, and books and digital material to which I was led by the issues and themes emerging from other forms of data. While the two first kinds of documents were both evidently present in or referred to the 'local' setting of the field – for example, the book where new parents are asked to register their babies' medical appointments, measures and developmental milestones (Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health, 2009) to which I refer in Chapter 12 was given to me by one of the NHS staff at the children's centre, within the folder given to all new parents in Wishwell and elsewhere within the UK - the last kind was not necessarily directly present in Wishwell, but mediated through other materials or phenomena. An example of this is the 'Hot Drinks Policy' (Sure-Start, 2012) to which I refer in Chapter 8: although I did not encounter the policy document itself in material form within Wishwell – in the form of leaflet, news, notice or so on – the events observed in the children's centre led me to ask about the rationale for the new regulations being put in place in the centre, and therefore they led me to the policy document, which I found online. Another example of this is the reference to the Highway Code (Department for Transport and Driving Standards Agency, 2007) in relation to children's leashes in Chapter 9. Again, the Highway Code was not itself a document I encountered in the field. However, many of the leaflets found in the children's centre about traffic safety referred to national traffic safety regulations that are the core of the Highway Code. In addition to that, my knowledge of the national traffic regulations revealed that this document constituted a mandatory reading for any person willing to pass the driving theory test in the UK. Therefore, its contents appeared as a key framework for the understanding of Wishwell's inhabitants' behaviours and perspectives in relation to traffic matters.

Another kind of document, this time solicited by the researcher to some of the participants, was the diary. Diaries are generally addressed as a useful way of accessing information or accounts that are otherwise difficult to obtain (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), as suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007): "with suitable cooperation from informants, the diary, in particular, can be used to record data that might not be forthcoming in face-to-face interviews or other data collection encounters" (2007: 127). In some cases this information can refer to private or intimate accounts that participants may not be willing to bring up in a conversation or interview. In the context of this study, rather than expecting this kind of revelatory accounts, the use of diaries aimed at accessing details of children's routines that may not be brought up in interviews because of their triviality, in the perspective of participants, or because they are simply forgotten.

The idea was to ask families to keep a diary – on a notebook provided by me – for one week, centred on the participating child's everyday routines and trips. They could write, collate tickets, leaflets or pictures. The diaries were a very demanding and time-consuming activity that put back most of the people I told about it – including my husband when I asked him to pilot the first guidelines I designed, and myself when I tried to keep one about my son as a way of exploring this tool. However, three mothers offered to do it before I directly ask them to do it, after reading the research leaflet. They all suggested keeping it for two weeks rather than one. From these three diaries I got back two, both with very valuable insights into children's trips, activities, the people that is part of their lives beyond immediate families, parent's perceptions of their emotions in different spaces and intimate family routines. Although the diaries constitute rich materials, they were even richer when used as conversation or interview material. In this sense, many questions emerged from these two diaries, and spaces I was not able to physically access became visualised, such as grandparents' homes in other cities or leisure attractions.

All these kinds of documents were not analysed in isolation, but in relation to other forms of data such as interview quotes, fieldnotes, diary abstracts or other documents. They were seen as actors that formed part of the constellations being studied, particularly of the constellation of young children's mobilities in Wishwell. As such, they mediated he actions of different actors, circulating ideas, policies, information, images, and so on.

1.3 'I don't want to be a shadow': not only observing, but participating in mobile practices

Before beginning fieldwork I had decided that the shadowing technique (Czarniawska, 2007; Gilliat-Ray, 2011; Jirón, 2009b; Quinlan, 2008) would be the key method for approaching mobilities in young children's everyday lives in Wishwell. Shadowing implies the researcher closely following the movements and actions of a participant, 'becoming' her, his or its 'shadow' (Jirón, 2011) and therefore not only observing these actions and movements but also approaching the participant's experiences as much as possible.

However, I did not know how mobile the participants of the study would be. Looking at that time now, it was a bet to determine in that stage of the study whether I would do multi-sited ethnography or use forms of participant observation in movement such as 'shadowing'. I did not know the reasons, sizes, scale, frequency and mediums of the movements of the people I would encounter – and that was precisely the reason for doing this fieldwork. In the same way that I could not predefine particular ways of working with the participants according to their ages, I could not predefine the best way of getting to know their spatialities based on their ages or residential location. In the end, I had to be open and let people share with me the spaces and ways of moving and communicating that were relevant for them.

I found out then, for example, that 'shadow' was not the most suitable metaphor for naming and explaining my role during the observations of the participants' movements: whilst the shadowing technique attempts to neutralize the presence of the researcher through the metaphor of the "shadow", and it considers her/his intervention as methodologically problematic (Czarniawska, 2007), in my case there was an interactive and participatory relationship involved in my mobile observations: I was going *with* the people, not *behind* them. I realised of this the day that I actually 'shadowed' a boy and his mother for a couple of minutes.

I had met Barbra, a volunteer in the children's centre, mother of 6 children and young people, and inhabitant of Wishwell. I had talked with her about the research, and we agreed to have an interview at her home. The day of the interview she had to go and pick up the children from school, so I walked with Barbra, meeting various women on the way, silently participating of their quick chats on the road, talking with Barbra, hearing what she had to say about these people. When we arrived at the school, while waiting for Henry - her 4 years old son - to come out, she told me that sometimes he was not in a good mood after school, so it would be better to talk to him later. I did not get the real meaning of this, and I was surprised when, after greeting Henry, Barbra walked with him in front of me not even introducing me to the boy. She winked at me and signalled to follow them. So I walked behind them all the way to the other entrance of the school, where her daughter would come out. Henry talked to his mother, walked with her and I was literally a shadow walking behind, even a bit nervous about being caught out! I wrote on my fieldnotes: "I was beginning to feel uncomfortable, this was REALLY LIKE SHADOWING THEM!!!". From time to time Barbra would look back at me and make some gesture or tell me something that I could not hear, but I was mainly shadowing them, observing how they walked, talked and interacted with others on their way, from a distance and with no direct interaction between us. Later on I was introduced and, as she had warned, Henry just roared at me and run away on his scooter, taking a while for him to talk to me – although in the end he was even sharing his sweets with me while watching telly together.

This situation emerged from this family's cultures of communication and movement, and I had to respect it and behave according to what Barbra thought was the best. However, during the minutes I followed them

as a shadow, I realised not only that this was not what I was doing most of the time with other people, but also that this was not what I really wanted to do in my research. I did not want to be a shadow, as I wrote in my field diary.

The shadowing technique has been mainly used within organisational studies, with the researcher observing the activities and movements of very busy people at work, during meetings, phone calls, individual work, etc. (Czarniawska, 2007). In this context, the presence of the researcher may constitute a problem not only because of the researcher's desire intervene the less possible in the 'natural' behaviour of the participants, but it may be a burden for the participant in practical terms if the researcher does not behave as a silent and subtle shadow (Czarniawska, 2007). Among the people I worked with, however, the situation was quite different. In most of the cases I was with children and adults, in circumstances in which adults were 'taking care' of their children. Most of the time, taking care of children did not coincide with working-time (and this should not be generalised, as in different contexts adults do work while taking care of children, and even children may participate of these productive activities). The children, although they may have been busy, many times involved me in their activities and they could have a rest of me while I talked with their parents or carers. My presence was actually helpful some times, for example when the children asked me to draw something for them, read a book or help with a jigsaw puzzle, or when adults asked me to hold a baby on my arms while they changed the nappies of the other child; or when asked to go after one a child in the playground while the mother went after the other one. I talked with the participants – children and adults - as we walked, just as I have seen they did with their friends, family or neighbours.

Re-reading many text messages through which we arranged our encounters I can see that the expression I commonly used was 'join you': "please let me know if I can join you some day this week…?". Many times they replied in the same terms: "we are going to… on Wednesday, you are welcome to join us…". 'Joining-in' the participants' trips or activities is quite different from the idea of shadowing them. It highlights the participative, collective character of the interaction, and the shared experience involved, as expressed by the notion of 'joint'. People shared with me what they were doing and the spaces they inhabited. After a couple of encounters they realised that even the humblest everyday walk or watching telly time were valuable for me and something worthy to share. I could not predict, however, whether my interactions with participants would take place at home, somewhere else or on the way there.

Therefore, in the same way that Christensen (2004) argues that we should not take for granted the particular methods that we will need in order to closely interact with people according to the ways in which they are categorised (Christensen, 2004), we should not take for granted the particular methods that we will need in order to observe people's im/mobilities. We should rather be open to learn about their cultures of movement, so that we can behave, interact, move and understand accordingly when 'being there'. With

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cultures of movement I mean the ways in which people organise and deal with distance in order to accomplish the interactions they need or want to engage in. This implies learning about people's resources, skills and access to means of movement – or what has been called motility (Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye, 2004) – but also about their rhythms, preferences, fears, mobility artefacts, routines, and so on.

1.4 Following things, and expanding the field

As important as referring to how the researcher gets to the field (which I will explore in Part III), is and stays there, is how the ethnographic research follows the threads of everyday life that go beyond the temporal and physical boundaries of the study. In doing so, artefacts may constitute a relevant aid.

Ian Cook (2004) developed a particular way of doing ethnographic-geographical research that aims at revealing the usually concealed processes behind the production, distribution and consumption of certain things - such as the papayas we find in the supermarkets. The kind of research developed in *'Follow the Thing: Papaya'* may be understood within the realm of multi-sited ethnography, where the field is expanded according to where the processes behind the papaya sold in an UK supermarket takes the researcher. Ian Cook was taken in that way to Jamaica as part of his ethnographic field. Although this was an appealing way for conducting my research, I was not able – for practical reasons that included family and financial matters - to travel beyond the boundaries of the United Kingdom following the traces that I found in young children's everyday lives in Wishwell. The idea behind the 'follow the things' project, however, was interesting to explore in alternative ways. Inspired by this idea, I conducted an ethnographic approach that paid particular attention to the materiality that was part of young children's lives.

Some examples of this are: how paying attention to the bracelets that many children wore in the children's centre I came to know about how these children were connected to their religious community and to their families in different geographical scales, as I will explore in Part IV; how paying attention to baby carriers opened up potential connections between Wishwell and ancient cultures of Asia, North and South America; or the role of leaflets in young children's mobilities in Wishwell. I did not need to physically travel abroad in order to follow these objects – although doing so would certainly open a whole new range of possibilities in the study of mobilities in young children's everyday lives. This approach, however, allowed me to expand the boundaries of the field and to see children as nodes of material connections to places near and far (Ansell, 2009), therefore moving between the 'horizontal' and 'vertical' planes of social life (Christensen, 1994).

When ethnographic attention is directed towards the hybrid nature of interactions, fieldnotes play a key role in translating what is observed into text trying to keep as much complexity as possible. But making good notes that create "good accounts" (Latour, 2005) is a difficult task when two hours of participant observation could easily mean a whole day of writing – especially if the field is not an ideal place for doing so. In this context it was important to discover some key principles to follow.

Bruno Latour highlights the importance of avoiding conceptual shortcuts in our accounts (Latour, 2005). Among diverse fields (topics) of study there must be different common shortcuts necessary to identify and avoid. Among childhood studies, probably one of most common conceptual shortcuts is the notion of play, especially in its verbal form, playing, as I found in my own note-making practice: I was looking at a group of children and a man in the children's centre. I first described this in my diary as "they were playing together". I stopped to think for a second and interrogated myself: what were they playing? What did I mean when with playing? I realised I was actually not saying anything about the interaction through which these people were engaging with each other. I corrected myself: they were making a tower with some building toys, cornet shaped. Still, it was not descriptive enough to grasp the richness of the interaction I had observed and participated in. After struggling for a bit, I ended up describing the event as follows:

> "Robert, Tabby, Karu, Ragi and Saif were putting one plastic cornet over another, building a sort of tower (I made the decision not to say 'they were making a tower' or 'they were playing with the plastic cornets', although those were my first options. I need to pay attention to my own trend towards making 'shortcuts' when describing my observations, especially related to children's activities, particularly with 'play' and 'playing'). Robert was holding the structure from 2 different highs, while the children were putting more cornets (not sure this is the best name for describing those things: plastic-made, different colours, about 15 cm long, with a cornet shape, open towards one side, so that you can put the closed side of one 'cornet' into the open side of another one, see drawing) on the top. As Ragi, Saif and Tabby became unable to reach the top sooner than Karu, Robert split the structure in the middle, so that the children could keep adding cornets and making it taller with no need for reaching the top of it. At some point, Robert couldn't keep holding it and splitting it at the same time, so I asked Karu whether I could put the last one on the top. So I did, and then I had to hold the structure from the top, otherwise it would collapse. And so it did, after I left it and after the children appreciated the product of their collaboration for a while. One of the cornets fell over a girl's head, not harm or cry involved. The event dissolved after the structure collapsed, resulting on many separated cornets spread over the floor together with other pieces of many kinds, and the children spreading around the room as well. I found this

interesting. Now I think it illustrates very well Vygotsky's concept of 'zone of proximal development' or Corsaro's ideas about children's agency" (fieldnotes, Namaste 15/05/13).

The analytical output at the end of the note was not the result of plain observation and participation, but of the making of a descriptive and detailed account of the event I observed and took part in. This realisation also challenges the very notion of play as an umbrella notion for everything that children do (Harker, 2005). In that sense, methodological and theoretical issues are tightly connected.

1.6 Mental pictures in a (not so) visual research

Early in my fieldwork I expected to carry out a study where visual methods would have a key role: pictures and videos taken and recorded by myself when joining-in children's trips, for instance, would constitute material for talking with participants afterwards. What happened then? On the one hand, in a first stage of fieldwork within the children's centre I faced the fact that photographs were not allowed. I could have requested permission to parents but people coming to the sessions was not always the same. Thus my idea of introducing the study and myself once for all would not work, and requesting permission for taking pictures would have been an ongoing task. In addition to that, I was finding my way into the hybrid role of researcher and volunteer. Handing a camera would have made it even more complex. So I thought I could leave the visual part for later, when I started working with children and families outside the centre.

However, once I started meeting participants outside the centre on a more frequent basis pictures and videos remained marginal. Although I still think visual methods can constitute very rich data that works in a different dimension than text, allows interesting ways of interacting with participants (through photo-elicited interviews for instance) and is useful for transmitting ideas (in papers and presentations), I did not always find circumstances in which I felt confident about photographing or video recording people. This confidence developed with time, when relationships with participants were stronger. My attitude as a researcher in this context contrasted with the way I had worked with visual methods in the past in Chile, which highlighted the fact that this issue was related to the particular 'cultures of communication' that I was being part of. In the meantime, I transformed the images I wanted to photograph or the situations I wanted to video-record in 'mental pictures' that I tried to describe in my written fieldnotes, following the principle of not taking 'shortcuts', as discussed above.

Consequently with an emphasis on materiality, I also approached objects and materials through visual means (Mitchell, 2011). On the one hand, I photographed rooms, artefacts, leaflets and posters. On the other, I collected visual information such as leaflets and booklets that I also consider as part of this visual endeavour. Both the lack of pictures and videos and the consideration of visual information collected as part of a visual approach open up the question of whether it is necessary for a research to be visual to

record images through technologies such as cameras, or whether the visual can be conveyed through other means such as memory, text, and materiality.

Some of the pictures I took in fieldwork are presented throughout the thesis in a modified form. They have been transformed into black and white sketches. When people appear in them, their facial particularities have been to some degree erased, so that the images contribute to the anonymity of participants. These images are not explicitly analysed here. This decision relates to the fact that, as explained earlier, I did not take pictures systematically with all the participants. Instead, the images displayed along the text convey affective aspects of the concepts or situations being discussed in each section. In this sense, they aim to work as 'affection-images' (Deleuze, 1986), so that:

> "Affects are not individuated like people and things, but nevertheless they do not blend into the indifference of the world. They have singularities which enter into virtual conjunction and each time constitute a complex entity. It is like points of melting, of boiling, of condensation, of coagulation, etc" (Deleuze, 1986: 103).

The image displayed on the cover page and page 156, for example, shows diverse components of a particular joint-mobility practice: the pushchair and all its parts; the rain cover, a woman's body and her clothing and gear; the bus timetable and a car in the background. It is also possible to guess the presence of children inside the pushchair. In this image, these material elements appear as connected, and actually some of them – the pushchair-mother – seem to compose a single entity. This entity, perceived here as aesthetic unity, conveys the notion of assemblage that is discussed throughout the thesis. The image is a point of condensation (Deleuze, 1986) for this idea. It is in this way that I expect the images to be seen and perceived: interrelated with the text, but conveying different aspects to the ones that textual discussion does, possibly unexpected aspects that the reader/viewer may discover. Therefore, the images are not numbered and they do not have explanatory captions. I have decided on the location of each image in relation to the ideas or situations being textually discussed or presented in each section. However, the images may as well refer to ideas present in any other parts of the thesis.

2. 'Will let you know in the morning': making and maintaining relationships in the field

While I conducted my research many times I wondered: how do other ethnographers organise time and contact with participants? How are their everyday lives while being doing fieldwork? There is never too much detail about this in ethnographic accounts. Still, I found this to be a key issue in developing an ethnographic study. Therefore, in this section I will present some insight in to my own ethnographic experience, discussing some issues that emerged from it.

2.1 The role of new communication technologies in shaping ethnographic practice

Most of my first encounters with the participants – before they became participants in my research – took place at the children's centre or at some activity organised by the children's centre (such as on a trip to a farm). Some others were contacted through personal networks, and for this I used email as first medium of contact. In all the cases, formal arrangements for participation – giving information leaflets and oral information, informed consents and meeting arrangements – were made with adults, as I will discuss later on in relation to research ethics.

I did not start contacting people officially as part of fieldwork until I had made an information leaflet. So this leaflet – as fragile in its agencies as the other leaflets encountered in the research, as I will discuss later – was my material introduction as an ethnographer, most of the times given beforehand. In the leaflet there were three stated ways of participating of the study: interviews, diaries and observations (at home, trips, playground, etc). Although I had the intention of being as clear as possible in the leaflet about these ways as alternative options – you could participate in one of those ways, two or all of them, according to your willingness and time - not as compulsory items, I found myself re-explaining this afterwards – after somebody said he was interested but did not have time for keeping a diary, for example. After explanation, the possibility of participating opened again.

Arranging the first encounter involved in most of the cases asking for the prospective participants' telephone number. This constituted a kind of threshold to cross once people expressed some interest on being contacted for the study. Initially because of my low confidence in speaking English, I was not happy about calling people. When I did, I usually felt ashamed of asking them to repeat something (several times sometimes) in order for me to understand. I had, therefore, a strong preference for text messages. However, this entailed the dilemma that perhaps replying to me with a text message was a burden for participants in terms of spending credits/money, or in terms of people not feeling confident with their writing, in the same way that I did not feel comfortable speaking on the phone. The decision about how to communicate with participants was always in question and implicitly re-negotiated with them: sometimes I did not get any answer on the phone, but did by using email. Other times I used a text message just to let them know that I had sent an email. Eventually I would have to call them anyway. Flexibility was part of these cultures/ways of communicating.

Every week started for me with quite a lot of uncertainty about how the week would be. It depended, of course, on the participants: on their activities, their time, organisation and their willingness to share some time with me. How this was arranged and which role spontaneity played are also important issues.

In addition to email, telephone and text messages, there was one particular and relatively new way of communication through mobile phones that came out to be very popular among the adult participants: WhatsApp. This is an instant messaging application for smart phones with Internet access. In addition to text messaging, it allows users to send each other images, video, and audio media messages. An important difference compared to common text messaging is that it has no cost provided the phone has access to Internet; it is possible to exchange messages with no national boundaries (as it is the case of the messages sent through telephone companies) and among groups of contacts. If you have WhatsApp on your mobile, once you add a new contact, if this number has the application, it will be visible on your WhatsApp list of contacts and it will be automatically possible to make contact through this medium. The application is always on, so it usually has a more immediate reach than an email, for instance. Looking at people's usage of WhatsApp, it seemed to be used not only as a means for communicating precise information (addresses, telephone numbers, dates) or for re/arranging meetings, but also as a way of keeping an on-going dialogue about every day issues with people who is more or less far away.

I knew about this application since I first arrived to the United Kingdom, as a friend from Chile suggested me to use it so that we could text each other. Nevertheless, I was surprised when the first time a participant contacted me through this means. She sent me a picture of the paper invitation to her son's birthday party, inviting my family to the celebration. The mobile phone become for me an artefact where diverse spheres of my life joint together through these combined technologies, applications, contacts, interactions, images, texts, etc. thus research communications interacting with personal communications. This example is illustrative of how cultures of communication are interwoven with technologies that expand people's (including the researcher's) fields of interactions.

WhatsApp is an innovative way of communication – a means of mobilities – that should be taken into account and further explored as part of the possible ways of ethnographic interaction and research communication – as well as in terms of the mobilities under study. Immediate text messaging and mobile communication in general configures particular ways of performing ethnographic relationships in terms of their temporal and spatial affordances. In my experience these forms of maintaining ethnographic relationships implied a great amount of flexibility and unpredictability, as shown in the following extract of my diary:

> "(while being at Tabby, Mark and Robert's house) I received a message from Heet saying she and Deva were going to town in 30 minutes, in case I wanted to join them. I said I'd call her if I could go. I was happy about it but it made me feel a bit nervous, feeling I had to rush, although I didn't want to stay for too long at Tabby and Mark's anyway. So I left after 3. I called Heet while walking towards the bus stop. She said they had just arrived and they're at the Bank. I said I'd take the bus and be there in 10 minutes (…) but the bus took more than 10 minutes to come,

maybe 20 or 30 (…) I called Heet from the bus again – after sending a message before taking the bus telling her not to wait for me if they were ready to go back home. She said they were in M&S; children's clothing? I asked; yes, she replied; so I'll meet you there, I said" (Fieldnotes, October 2013).

Mobile communication technologies in the context of research as in other kinds of social interaction allow communication taking place at any time from – almost – any space, changing plans, arranging or re-arranging –sometimes unexpected – encounters on the way. This implied for me to be ready to go – to the field, to other location, to adopt a researcher role – at almost any time during fieldwork. Many times I was not certain if I would join some family until the very morning of the supposed trip, as it depended on the weather, children being awake, ill and so on. Invitations many times included last minute changes or "I'll let you know in the morning" (If we are going, or what time we are going). I found myself ready to have lunch at home and suddenly preparing for going out to do an offer at the Hindi temple with one of the families taking part of the study. This increased the degree of uncertainty and flexibility in the organization of ethnographic practice.

Moreover, the use of mobile communications in this ethnographic research had impacts on the configuration and understanding of the field and spatial practices of research. In the previous account, for instance, I was spending some time at a family's house in the very end of Wishwell. Heet, on the other side, invited me to join her and her son Deva on a walk to 'town', meaning the neighbouring town's centre (this differences will be explained in Part III). Through this communication, a space such as the neighbouring town's centre became part of my field. The immediacy of this kind of communication facilitated the integration of everyday practices not necessarily pre-defined as meaningful for the fieldwork relationships. It also allowed the spontaneity, uncertainty and flexibility of people's everyday lives to be perceived, registered and shared by the ethnographer. The latter idea raises the question of whether people's everyday lives are getting more uncertain and flexible, or whether it is the communicative tools that we have for exploring people's everyday lives through our relationships with them that allow us to capture this uncertainty and flexibility.

The example discussed also shows that new communication technologies are always interdependent with other forms of movement and communication: no matter how immediate my messages and calls with Heet were, getting from one end of Wishwell into the heart of Riverton was not possible if I did not walk or take the bus. Our mobile and communicative practices become physical again, and overcoming distance depended on material means –such as the bus- where time-space is not as compressed as with a text message.

2.2 The role of the researcher and her 'expanded fields'

The desirability of "some degree of self-location" in the sense stated by Clifford (1997) is vital for understanding where the researcher, research site and participants are located in terms of "(…) where they/we are coming from, going to, and where on these paths research encounters have occurred" (Crang & Cook, 2007:10). Locating the itineraries that the researcher followed in relation to the study is a way of acknowledging that, as Crang and Cook argue: " (…) both researcher and researched are equally positioned, inter-connected and involved in the changing social and cultural relations under study" (Crang & Cook, 2007:8) – which should not be understood as the researcher and researched necessarily being in the *same* position in relation to the relations being studied. For this reason, if we are to situate ourselves as ethnographers in relation to a field of study, we need to understand not only how researchers and the people whose lives we aim to study are located in relation to certain boundaries at the time of the study, but also how researchers and participants got there and how these boundaries move when we move locations or positions. Understanding the geographical boundaries of ethnographic research implies then making visible the positions of people involved in the research process, including the researcher's own. And for making visible the positions and itineraries of the people involved in the research process, then, it is important to see research as an embodied activity that, as Craig and Cook points out, involves the whole physicality of the person in tandem with her/his "inescapable identities".

Research involves relationships between people more or less similar/different in terms of cultures, classes, genders, sexualities, dis-abilities, generations, nationalities, race, ethnicity, religions, etc. The understandings that emerge from these relationships are strongly affected by the way these relationships are performed (Crang & Cook, 2007). Moreover, Craig and Cook add: "(…) the relationships that matter are not only those between researcher and researched in a traditionally ascribed 'field' setting" (Crang & Cook, 2007:9). As important as these are the relationships developed within and between what Craig and Cook (2007) call 'expanded fields'. The researchers' expanded fields include relationships developed with others in the academy (supervisors, examiners, referees, editors, colleagues, students), in a researcher's 'outside' life (e.g. family members, friends, children, community members), among others. These relations may have as much influence over the research resulting understandings as the relations developed within the strictly ethnographic site of study (Crang & Cook, 2007:9). Following this argument and drawing on some experiences from fieldwork I will illustrate the relevance that my own identity and 'expanded fields' had for the research relationships.

Picture me at the beginning of fieldwork being introduced by the children's centre staff, as a student conducting a study about children in Wishwell, to a group of mothers circling around the babies' area chatting to each other. I am sitting on one of the chairs, listening to what they talk about, not completely understanding what they say – mainly because of language barriers when listening to a big group

conversation - now and then engaging in some short interaction with one of the babies through some of the toys distributed over the blanket on the floor. I seem completely invisible to the mothers. Not because they do not see me – actually, they are probably asking themselves who I am, what do I want, where I am from, how old I am – but because they do not have any point of reference to perceive me. At this respect, my physical aspect is not irrelevant: although I am in my early 30s, probably older than many of these mothers, people have frequently amazed when they learn that I am a mother because I look younger than I actually am (at least that was the case when I started this PhD). Therefore, there was not a shared connection from where to start an interaction. Suddenly, I would make a comment giving a glimpse of my own motherhood - something like: "oh yes, I remember when my son was beginning to crawl and I would have to chase him around…". The response from the other mothers revealed a completely new attitude and a range of new possibilities for engagement: "oh, you have a son? How old is he? Where are you from? Is he here with you? Which school is he going to?" and so on.

The idea of 'expanded fields' is interesting in this discussion. It directs our attention to the manifold relationships that the researcher is engaged on in a time and space that precedes or is not directly related to the research and the field setting, that are, however, relevant for the research process. A clear differentiation between 'outside' and 'inside' of the field is in this way blurred. If we are to understand ethnographic research as a dialogical process (Christensen, 2004) we need to locate the positions of researcher as well as those of the participants at the moment and place of their encounter. Making explicit who we are - in terms of the manifold identities or roles that we may have - to the people we engage with in research has at the same time important impacts on the ways our relationships develop. The notion of expanded fields challenges the arbitrary depiction of the field's boundaries (Candea, 2007). In this regard, I will refer now to the idea of cultures of communication in the way it has been experienced in my ethnographic study and in relation to the idea of the 'expanded fields' of the researcher.

I came from Chile to the United Kingdom in September 2011 with my husband and 4-year-old son to start my PhD degree. Initially I thought I would carry out the study in Chile. However, once I was in the United Kingdom with my family, I realised it would not be convenient to move back to Chile for fieldwork and then back again to the UK. When I finally decided to do my research in the UK, I had already lived manifold experiences in this country that were not lived as fieldwork experiences. After I started planning the fieldwork here, however, these everyday experiences as a foreign student, woman, wife and mother took a new value as I was making my way into a new culture. All these identities would accompany me during the whole research experience in a dynamic and never ending interaction between them.

Although the field-site's boundaries coincided with those of Wishwell, (taking into account the multiplicity and flexibility that those boundaries had, as I will show in Part III) and it is temporally limited to beginning and end dates, my ethnographic experience extended beyond those spatial and temporal boundaries.

Experiences taking place in other locations, other times and with people who were not participating of the study became relevant to me as I aimed to identify the local cultures of communication and movement. That was the case, for example, of understanding local ways of greeting strangers or barely known people, which I did through my interactions with parents at my son's nursery, or interpreting people's messages or responses with the aid of British friends. This highlights the relevance of interactions performed by the researcher beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of the field site for the understanding of local cultures of communication and interpretation of ethnographic interactions. Although my field may be more or less limited to certain physical and temporal location, the relations that were relevant to the study – to get into the local cultures of communication – were developed in far wider spatial and temporal dimensions. It made me aware of the importance of my 'expanded fields' (Crang & Cook, 2007).

The notion of expanded field, however, should not be limited to understanding the researcher's own interactions. Participants of the research also have their expanded fields from where they make sense – or not – of the research. Or, from a different angle, participating of the research can be considered from the participant's point of view as part of an expanded field of interactions that goes beyond what they consider to be their everyday life.

In understanding the way in which researchers' and participants' expanded fields interact, it is interesting to take into account the idea of conversations that Guderman and Rivera (Guderman & Rivera, 1990) elaborate in *'Conversations in Colombia'*. They argue that the conversations (or social interactions) observed by ethnography have no beginning and no end. Research is "embedded within a long and complex conversation" (Guderman & Rivera, 1990:3) in relation to which ethnographic texts are only one part of. This is key in Guderman and Rivera's idea of shifting the concept of the anthropological project "from singular to communal venture, and to expand the scope of conversation" (Guderman & Rivera, 1990:4). In this perspective, people whose lives and cultures anthropology aims at understanding are engaged in on-going conversations and interactions that at some point come to our encounter and at some point bring us back to our 'own' on-going conversations: "Over time conversations certainly shift, but new ones incorporate and appropriate from the old so that all conversations are thick with history" (Guderman & Rivera, 1990:16).

In getting involved and making sense of these conversations and the paths they have followed, the authors refer to the "dialectical drawing out and use of personal knowledge" of the researcher. They wonder, however, "whether anthropology might be nearly impossible for the single foreign researcher, who, lacking a lifetime of personal knowledge, could never fill out, make the cultural connections, or turn into longhand what we increasingly understood to be elliptical field encounters" (Guderman & Rivera, 1990:7). They wonder as well whether it is possible for the single 'native' researcher for whom every

element of the conversations may seem too familiar to require further explanation or as unconnected to anything else (Guderman & Rivera, 1990). The authors suggest the ethnographic research-team as a possible solution to this. On the one hand, that alternative is not always possible or desirable. On the other hand, I would alternatively or complimentary argue that it is precisely the idea of cultures of communication what we need to situate in the centre of our attention as anthropologists: those elements of local ways of communication are what we need to understand in order to make sense of the on-going conversations we engage in. in doing so, our expanded fields may help.

The idea of expanded fields challenges the notion of a pure and clearly bounded ethnographic field in terms of its spatial and temporal boundaries. Under the light of the quite extended understanding that cultures cannot be 'ring-fenced' limiting their spatial scope to particular locations (Clifford, 1997; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2003; Crang & Cook, 2007), the idea of 'being there' to 'study it' (a culture, a group of people, a cultural phenomena) (Crang & Cook, 2007) is not enough because 'it' is considered to be "simultaneously supralocal, translocal and local, simultaneously planetary and, refracted through the shards of vernacular cultural practices, profoundly parochial" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2003:151). As Hannerz (2003) puts it in relation to the multi-site ethnographic practice, research involves not only "interacting with informants across a number of disperse sites, but also doing fieldwork by telephone and email, collecting data eclectically in many different ways from a disparate array of sources" (Hannerz, 2003:212). From this perspective, and going back to Christensen's definition of fieldwork as "the researcher taking part in close social interaction with informants over extensive periods of time" (Christensen, 2004:166), we can further interrogate this statement, so that we ask ourselves: how do we engage in 'close social interaction' in fieldwork? And furthermore, how do these ways of engaging in close social interaction determine our field in geographical and temporal terms?

The researcher taking part in close social interaction with participants over extended periods of time is a different way of addressing the importance of fieldwork and the ethnographer "being there". However, what makes Christensen's way of putting it more appealing and appropriate for the study of mobilities in young children's everyday lives is that closeness implies a relative distance between the researcher and the participants in terms of interaction, but not necessarily in terms of physical distance. A close social interaction does not necessarily mean 'being there' at a close physical distance, as it is understood in the more traditional definitions of ethnography and ethnographic fieldwork. This possibility opens up manifold methodological options in the forms of social interaction that the researcher may take part of as part of the research relationships that she or he establishes with the participants. In this way, the diverse forms of mobilities that we observe in the world may also be considered as possible ways for the ethnographer to 'get' to and 'be' part of expanded fields of research.

3. Information, consent and relationships: on the ethics of researching young children in Wishwell

Before starting fieldwork I had to fulfil the requirements of the Ethics Committee of Warwick School of Education, where I was doing my PhD at that time. This involved an ethics form submitted to the committee and approved by it before the beginning of fieldwork. This included questions about the more general and predictable ethical matters of any research, such as informed consent, possible harm, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, and also the more particular associated to research with what is generally understood as vulnerable groups, children included.

In the manner that fieldwork relationships developed in this study, initial requests for participation and informed consent were always asked from adults rather than from children. Even if in some cases I engaged in interactions with children before than with their parents or carers, I would ask their parents or carers about engaging in the study: I would give the research leaflet to adults, as well as the informed consent. This was not based on an ethical conviction that parents' or adults' consent was in essence more relevant, but because, on the one hand, this seemed to be the most appropriate way to proceed in relation to the local cultures of communication. On the other hand, the children involved were babies and very young children that did not communicate through textual information, and I did not attempt to create some kind of symbolic consent on their side. Instead, their assent was a continuous process that required me to be very attentive to their comfort and reactions to my presence and interactions with me.

The information leaflet given to potential participants contained information about the research theme and the possible ways in which they could participate, also some information about the researcher and the institution in which I was doing my PhD, as well as my supervisors' contact details and my own. Information leaflets were distributed by myself in the children's centre's sessions I was observing, handing them individually to all the adult attendants during the first sessions I participated of. Some leaflets were also displayed on the reception desk, together with other leaflets that were distributed there, and a summarised version of this leaflet appeared on one of the children's centre newsletters. I also gave a copy of the leaflet to all the participant families together with the informed consent. The aim of the leaflets was not only to recruit participants and to inform them about the study, but also to inform as many attendants of the children's centre as possible of my role there. As people came and go, and not all of them were there on a regular basis, it was not possible to inform all of them at the same time about my presence there. Because I was also doing volunteer work in administrative tasks, it was important to inform people that I was also conducting a research – and that I was not, as they may have thought, assessing the children's centre's staff or their parenting behaviours.

The informed consent contained information about the research, specified the possible forms of participation in the study, and made explicit that participants could step back from the study at any point without giving further explanation.

Although informed consents included permission for taking pictures or video recording participants, I always asked for explicit oral permission every time I took a picture of the children or adults. Some of the pictures were printed and I gave them to the participants at the end of the study. The images used in the thesis, as explained before, have bean transformed so that they also protect the anonymity of people.

There were not predictable risks of harm or negative consequences associated to the participation in this research. However, preventing any unpredictable risks resulting from unexpected uses of the research results anonymity throughout the thesis and any associated publications has been secured. This implied making anonymous not only the participants' names and identities but also the town, particularly protecting the anonymity of the children's centre and its staff. Therefore, all the places' names mentioned in the thesis are pseudonyms.

Although no problematic issues emerged from my relationships with the participants during fieldwork – at least from my perspective and to my knowledge – the creation of a close relationship through regular contact with one participant for an extended period of time challenged the boundaries between researcher-participant and friendship relationships. This did not seem a problematic issue until after finishing the fieldwork period and moving out of the field this person decided to put an abrupt end to our relationship without any form of explanation. I did not question that decision and I did not ask for reasons. However, this event made me reflect on the unexpected emotional consequences of the relationships established as part of ethnographic research. Becoming part of a constellation, of people's social networks, can have affective implications that are not in our control, and that we cannot always foresee. I can only hope that this event was not due to emotional distress caused in one way or another by the study or by myself.

4. The children I met: brief accounts of the participant children[1]

In this last section of Chapter 6 I will introduce the participant children through brief accounts of their families and mobile routines. I will also briefly specify the ways in which each of them took part of the study. This is key for relating the data to the participants, and also for creating a frame from which to read

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[1] A table of participants with their names (pseudonyms), relations to Wishwell and to other participants, can be found in Appendix 1.

Part IV. A table with names and details of all participants (not only children) can be found in Appendix 1, which I recommend to consult while reading chapters 9, 10 and 11.

Deva

Deva was then 7 months old when we met. His grandparents had Punjabi origins and the whole family was part of the Sikh community, as shown by the golden bracelet that Deva wore on his wrist. He and his mother Heet used to attend the Asian families group sessions at WCC, although they lived in Riverton. At the time we met Deva's mother was in maternity leave, so she had time for going with Deva to groups, courses and trips. However, she would go back to work four months later, and then their whole weekly routine would dramatically change. Heet worked for a company that made electricity transactions between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Although her main office was located in a nearby city to where she travelled by train, before Deva was born she used to spend several days in the Netherlands every week. She was not sure about how work arrangements would be when going back to work, as she definitely would not want to or could keep the same travel dynamic. One of the possibilities she was exploring was to move with her family to the Netherlands, and she was already thinking in terms of the schools where Deva would be able to go there.

Deva and his family participated of the study through recorded interviews with his mother (two interviews, 45 and 30 minutes long), conversations with her and interactions with Deva, and inviting me to participate of some of their activities, such as join in trips to the Gurdwara, swimming lessons, baby development group, children's centres activities, shopping, photo-studio sessions, family celebrations or being with them at home. They also participated through a diary that Heet kept for two weeks, in which she and her mother recorded Deva's journeys and interactions with people, things, TV shows, songs and so on.

Guillermo

Guillermo was one year old when we met. His parents Laura and Luis were from South America, and had arrived to the UK two years ago. The family had recently moved to Wishwell from a nearby village where he was born. The village life was too isolated for his mother Laura, as they did not know people there and she did not drive when Guillermo was born. Guillermo spent all the time with his mother. They spent most of the time at home, but had recently started attending the playgroup created by Juliette at WCC (where I was a volunteer and where we met). They would occasionally attend other children's groups such as singing activities at the library and used to meet with friends, especially the ones Laura met in the National Childbirth Trust antenatal course, with whom they tried to meet on a regular basis, visiting each other's houses. All their family was in South America, so Guillermo's family relationships were performed through Skype and through the occasional visits from his relatives. His parents were hoping to go on holidays to their home country soon – but the airplane tickets price made it very difficult.

Guillermo participated of the study through interactions at WCC and at his home, and through conversations and a recorded interview with his mother (90 minutes long).

Henry

Henry was four years old when we met. He lived with his mother Barbra and two of his four older sisters in the boundary between Riverton and Wishwell. One of his older sisters lived in Riverton and another one in the south coast of England. His mother was born in Riverton and had always lived around Wishwell and Riverton. Henry spent most of his time between his home and school. However, 'home' in his case involved not only the internal and private spaces of the house, but also the open garden where he used to play with other children, the road and the park around the corner.

Henry participated of the study through my interactions on the way home from school and at home, and through conversations and interview with his mother (not recorded, around 40 minutes long).

Horace

Horace was almost three years old when we met. He lived in Wishwell since he was almost one, with his Austrian mother Josephine - who worked on a free-lance basis for a car company in a nearby city - and his English father, Julian, who lived with them on the weekends, as he worked in the army and lived in another location during the week. They had chosen to live in Wishwell because Josephine made good friends with people from Riverton and Wishwell in the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) antenatal classes. As Julian's job in the army demanded him to be away for long periods, and as her family lived abroad, it was important for her to live close to her friendship network.
Horace's maternal family lived in different parts of Europe. They would always try to meet for Christmas, usually in Austria. Horace's paternal family lived in different areas of England, and they visited each other regularly.

Horace participated of the study only through a recorded interview with his mother (30 minutes long) and conversation with his parents, as I met them towards the end of fieldwork.

Isva

Isva was almost two years old when we met. He was born in India, while his father was studying in the UK. Isva and his mother Abha had come to the UK a year before we met. He lived with his parents in Riverton, near Wishwell, in shared accommodation. His everyday life was lived mainly within the family room. In that sense, the children's centre was a key space in Abha's perspective, as a place where Isva (and herself)

had more space to move around and a chance to meet other people. They kept in touch with their family in Indian through Skype, mainly with Isva's grandmothers, on a weekly basis. Some time after we met Abha and Isva would go back to India for the first time since they left. They would stay there for six months.

Isva participated of the study through interaction at WCC, conversations and a recorded interview with his mother (43 minutes long).

Jack and Dorothy

Jack was two years old when we met, and Dorothy was three. They lived with their parents in Wishwell, where they had been born. Whilst their father was half-Portuguese, half-Burmese, their mother Jeanette was from South Africa, from a Yugoslavian and white South African family. She had come to work in the UK, where she met her husband. Although they did not have family nearby, they had some friends around, many of which Jeanette had made in the playgroups. Sometimes they organised play dates visiting each other's houses, but most of the time when they were not in a playgroup they were at home.

Dorothy and Jack participated of the study through interactions at WCC and St. Mary's playgroup, and through conversations and an interview with their mother (50 minutes long).

Jacob and Finley

Jacob and Finley were three years old twins. They had always lived in Wishwell in the house their parents bought years before they were born. Both of their parents had always lived between Riverton and Wishwell. Except for an uncle in Australia, their families lived nearby, and most of their social life was based around this area. The children went to nursery five days a week.

Jacob and Finley participated of the study through interactions at WCC and at their home, conversations and an interview with their mother (68 minutes long), and inviting me to join in their journey between nursery and home.

Jasmine and Lillian

Lillian was two years old when we met. Her sister Jasmine was three months old. Both of them were born in Wishwell[2]. Their parents Gabrielle and Tom had moved there just before Lillian was born as Tom, who worked for a church, had been posted there. Both Gabrielle and Tom were British, they had lived in many

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[2] When I say that the children were born in Wishwell it means that their families were already living in Wishwell when they were born, but actually the local hospital where all the residents of Wishwell were supposed to give birth (if they chose to give birth at the hospital) was located in the neighbour town of Weiston.

different places in Britain and also abroad in the case of Gabrielle, while she was studying. Gabrielle's family was spread across England, whilst Tom's family lived in England and the Channel Islands. They used to visit each other from time to time.

Lillian and Jasmine participated of the study through interactions at home, at WCC and three other playgroups, conversations and recorded interview with their mother and father (80 minutes long), and inviting me to their home and to join in many of their leisure trips to the parks, farm, family celebrations and other activities.

Jeevi and Karu

Jeevi was 7 months old and Karu was four when we met. They were siblings born from British parents in an Indian family, whose grandparents had migrated to the UK in different moments and under diverse circumstances. Karu was four years old when we met; Jeevi was seven months. Karu and his parents had moved to Wishwell one year before our first encounter from a nearby city where they still worked. In Wishwell they lived with their parents and paternal grandparents, who would take care of them when their mother, Tera, went back to work after maternity leave was finished, a couple of months after we met.

Karu and Jeevi participated of the study through interactions at WCC, and through informal interviews with their mother walking between the children's centre and their home. The end of their mother's maternity leave hindered their further participation.

Resham

Resham was four years old when we met. He and his parents were born in the UK, but all his grandparents had migrated from India to the UK around thirty years ago. He attended the Asian group at WCC with his grandmother Naniji, who looked after him every weekday while his parents worked. Resham lived in a recent housing development in Wishwell with his parents. However, every morning he was taken to Naniji's home in Riverton (not far from Wishwell). Some days, for example after the Asian group, they would go to the Gurdwara, spend some time in the praying room and have lunch there. His grandmother also took him to local parks in Riverton, usually by car. Rasham had been to India when he was two years old. They had been to Punjab, visited family and Sikh sacred places.

Resham participated of the study though interactions at WCC and the Gurdwara, and through conversations and a recorded interview with his grandmother (20 minutes long), as well as inviting me to participate of some of their visits to the temple.

Suzanne

Suzanne was two years old when we met. She was born in Wishwell and lived there with her mother Louise, who had Scottish origins and worked in a university at one hour drive from home, and her French father Samuel, who worked in an automobile company as car designer, whose parents were Portuguese and distributed their time between France and the Portuguese rural village they were originally from. Her maternal grandparents, on the other hand, lived in England at a three hours drive distance. Suzanne had a dog, Charles, and her mother was about to give birth to her brother Leonard when I met them.

Suzanne participated of the study through interactions at her home, through conversations and recorded interviews with her mother (two interviews, 112 and 30 minutes long), a diary kept by her mother for two weeks, and inviting me to join in some short trips around the neighbourhood.

Tabby and Mark

Tabby was a two-year-old girl when we met. Her brother Mark was three, and their parents were Robert, of white-British origins, and Vama, who was born in Britain from Indian parents. Robert and Vama had moved out of London when Vama was first pregnant, as they thought the place where they lived was not appropriate for raising children. The family arrived to Wishwell when Mark was almost six months old. They had chosen to live there because Vama had grown up in the area, therefore she still knew some people living around and they liked the place. At the time of fieldwork, Vama had around an hour commute to her full-time job. The company, however, had several branches around Britain thus her job involved a lot of travelling, sometimes by car, sometimes by train or airplane. In the meanwhile, Tabby spent all day with Robert, and Mark had half-day nursery. The children and their dad had a very busy week attending Wishwell and other children's centres in Riverton, as they were regular attendees in many sessions such as the Asian group.

Tabby and Mark participated of the study through interactions at WCC, conversations and recorded interview with their father (67 minutes long), frequent visits to their home and inviting me to participate of some of their trips, such as to the swimming pool and Hindu temple.

Part III Wishwell and Wishwell Children's Centre: constellations of temporary coherence

In this part I will present Wishwell, the town where this study was conducted. Wishwell and Wishwell Children's Centre will be seen as constellations of temporary coherence (Massey, 1995). This will imply unfolding the various interrelations between people, places, policies, discourses and artefacts encountered within the 'action spaces' (Massey, 1995) of the children that participated in the study. My account will emphasise the various locations and events that young children living in or around Wishwell were connected with, illustrating the various 'trajectories' (Jirón & Iturra, 2014) that formed the constellations of their everyday lives. In the next two chapters children may at times appear invisible amongst the variety of places, people and hi/stories that I describe and where children do not feature as the main characters. This is because the chapters of this part deal mainly with the 'unobserved places' (Ansell, 2009) of children's lives. That is places that children's lives are connected to in diverse ways even if they are not physically present.

Par III is divided in two chapters. Based on Massey (1995)'s notions of space and place discussed in Chapter 2, in Chapter 7 Wishwell will be presented through a series of accounts representing diverse points of view such as that of the researcher, secondary sources of information (historical and demographic), and the perspectives of Wishwell's inhabitants. These diverse perspectives will present a multi-layered picture of the town and its temporal and spatial connections. In Chapter 8 Wishwell Children's Centre will be described as a "hybrid space" (Jupp, 2013) where policy, discourses of child development, practitioners, children, parents, technologies, buildings, artefacts and emotions interact, connecting the centre to people and places *near and far* (Ansell, 2009).

Chapter 7: The constellation of Wishwell
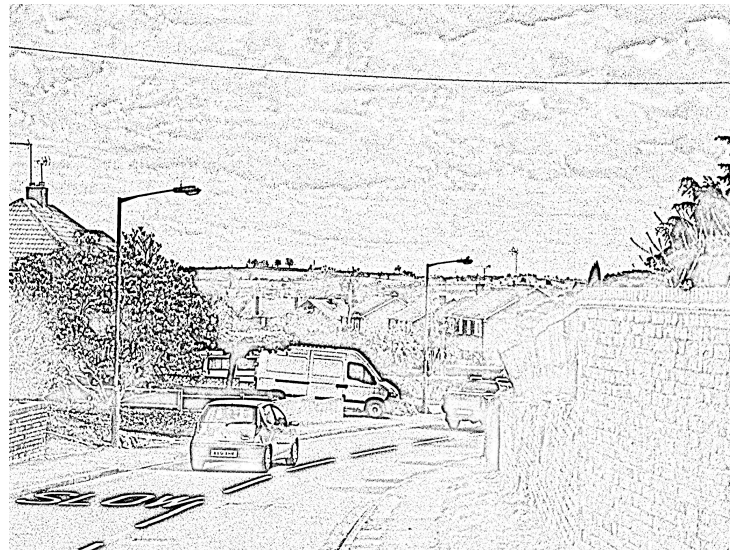
As discussed in chapter 2, Doreen Massey has called for the necessity to rethink the notions of place and space and "to question our representation of them as coherent, bounded and settled" (Massey, 1995: 54). Massey highlights the relational nature of particular localities, cultures, places, areas, nations and any kind of geographical entity (1994, 1995, 2005). In doing so, she suggests the concept of 'activity space' as a "way of thinking about the spatial organisation of society" (Massey, 1995: 55). Activity space is defined as:

> "spatial network of links and activities, of spatial connections and of locations, within which a particular agent operates (...) The idea of activity spaces is not a precise theoretical concept: there are no rules about where to draw the cut-off point around a company's activities or influence, for instance" (Massey, 1995: 54-5).

Within this frame, place is understood as: "(...) the location of the intersections of particular bundles of activity spaces, of connections and interrelations, of influences and movements (...) both local ones and those that stretch more widely, even internationally" (Massey, 1995: 58-9). Social relations are organised into 'constellations of temporary coherence' (Massey, 1998), among which we find local cultures and places. Coherence is a term that refers to "the quality of forming a unified whole", or "the quality of being logical and consistent" (Oxford Dictionary, 2012). These qualities, according to Massey (1995), are accomplished by places only on a temporary basis, as the relations that constitute them are made and unmade, and its potential interconnections are performed or kept at rest, whilst the agents that bring about these connections move between diverse positions within or between places (Massey, 1995, 2005). Inhabitants of a particular place live different lives from different positions, so that:

"These very different lives, with their contrasting activity spaces, touch each other. They intersect and sometimes interact (…) These contrasts mean also that different groups have very different views of the place, very different senses of its identity. And they have, too, very different ways of participating in, using and contributing to the place (…) every place is, in this way, a unique mixture of the relations which configure social space" (Massey, 1995: 60-1).

From the point of view of activity spaces, places are seen, sensed, lived and experienced in various ways by different denizens – "a person, animal, or plant that lives or is found in a particular place" (Oxford-Dictionary, 2012). Their views, practices and experiences may overlap, coinciding or conflicting with each other. If places manage to keep an identity shared by manifold groups of inhabitants, it is partly due to what Star and Griesemer (1989) have called 'boundary objects'. A boundary object is defined as:

"(…) objects which both inhabit several intersecting social worlds (…) and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them (…) are objects that are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual-site use. These objects may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation" (Star & Griesemer, 1989: 393).

Boundary objects constitute then "objects that coordinate the perspectives of various communities of practice" (C. Lee, 2007). These can be of different kinds, varying from libraries or museums to diagrams, graphs, specimens, political boundaries or forms (Lee, 2007; Star & Griesemer, 1989). Taking this perspective in the understanding of Wishwell as a constellation of temporary coherence reveals the existence of manifold 'boundary objects' that allowed diverse people related to this place – as residents, workers, politicians, visitors and so on – to share a common understanding of Wishwell – and, more specifically, of the young children that inhabited the town – while keeping the diversity of their views and experiences of it. These boundary objects included (but were not limited to): the children's centre, the library and medical surgery; artefacts such as leaflets, maps and administrative boundaries; historical accounts and the very name of the place. As I will show in chapters 7 and 8, Wishwell and WCC were entities with a recognisable identity shared by the diverse inhabitants of the town and users of the centre. They shared common infrastructures, from roads to toys and had common names for these places. However, what the town and the children's centre meant for them varied and, although their everyday life' maps overlapped in Wishwell or WCC, they had different meanings, extensions and shapes. It is from this perspective that I strive to present Wishwell and Wishwell Children's Centre: as places shaped by strong

but diverse perceptions, identities, historical processes, past and present financial, cultural, social, material and emotional connections to other places near and far.

This chapter is constituted as a series of interconnected accounts, divided in five parts: '*The researcher: from Santiago to Wishwell*' will introduce the town from the perspective of my encounter with it, highlighting the temporality of fieldwork. The accounts presented here make explicit some of the aspects that defined my initial position in the field and the potential connections that I brought with me to Wishwell. The next part, '*Where would you draw the line?* discusses the difficulty of grasping the dynamic boundaries of the town, as well as its relationship to the neighbouring town of Riverton and the imminent changes that would further shift the boundaries and the composition of the town. '*Community feeling(s)*' places Wishwell in relation to other localities in historical and present time, and the perceptions of the place as a 'community' from the multiple perspectives of its inhabitants. '*From car parts to car design and from local workers to commuters*' discusses the shifting local – and not so local - economies of the town and their impacts on family and children's lives. Finally, '*Experiencing the locality profile*' focuses on the socioeconomic complexity of Wishwell and its geographical sub-areas, emphasising the inhabitants' perceptions of socioeconomic differences and inequalities.

1. The researcher: from Santiago to Wishwell

Among the manifold agents interacting in Wishwell was myself, the researcher, coming all the way from Chile to this English town. Two different but connected issues will be highlighted in this regard. First, the temporality of fieldwork and therefore of the accounts presented here. Second, I want to make explicit some of the aspects that defined my initial position in the field, and the potential connections that I brought with me.

1.1 Past tense

I brought with me certain ideas, questions, leaflets, funding, technologies, and so on, all of which in one way or another got into contact with the people I met, adding another star to their constellations. Our interactions were many times meaningful not only in terms of the research but as personal and affective encounters. I formed part of the constellations of Wishwell and WCC. However, I do not live in Wishwell and I am not part of WCC anymore. In the same way, most of the children I met, some of the children's centre sessions and staff members are not there now, while I write and while you read. Wishwell and WCC as I describe them here do not exist anymore. This is the reason why I decide to write in past tense, because there is no reason for making it seem an a-temporal or infinite account. There is a vast discussion about the use of present tense in ethnographic accounts or the 'ethnographic present' (Fabian,

1983). As Jones et al. (2010) have argued in relation to the use of present tense in some of their own classroom ethnographic observations:

"(…) the use of the present tense (…) conjures a sense of direct transmission between the eye, the action being observed and the written observation of the account (…) It also works at producing a static or fixed account, one that is inattentive to the fact that all cultures are constantly changing (…) the effects at the very least of using the present tense is that it 'freezes' the events" (Jones, Holmes, MacRae, & MacLure, 2010).

My use of past tense in the narratives that follow intent to acknowledge the temporal particularity of the situations I will refer to, and to leave as an open and continuous question what will happen next.

1.2 Wonder

Maggie McLure (2013) refers to 'wonder' as the potentiality of data perceived when:

"something – perhaps a comment in an interview, a fragment of a field note, an anecdote, an object, or a strange facial expression – seems to reach out from the inert corpus (corpse) of the data, to grasp us. These moment confound the industrious, mechanical search for meanings, patterns, codes, or themes; but at the same time, they exert a kind of fascination, and have a capacity to animate further thought (…) It is this liminal conditions, suspended in a threshold between knowing and unknowing, that prevents wonder from being wholly contained or recuperated as knowledge, and thus afford an opening onto the new" (McLure, 2013: 228).

Wonder is relational, a mutual affection between data and researcher that entails the "crafting of a problem and a challenge: what next?" (2013: 229). However, I would argue that this sense of wonder is not exclusive of research data, but it is present in everyday life and in that way is in the origin of many researchers' questions and interests, as I will show now in relation to my encounter of the field of study. In this sense, coming from Chile, where inhabited towns and cities are no older than 200 years and because of the frequent earthquakes, most of the built environment is no older than 60 years (excluding, of course, archaeological settlements), and having had my first child there, where there is no such thing as children's centres, gave me a particular appreciation of Wishwell and WCC. I saw them first with a certain naivety and 'wonder' (MacLure, 2013) that preceded a more informed approach to the history of the town and Sure Start children's centres.

Wishwell evoked on me a similar impression to a first-time visitor around 150 years ago, when a foreign writer[3] visited Wishwell, which was then a tiny village. He described in his travel diaries the 'rustic dwellings' that surrounded the village-green and church, captivated by the thatched roofs and other natural building materials that made the houses look like nests. In later visits to the village, however, the traveller realised, as I did, that the image of the wooden-framed thatched houses was a powerful one, but not necessarily representative of the place as a whole: although the cottages looked ancient because of the building materials and style, some of them had been recently built. His sentiment of being in a remote and secluded rural village, however, persisted. He wondered whether the inhabitants of this secluded village were at all aware of the new transport technologies that were changing the world: did they know about the existence of railways and stage coaches? His questions came out of wonder as well, wonder and unfamiliarity in relation to this geographically, historically and culturally distinct place.

People in Wishwell 150 year ago had, nevertheless, not only heard about railways, but one of the main rail lines of the time traversed the village from end to end, and the inhabitants of the village had celebrated and congregated at the bridge over the railway to see it pass for the first time. The village was also house to new families every year, that came here as farmers. As secluded as it could seem an industrial exhibition was organised in Wishwell. Before the end of the 19th century, the village hosted one of the many farm labourers on strike gatherings that led to the creation in May 1872 of the National Agricultural Workers Union. These diverse events give a glimpse of old Wishwell that question the description of the village as an utterly secluded and anchored in the past community: all these social events situate it in relation to other places and events far beyond the boundaries of the then very small village. They all imply diverse means of getting there, going somewhere else, being in touch with people in other areas of the country, and they all refer to different productive activities that were taking part in Wishwell or to which the village was related in one way or another.

2. Where would you draw the line?

My first impressions of the town, based on an incidental first encounter with it, were later on deepened by visits aimed at discovering the place as a possible ethnographic site and through information about Wishwell available through books, websites and national locality profiles. In this sense, I decided not to prioritise the written and statistical sources over my own experiences of the place and the encounters with people there. Describing Wishwell as a constellation of temporary coherence is based on these different

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[3] The name of the writer and bibliographic reference are omitted because of anonymity reasons. All sources of information about Wishwell have been omitted for the same reason. This information can be found in the anonymity file available for examiners.

perspectives and highlights the complexity of encountering overlapping boundaries, maps and activity spaces within the identity of the town.

ABSTRACT MAP OF WISHWELL AREA

◇ SPRINGTON

◁ RIVERTON

○ WEISTON

▢ WISHWELL

★ WCC
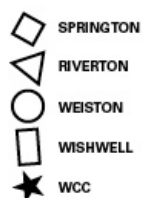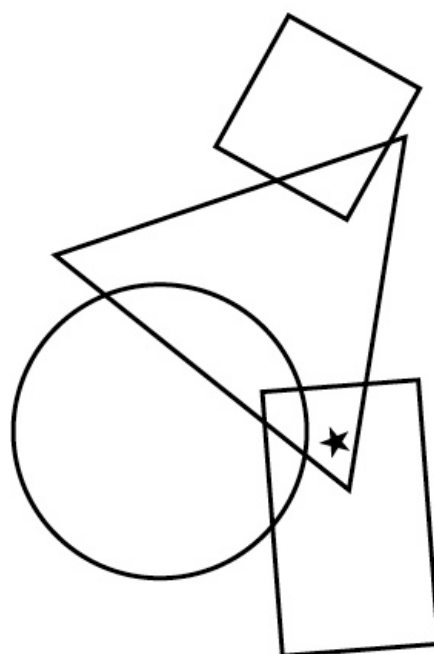
In 2013-14, when I conducted my research fieldwork, Wishwell[4] was a small 'ordinary' (Robinson, 2006) town in England. It could trace back its origins as a settlement in Roman times, being located near to one of the many Roman roads that traverse the country. In 2009 it had a population of just under 10,000 people and it was defined as a 'residential town' in its locality profile. Among its inhabitants, there was a significant percentage of 'successful professionals living in suburban or semi-rural homes', as well as 'middle income families living in moderate suburban semis' (Locality Profile). There were, however, very diverse areas within the town in terms of deprivation, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation for

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[4] All sources of information about Wishwell have been omitted for anonymity reasons. This information can be found in the anonymity file available for examiners.

the different Super Output Areas (SOA): the areas ranged between 14,000 to almost 29,500[5]. The town had been a small rural village until WWII. The first population growths had intensified the density of the original area of the town. Later on, the explosive industrial growth resulted in the expansion of the town in all directions, with a big increase on the number of inhabitants: from around 500 inhabitants in 1890's, to 7,000 in 1970's, and around 10,000 in 2009. The resulting conurbation of Wishwell, Riverton and Weiston meant that boundaries were blurred for the inhabitants and administratively they were still being negotiated.

Wishwell seemed for many people (in Wishwell as well as Riverton) like a suburb in the periphery of Riverton. For the older inhabitants of Wishwell this was an upsetting situation, and they strived to make it clear that this was a town on its own. The local council was trying, for example, to get its own postcode instead of sharing the same with Riverton. For the newer inhabitants, however, this did not constitute an important issue and actually some of them saw the town as part of Riverton, as expressed by a mother when enlisting the positive features of Wishwell: "it's separated, but it's not far enough to be considered like a separate town" (Interview with Louise, July 2013). As shown in this quote, many people who had recently moved there used to say, when going to Riverton town centre, that they were "going to town". This feeling of continuity between Riverton and Wishwell was aided by the continuity of the built environment along the main road connecting both towns, as I experienced the first time I went to Wishwell from Riverton (where I lived) with an ethnographic intent and would not have identified the end of Riverton and the beginning of Wishwell if the sign saying: *'Wishwell. A neighbourhood watch town'* was not there. When looking at Wishwell on a map and then comparing it to the perspectives and lives of the people I met, establishing the boundaries of the field of study was not easier. The ever-changing boundaries between Wishwell and Riverton were also confusing for the inhabitants of the boundary areas, some of whom were not sure whether they lived in one town or the other, administratively speaking.

Administrative boundaries ongoing negotiation related to current discussion about future growth in the area, as plans were being approved for massive housing developments in Wishwell. For some inhabitants this was a problematic situation because of the lack of infrastructure for receiving big amounts of new inhabitants. For example, as explained by Juliette (an old inhabitant and also staff at WCC), current school provision would not be able to allocate all new children in local schools. This would have an effect on their everyday mobilities, as the solution suggested by planners was to offer school buses for the children to travel. This situation involved conflicting interests between the district council, town council, different factions of inhabitants and potential newcomers.

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[5] A ranking of 1 represents the most deprived SOA nationally and a ranking of 32,482 represents the least deprived SOA nationally.

The various views on the town's boundaries speak about the diversity of inhabitants who populated the town and how differently these matters seemed to affect them. In what follows, this diversity will be addressed in relation to the changing economies that sustained Wishwell across its recent history, the cultural diversification of its inhabitants and areas, and the overlapping understandings of Wishwell that this diversity involved.

3. Community feeling(s)

The population growth experienced in Wishwell during the last part of the twentieth century implied productive, cultural, ethnic and economic diversification. This growth and diversification involved various forms of mobilities that brought new people to inhabit the town, as well as movements that brought Wishwell into contact with localities far beyond its physical boundaries. Although it continued to be a village until the second half of the twentieth century, its relationships with other localities in terms of its economy, pathways, transport means and social interactions were changing since the very beginning of the inhabitation of the area. These changes continued in more recent times, with the arrival of automotive industry to the area after WWII. The factories settled in Wishwell and Riverton opened up a new source of employment for the inhabitants of both towns and changed the productive balance of the area from farming to industry. They also attracted a big number of new workers that became inhabitants of one or the other town. Juliette, who grew up and lived most of her life there, told me about this process:

> "When I was growing up it was a very small village. Became a town in the 70's (…) that reflected the fact that it was growing. It was actually built on the automotive industry. (The automotive parts factory) came to Riverton and really from the war years onwards building in Wishwell was housing for (this factory). (Three factories), were the 3 big places to work in this area. But definitely most people in Wishwell worked at (the automotive parts factory), as I did, and my husband did (…) not far from here. So there used to be 6 and a half, 7 and a half thousand people working there when I worked there (…) when my husband left there was only about 400 people working in his bit, so probably no more than 600 people now (…) but Wishwell was built in the 60's it just got bigger and bigger (…) as a product of (the automotive industry) because people wanted to live fairly close to where their work was" (Interview with Juliette, July 2013).

The growth of Wishwell created new connections to disperse localities. For example, *newcomers* brought a more diverse range of cultural and geographical origins among the inhabitants of the village/town. New dynamics were created between Wishwell and Riverton, with people from both places sharing workspace. In addition to this, the automotive parts being produced there were part of a bigger productive chain taking place elsewhere. The final product, the car, tells us about how the changes taking place in Wishwell were

connected to the wider phenomena of auto-mobility that was changing transport systems, the ways of moving, the shape, infrastructure and connectedness of places across the country.

However, the town I found in my fieldwork was very different from the 70's new town that became the home of the automotive industry workers. Industry had declined in the area but the houses left by industrial growth were still inhabited and many new houses had been built since. Here, again, Juliette explained the process of change:

> " (…) what hasn't happened, as industry died, it hasn't declined, people still want to live in Wishwell, got good schools, no crime rate, handy for everywhere, so it's still as popular, the house prices still very buoyant (…) but there's still a community feel, still very strong churches, still a twinning association (…) clubs, there's still a very active community feel, people who've always lived around here still call it the village, but is a town now, because we managed to keep some how that community feeling going" (Interview with Juliette, July 2013).

This 'community feeling' was mentioned many times by parents when explaining to me their decision of living in Wishwell even though many of them did not work there. However, the understanding of what this meant varied. One version of this community feeling was the expressed by Richard and Mark, two old inhabitants of the town whom I met at a council meeting. Richard had grown up in Wishwell, as his father had worked in one of the local factories and had moved to Wishwell decades ago. When I met him he worked outside of town, but not too far, and was very involved in the council's activities and decision-making processes. He knew many of his neighbours at a quite intimate level. The lady next door, for instance, had looked after him when he was a boy, as his mother died when he was very young. He had known Mark, his neighbour (the other side) next door for decades, and had seen his children grow since they were babies. As Mark put it:

> "(…) a whole thing about Wishwell is people don't tend to move away too much. I think when people get to Wishwell, because it's such a good community spirit, they tend to stay here, like us (…) it's a close community (…) a lot of people know each other" (Mark, July 2014).

They complained, however, about young people's (children and adults alike) lack of participation on the community decision-making processes in relation to issues such as the negotiation of administrative boundaries, the potential designation of Gypsy and travellers sites in the periphery of town and the housing development plan. These topics seemed for Richard and Mark of utmost relevance for the preservation of the town's 'community feeling' and the future of Wishwell.

A different version of community feeling was represented by Louise, a mother of a 2 year-old girl and pregnant of a boy when we met, who had lived in Wishwell for a couple of years. I asked her why she and her husband Samuel had chosen to live there, and she said to me:

> "I just felt like I wanted to live like, I don't know, I wanted to live in a community, I didn't wanna live in town anymore because I've done that (…) and we wanted to get a dog and the fields are great and, it was just quiet! and you know I lived in Paris, in Brussels, and it was so different… so I thought now I want to do something different, something grown up (…) I didn't know Wishwell, I didn't know it at all, but I liked the fact, you know when I read about it, it was like there's a bus every several minutes, you're in town (Riverton) in 5, 10 minutes, it's also a walkable distance to town (Riverton) (…) I liked the fact that you know it has its own post office, and you know, it has a library and there are shops not far from here and there is like, it's separated, but it's not far enough to be considered like a separated town (…) you start to build, you know like I walked the dog this morning and I know the neighbours and you know, you know people and (…) I really really like Wishwell, I really do, and the people, and it's quiet, but you still got everything you need not far away" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

For Louise, the community 'atmosphere', as she called it, was also the result of socioeconomic variety and "a wide spread of age ranges", embodied by a retirement house and local schools in the area, which in her view created a feeling of "a normal community" (Interview with Louise, July 2013). This feeling referred to knowing her neighbours at least at a level that allowed her to greet them when walking the dog or going out with children – both of which allowed a sense of community to be experienced, facilitating the contact with neighbours, as both dogs and children were subject of conversation and mediators in the random interactions of bumping into neighbours. This was also expressed by Jennifer, the mother of two three year-old boys:

> "Having children it's completely changed, I can get on the bus and know 2 or 3 people, pretty much all the time, and a lot of that is because I see the same faces everyday, and ever since I have the children and they've just watched the boys grow up, and just sort of speak and say hello. I have the feeling it's quite a community place. Like in the church, I know a lot of people in church; when the church's toddler groups started I knew lots of people there, 'cause I volunteer at (local school) and I work at St Mary's school, I go there and instantly know people (…) I want to do that (volunteer at the local school) because I want to be part of the school, and also feel like a community (…) the school where they will be going to. And I don't know if you've seen a little magazine called the Wishwell Times… it's just a little leaflet about what's going on in Wishwell… I volunteer in delivering those (…) and if we go out delivering those, people are happy to see us and the boys help me doing that" (Interview with Jennifer, May 2013).

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'Community feeling' seemed to be constituted through the action of various boundary objects that allowed different groups of inhabitants to share a material base and a discourse about the place they inhabited. These included written descriptions of the town; the local magazine; the bus that ran between Wishwell and Riverton, and so on. However, there were differences in the way each of them described or identified this feeling or feature: from saying hello to neighbours to having lunch with them and taking care of each other's children; or from having a diverse range of people as neighbours to getting involved in the community's political and practical matters.

4. From car parts to car design, and from local workers to commuters

Beyond how important and diverse that 'community feeling' was, it was not the only reason why Wishwell had kept afloat as an attractive settlement after the industrial decline of the area. Its more recent appeal was also related to the automobile industry in two different senses: first, the raise of auto-mobility and mobility infrastructure meant that people could live in one place and work in another. At the time that factories closed down or dramatically reduced their personnel, other productive activities flourished. These activities were not necessarily located within Wishwell or its immediate surroundings, but at distances that became accessible from Wishwell thanks to the car as a private and increasingly accessible means of mobility. They became accessible also because of the mobility infrastructure that came in tandem with auto-mobility across the country, such as high-speed motorways and trains. And second, although the manufacturing of automotive parts had declined in this part of the world, other parts of the productive chain were now localised in this geographical area: from manufacturing car parts, it moved towards car design. This new form of car industry was one of the sources of employment of many of the parents I met there.

Although car design was not the only or the most representative productive activity of parents in Wishwell, the movement from car parts manufacturing to car design in this area of the world expresses and summarises a movement from work-home proximity to commuting models and work flexibility. This goes in tandem with changing forms of mobilities, family life and routines and, consequently, diverse forms of experiencing childhood. For example, both Suzanne and Guillermo's families had recently moved to Wishwell; both had at least one parent commuting to work in the car industry; and both families had families abroad. However, Guillermo and Suzanne lived their everyday lives in very different spaces. Suzanne's mother, Louise, worked in a university to where she had an hour commute. Therefore, Suzanne went to nursery full-time four days a week, spending her days there from 8 am to 5 pm. Guillermo's mother, Laura, although she used to work before Guillermo was born, had decided to stop working until he was a bit older. For this reason, he went to the children's centre, the library or other local activities, but mainly stayed at home with his mother.

Nicola Ansell (2009) has argued that children's everyday lives and their immediate spaces of perception are "the product of events, policies, discourses and decisions with diverse origins in time and space. Sensory perceptions thus provide children with very incomplete descriptions of the world they encounter" (Ansell, 2009: 199). For this reason, she points out the necessity of focusing on the 'unobserved places' to which children's lives are in one way or another related. In this sense, it is important to look at Wishwell with a wide spatial and temporal perspective. In this way, we can see how economic processes such as industrialization, decline of industry, new transport systems and working arrangements were related in Wishwell to the kinds of lives that children live and the spaces they inhabited. For example, although Suzanne did not spend any time at the car company where her dad worked or at the university where her mom did (so that these would usually be 'unobserved places' of Suzanne's everyday life), her everyday routine was partly shaped by the labour conditions of the company and the university, by their locations and by some material features of those work-places, as shown in Louise's account of Suzanne's daily routine:

> "I take her (to nursery) in the mornings, usually always, you know even when I was sick I was still… because where Samuel works, parking is really difficult, and he starts very early, so he's usually out of the house by about half six, so he leaves even before she wakes up. But then he can leave at 5 and pick her up (…) I always used to do the picks up and the drops off, because my hours are so much more flexible, and he would only pick her up when I couldn't, but now we sort of swop roles, and he's always picking her up now… so she's home by about 6 (…)" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

Suzanne's range of mobility stretched out of town to nursery in Riverton, parks, the fields and woods inside and outside of the Wishwell, the visits to her grandparents in a different area of the country, and the trips to France that she had already taken three times. Se was usually driven by car to and from all these places. Her inhabitation of Wishwell was quite different to that of Richard when he was a child. Suzanne and her family, although they had friendly neighbours that they could greet on their daily walks, did not have any friends nearby, or any network of support they could rely on if they needed childcare, for example. Both of her parents had jobs away from town and so were their social networks, spread across the country and abroad. Guillermo's spatiality was similar to that of Suzanne's in terms of having family and social networks spread beyond the boundaries of Wishwell, at national and international levels. However, his daily life was based within the space of his house, with regular but not too many visits to local facilities and friends in the area.

Suzanne and Guillermo's lives in Wishwell contrasted with the image of childhood pictured by Richard's recount of his experiences as a young boy in Wishwell five decades ago. His dad, who was a factory worker as previously mentioned, never drove a car in his life. Therefore, the spatiality of Richard's family

was one reached by walking, cycling, eventually taking the bus and very rarely the train. He grew up *in* Wishwell, in a very literal way: until he went to secondary school, he did not have any activities outside the town. He was child-minded by a neighbour, went to school and had all his friends and family there and, because his father was raising five children on his own, they did not go on holidays very often - never went abroad at all. He had, however, a very rich social life in town. He would go to the stream with his siblings and neighbours, ride his bicycle around, and had a close relationship with neighbour families, many of which were also factory workers in the same workplace as his dad. He could remember the shop where he used to buy chocolates, a shop that was not there anymore; he recalled the old cottages that were demolished years ago, 'where the bus stop is now'. His sense of community was based on all this history of growing up there and inhabiting not only his house in Wishwell but also the whole town: its roads, shops and streams.

I do not intend to go into details about children's experiences of these spatialities and mobilities at this point, as that will be the focus of part IV. What I want to highlight here are the manifold connections to places and events near and far (in time and space) that formed part of young children's lives in Wishwell in 2013-14. So far, these connections and spatialities have been explored in relation to the changes in the economies of the area and beyond, particularly in relation to parents' employment, and the cultural and geographical diversification that these processes implied. In what follows, other forms of heterogeneity characterising Wishwell will be discussed, this time focusing on the socioeconomic areas that shaped the town and how these differences were expressed by some of the inhabitants, creating internal boundaries and places within this place.

5. Experiencing the locality profile

In my study, class differences and conflicts were not an explicit issue that I intended to look into from the start of the project. However, these appeared not only in secondary sources of information about the town but also in the form of subtle comments in people's accounts. These echoed the picture of the town described by its locality profile as a place made out of areas with significant differences between them. In this regard, I will share two vignettes that illustrate the ways in which some people perceived and enacted this difference: *'holding hands'* and *'your children's centre is close to Asda!'*.

5.1 Holding hands
Finley and Jacob, three year-old twins, lived in Wishwell in the house they parents Jennifer and Peter had bought many years before they were born. The location of the house was chosen, however, with the boys already in mind, as expressed by their mother:

"we chose this house because we knew it was close to the school we wanted *them* to go, so we knew that we would be in the catchment area, so when we had children we wouldn't have to move again" (Interview with Jennifer, May 2013).

The boys were already agents in their family's decision-making even before they were conceived, as they existed as a potential before existing as 'real' children. The decision about the school their parents wanted them to go was based on the school's "good reputation" within Wishwell, a place where they could afford to buy a house. However, they did not want to live anywhere in Wishwell or their children to attend any school in town. There were other issues on board apart from this school having a "good reputation". These issues emerged when I asked Jennifer whether there were areas of the town that she did not like or places that she avoided:

"I suppose the only way that's being influential is my school choice… I don't want it to sound snobbish, but as much as I know Wishwell Primary School is trying to change itself, is not where I would want to send my children to, and I think some of that is the type of houses in its catchment area… do you know what I'm trying to say? And it's just about the areas, I don't want to stereotype people and I don't want to discriminate them and say oh, they're like that or anything like that, but, I suppose to give your child the best chance, and I suppose I'm from a slightly different background to maybe some of those other people around there… and sort of, you can see the differences (…) I've got firm opinions and beliefs about how certain things should and shouldn't be. From little things like, you know, crossing the road, they HAVE to hold my hand, you know? And table manners, just for me the basics (…) as much as the school is trying to change, the problem is it can only change as much as the area that is in allows it to (…) That's why I've chosen the school and that's why we've chosen here… so we moved here in 2004, and they were born in 2008, as it took us longer than we thought to have children… but it's because I moved, that's where I wanted them to go, that's why we bought this house" (Interview with Jennifer, May 2013).

In this excerpt from Jennifer's interview there are different aspects concerning the children and the family's mobilities. First, the couple's decision of where to buy a property to live as a family was guided by educational choices for their potential children. This decision was informed not only by a purely educational assessment of the schools in the area where they wanted to live –and where they could afford to buy a house – but also by their knowledge of the area in socioeconomic terms. If we look at Jennifer's explanation of her residential/school choice in relation to the map of super output areas, what she was trying to say is that she did not want to live, or her children to go to school, within the area of highest deprivation in town. While her house was located within a SOA with an Index of Multiple Deprivation of over 26,000, Wishwell Primary School was located in an area with an index of just over 14,000. In turn, the

school where she wanted her children to go in the future was located in the least deprived area of town. Their residential mobility was informed by their perception and knowledge of the socioeconomic aspects of Wishwell, and by their own socioeconomic background and conditions. Second, although she did not describe the ways in which 'those other people around there' did things, she compared them to her own parenting style. In this regard, one of her observations referred to what she considered the right way of moving with children: "little things like, you know, crossing the road, they HAVE to hold my hand, you know?".

5.2 'Your children's centre is close to Asda!'

Louise told me that she went to WCC for a while, when Suzanne was a baby. She said that she did not enjoy being there because people seemed to already know each other and she did not feel comfortable getting on with a big group of people that she did not feel part of. However, there was another aspect related to this discomfort that she expressed in terms of what other people (friends that lived in Riverton) would tell her when she was going to WCC: "there is a class thing going on in Wishwell, like people say 'your children's centre is close to Asda!', they think it's a dangerous area, but it's nice" (conversation with Louise, June 2013). This comment referred, as Louise explained to me, to Asda's 'clients stereotype': "you know, poor people, cheap products, people that buy 20 doughnuts for a pound". In reality, people of every sort did their shopping in Asda, but that was the ideal type of the socioeconomic groups and supermarkets association in Riverton and Wishwell.

On the top of that, Asda was located in the periphery of Riverton, in one of its most deprived areas, which was also more deprived than any SOAs in Wishwell - with a score of around 8,000. This was the place where Wishwell Children's Centre was located.

Chapter 8: The constellation of Wishwell Children's Centre

Throughout the previous chapter Wishwell Children's Centre appeared at various points as a key place of encounter for the children, parents and carers of Wishwell. It was a key spatiality in young children's lives. It also constituted a focal place in my research where I met most of the participants. For these reasons, in this chapter I will present Wishwell Children's Centre as a constellation of temporary coherence within - or overlapping with - the constellation of Wishwell.

This chapter is divided in seven sections: *'Hybrid space: people, buildings and policies'* in which the children's centre is introduced in terms of its geographical location and material composition; *'Sure Start: pram-pushing distance policy'*, discussing the policy behind WCC; *'Softsmart: please sign in'* focuses on the role of technology in registering the children's centre's performance in relation to its geographical and socioeconomic targets, and as a mediator between children, families and WCC; *'Namaste: from India to WCC'* is an account of how Asian families were part of WCC, showing at the same time how Wishwell was connected to India in diverse ways; *'The Solihull approach: the evaluation of children and parents'* discusses the developmental discourse that shaped WCC's approach to children, and the "social investment state" of which this discourse and the Sure Start policy were part of. It also discusses how, as a result of this, child assessments were a prime mediator between the children's centre and children and parents; in *'Those hard to reach: the evaluation of the children's centres'* this evaluative mode is discussed in relation to the assessment of the Sure Start programme and the children's centres, focusing on critical perspectives of this form of assessment; and finally, *'The end of Namaste: from WCC to where?'* presents a specific 'local' example of the consequences of evaluation of the children's centres at a national scale, in the context of wider funding cuts being applied to public services throughout the UK.

1. Hybrid space: people, buildings and policies

Eleanor Jupp (2013) has defined children's centres as 'hybrid spaces'. She identifies three interrelated aspects of interaction within these spaces, shaped by policy programmes, materials and other dynamics: first, the material 'feel' of the spaces of the centres; second, relations and conversations between staff and users; and third, interactions among users (Jupp, 2013). Jupp highlights the active role of buildings and material environments in shaping spatial experiences "as events or performances in themselves" (Jupp, 2013:178). Therefore, it is important to emphasise that because of limited time and resources for developing the programmes and meeting the target that there would be a centre "in every neighbourhood by 2010" (DCSF, 2005):

"(…) what became children's centre generally already existed as family centres, school nurseries or community centres, given new resources, programmes and staffing, but bringing existing relationships with other institutions, sets of users and histories" (Jupp, 2013:178).

This was the case of WCC, located next to Wishwell Nursery over the grounds and building of what used to be Wishwell Junior School - where some of the staff and parents had attended as children. WCC was considered to be a small centre: it was a one storey building divided in the reception and the 'toddlers' room', as some of the staff called it. This latter room was:

"(…) filled with teddy bears, baby chairs, chairs, tables, distorted mirrors, shelves, clothes, toys of different kinds, decorated lanterns hanging from the roof … I recognise the Reggio Emilia big triangle (a wooden tri-dimensional triangle covered with mirrors in the insides, where children can get themselves in or look at other materials reflecting in the never-ending kaleidoscopic triangle). There are boards and printed messages and photographs on the walls; pictures showing the children doing different activities; and the 'Parents' Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'. Another board has as title 'What is Play?' with messages and photographs again (…)" (Fieldnotes, Namaste 01/03/13).
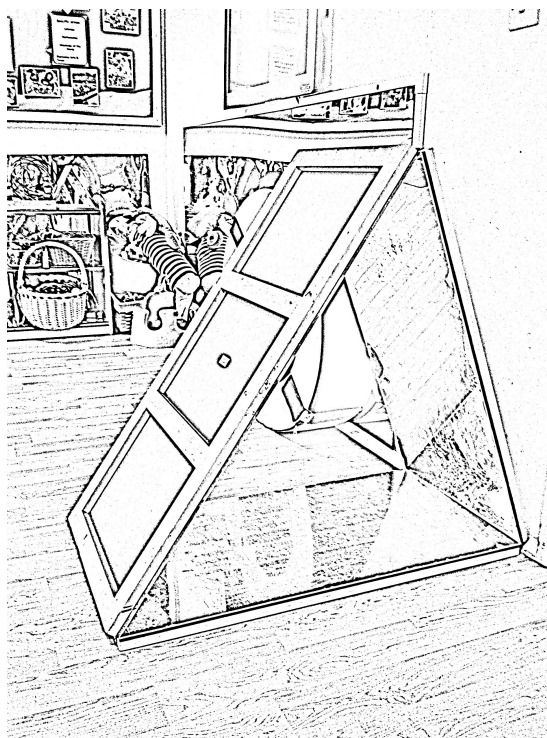
This extract illustrates only some of the many material elements that composed WCC. Some of them reflected the policies the centre ascribed to. Others pointed out connections to other places and ideas. The triangle, for example, was an artefact designed by people working with the pre-school settings of

Reggio Emilia, in Italy. 'Scuolas' and 'nidos' were created in this small town in the North of Italy after WWII, developing what has come to be known as the 'Reggio approach'. In this perspective, education is conceived as the result of the interactions between the built environment and materiality, children, pedagogues, families and community, where children are active agents in deciding what and how to learn (Ceppi & Zini, 2009; Dahlberg, 2001; Soler & Miller, 2003). Therefore, the pre-school settings of Reggio Emilia have worked closely with architects and designers in developing innovative spaces and artefacts that contribute to children's explorative relationships with their environments. One of these artefacts is a kaleidoscopic triangle built in two sizes: a small one, for children to hold and look into, and a big one for children to inhabit. Since its creation by Play+ in collaboration with Reggio Children the triangle has been built and sold by different companies, resulting in diverse versions with slight variations on its design. One of these versions was the one found in WCC. Asking about its purchase I realised, on the one hand, that Wishwell Nursery, the nursery next door with which the centre shared grounds and users, worked with the Reggio Approach. On the other hand, I learnt that WCC was part of a cluster of children's centres, as I saw the same triangle in other centres in Riverton. Soor, the admin person, explained to me how purchases of this kind of items were sometimes the product of seeing something interesting in another centre of the cluster, and then "you say oh! Where did you get that? So you get it for your children's centre as well" (Conversation with Soor, March 2013).

The cluster of children's centres was managed by a private organisation on behalf of the county council. This cluster structure meant that some resources - such as staff and information that moved across the centres - infrastructure - such as software, artefacts and space - as well as management and decision-making processes were shared. Although Wishwell Children's Centre was the most frequented by Wishwell inhabitants, parents and carers were aware of all the other children's centres timetables and many of them attended activities that suited their interests or weekly agendas in the other nearby centres.

People's awareness of the activities taking place in WCC and other children's centres was partly due to other element of WCC: leaflets. There was always a vast array of them displayed on the reception desk. Leaflets, booklets and local magazines constituted important artefacts among children and parents in Wishwell, connecting them to other places beyond the children's centre. However, their function should not be taken for granted, as observed in my fieldnotes:

> "When I have nothing to do at WCC or I'm waiting for something there, I use to look at all the
> informative leaflets over the reception desk. The leaflets are there for visitors to take them, read
> them, to become aware of services, activities, and information. Some of them are from WCC and
> inform about the activities taking place here. Most of them, however, are from other institutions,
> companies or from a wider institutional level related to WCC. There are leaflets about: a
> children's leisure farm outside town, which includes a discount voucher; about legal/safety

regulations when carrying children as car passengers; top tips for 'keeping warm' in winter; a NHS' 'stop smoking' pack; food-coop veggie box, among many others. I think about them now that I'm designing my own research leaflet. They are there, facing the visitors as soon as they come in. They may constitute a link between the people and so many things: places, people, services, food, health, etc. But they may easily become rubbish with no previous reading; they may be useful when writing down a telephone number, a message, an email address, an address… as simple paper; sometimes they act as coasters when I'm drinking a hot drink while doing Soft Smart; they may stay into a coat's pocket, a handbag, a hand; they are sometimes thrown away by children's hands that curiously explore the high desk surface while their moms sign in the register" (Fieldnotes, February 2013).

The observation of the leaflets made me wonder early in fieldwork: where do all these leaflets come from? What is their destiny? What happens, as a consequence of their existence and relationships to people? To which places, people, policies and so on do they connect WCC? These questions will be further discussed in Chapter 11 in relation to the travel of objects.

2. Sure Start: pram-pushing distance policy

WCC had a catchment area that involved the whole of Wishwell but also the part of Riverton where the centre was located. Although its position outside the town whose name the centre held seemed odd at a first impression, this location had a sensible explanation. WCC was part of the Sure Start national programme initiated in 1997-98. Targeted at children under four years old and their families in some of the 20% most deprived and disadvantaged geographical areas of the country (Garbers, Tunstill, Allnock, & Akhurst, 2006), Sure Start was presented it in these terms:

It is part of the Government's policy to prevent social exclusion and aims to improve the life chances of younger children through better access to early education and play, health services for children and parents, family support and advice on nurturing. It will be locally led and locally delivered but will be based on evidence from the United Kingdom and elsewhere on 'what works' in terms of improving the life chances of children and their parents (…) The aim of Sure Start is to work with parents and children to promote physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of children - particularly those who are disadvantaged - to make sure they are ready to thrive when they get to school. It is consciously intended to achieve long-term results such as better educational performance, lower unemployment, less criminality and reduced levels of teenage pregnancy" (Glass, 1999: 258).

Although Sure Start was supposed to be a prime example of evidence-based policy making, evidence in the UK was very limited, thus the programme drew upon evidence-based programmes and research mainly from the US (Glass, 1999). It was developed in the form of community-based local programmes (SSLPS) that aimed at providing particular areas of the country - chosen for their high levels of deprivation – with diverse services for children and families unified in one single entity or location. As described by Clarke (2006):

> "Each local programme operates within a small geographically defined area and is focused on the population of children under four within that area (normally 400-800 children), who live within 'pram-pushing distance' of the Sure Start centre" (Clarke, 2006: 704).

The programme was defined as a universal service, therefore avoiding the "stigma associated with receiving targeted services" (Clarke, 2006:705). However, the target population (those children under 4 and their families living in deprived areas) was targeted through the geographical location of the Sure Start centres – with the potential stigmatization of all families in these areas (Clarke, 2006). The geographical location of the programme at a 'pram-pushing distance' for children under four and their families, and strategies such as visiting all babies within the first two months of their lives (Garbers et al. 2006) were initiatives for maximising the children's centres' access to their target population. The use of publicity relied on the mediation of health visitors and midwives between the children's centres and potential users – positioning them as "conduits through which the theory and practice of the Sure Start programme is made local" (Gustafsson & Driver, 2005:539). It also included the use of leaflets and the organisation of promotional activities at libraries or other local settings. Informal strategies, such as celebrations and leisure trips, were also developed as a way of advertising the centres (Garbers et al. 2006).

SSLPs started with sixty centres in 1999 (Horton & Kraftl, 2009a). The programme quickly escalated into a bigger project that in 2004 was transformed into Sure Start Children's Centres (Lewis, 2011; Lewis, Cuthbert, & Sarre, 2011). A children's centre was defined as "a place or group of places" that was "managed by or on behalf of, or arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority are made available in an integrated way". This meant that the programme was extended to 1,250 centres in 2006 (Horton & Kraftl, 2009a) and 3,631 in 2010, covering 70% of the most deprived wards in the country (4Children, 2013). The emphasis put by the programme on the geographical location of the centres as a form of targeting their services explains why WCC was located in a ward in Riverton rather than somewhere in Wishwell: it was the most deprived ward of the Wishwell and South Riverton area. It also had available the building left by Wishwell Junior School.

3. Softsmart: please sign in

Because WCC was supposed to reach the most disadvantaged inhabitants of its reach area, regular evaluations of the centre took into account attendance: knowing where the attendees come from, in terms of residential location as an expression of deprivation or socioeconomic group, was key. For this reason, the register of attendances and their residential details were fundamental for the children's centre's proof of performance. For this purpose, the children's centres had "Softsmart", a computer programme that allowed the recording of information about families into a digital database shared by the children's centre cluster.

The registration system involved, first, that every time a new family or person came into the centre, they would need to fill in a registration form given to new comers at the centre, mums-to-be or new parents by the midwife or health visitor. The children's centres registration form stated that:

> "All information will be kept securely whether it is written or on a computer system. This information may be used to help plan services and provide anonymous statistical information about our work with families. We will register your attendance at our services and we may keep other additional records".

The form required information about children and families such address telephone number, postcode and email; dates of birth, gender and ethnicity code of all the children under five being registered, their parents and other family members' (e.g. siblings) The information provided through these forms was later digitalised on Softsmart, where individual children were linked to parents, siblings, residential address and postcode – and therefore to a particular SOA.

The second part of the process meant that every time there was an activity in the centre attendants had to sign in an attendance sheet, writing down their name, name and DOB of the children attending with them, address, postcode, and whether they were registered with the children's centre or not. There was a constant emphasis on asking people to sign in if they did not do it immediately after coming in. This was because having high attendance rates, and from particular wards within the catchment area, were positive and key issues for the centre's assessment – and for its survival after the forthcoming funding cuts. Among my tasks as an admin volunteer, I did lots of Softsmart inputs. This constituted an incredibly time-consuming activity: it involved creating attendance lists for each session carried out in the centre, and inputting all the attendants – children and adults – by searching them on the digital system where they should be already registered. This was done by searching address or postcode as first option. Under an address the different household members would appear, and I would tick them for putting them on the list. However, the programme was not easy to use, as the search tools were very basic. In addition to that, the

task implied reading handwritten information, sometimes guessing the numbers or letters of the postcode, street or surnames (especially because many surnames were completely unknown for me). This made the search for registered members very difficult and slow, as expressed in the following extract of fieldnotes:

"About my work in Softsmart, I'm becoming faster (actually, today I finished all the pending attendance lists), but I keep thinking that Softsmart is not really that smart. It isn't good at making links between different pieces of information. For instance, I may find a person, a mother, because of her name (if the address is incomplete or unreadable), but I can't find the child linked to her. I can only find the family members linked together through a home address, not through a name" (Fieldnotes, March 2013).

It was easier for Soor, who already knew most of the attendees and could remember their surnames and even addresses, after many inputs. However, she would also complain about the software not making things easier. In addition to this, there was a feeling of a lot of staff-time being spent on this task that did not seem to have immediate positive value for children, families or staff. The information provided by the records system was, however, key for the survival of WCC. It was also fundamental for the whole Every Child Matters national programme that relied on IT systems as potential ways of identifying problems, allowing different organisations and professionals to share information, so that more integrated services and actions could be provided and taken (Parton, 2006), and allowing:

"different organisations and professionals to share information in order to ensure that children's problems were not missed and, crucially, children did not fall through 'the net'. The introduction of more integrated services was seen as crucially dependent on the introduction of new information technology" (Parton, 2006: 978).

Doing the digital inputs gave me an idea of the residential location of the children coming to the children's centre. It made me realise that the children I would find there were not necessarily inhabitants of the town of Wishwell but their residential locations spread across the wider reach area. Sitting at the reception desk, doing the inputs while answering the phone and welcoming people was also very insightful in this sense. For example, sometimes I observed that different names were written by the same hand on the attendance sheets. I understood the reason when observing that:

"groups of mums and children come together into the centre. Mums are all carrying children, coats and pushchairs, so one of them signs in for her and her friends. I saw one of them asking the house number and postcode of the others; "the same postcode that you are!", replied another mom as if highlighting the obvious. "Oh, I didn't know…". I imagined it would be like this, as

sometimes I see the same letter style in different and subsequent names on the list" (Fieldnotes, February 2013).

The familiarity between these people was evident in their interaction while being at the centre. The observation of the attendance lists and the signing-in moment revealed that this familiarity was not only the product of friendships made at the centre, but also the result of being neighbours. Both relationships were, however, tightly related.

Apart from some locations that were temporarily transformed into public spaces for special events - such as the pub car parking and the main road for the Christmas lights switch on celebration, or one of the green areas for Wishwell's summer fun day –the town did not have a centre or a lively public space where people could meet their neighbours or at least see each other. For this reason, for families with young children WCC and playgroups in Wishwell and Riverton were key as places where babies, young children and their parents (with a great emphasis on mothers but not exclusively) met each other, created and maintained relationships with other inhabitants of the town. These were places where a community feeling was actually performed and created, as I will now illustrate with the example of Namaste.

4. Asian families: from India to WCC

Wishwell and Riverton were one of the areas in the UK with high Indian population, which in different times and for different reasons had come to settle down there. This was expressed by WCC's special drop-in play session for Asian families, where people with diverse stories of migration weekly met. Although the activities offered to the children and parents were basically the same to the ones offered in all the other 'stay and play' sessions in the centre, this session had some particularities: the main spoken language was Punjabi, although it was mixed with English and people would sometimes swap to English if English-speaking staff or volunteers were nearby. Snack time was also distinctive: while Stay and Play only offered a snack for children – standard finger food such as carrots, fruits and little sandwiches – this session included the preparation of spicy tea for adults made in a big iron teapot by some of the mothers and volunteers. For special occasions such as a child's birthday the parents would bring samosas, chilli sauce, cake and Indian sweets.

Another particularity was that in addition to babies, children, mothers and a couple of dads, many of the attendants were grandmothers. It was common for Indian, and particularly Sikh families to live as extended families, and for grandparents to take care of their grandchildren while parents worked. Therefore, in many cases it was the grandmothers' role to take the children to WCC. While most of the mothers did not wear a distinctive kind of dress, all grandmothers wore traditional Indian dresses.

The person in charge of this session, Sai, had come with her family from Uganda to the UK in the seventies, when the Indian community they were part of was forced by the government to leave the country. Among the people I met there were Jeevi, who was around 8 months old, her brother Karu, who was 3 years old, and their mother Tera. She was born in England from Indian parents. Her mother had come to the UK when she was 10 years old. Her father had come when they got married, as it was an arranged wedding. Tera, Karu and Jeevi were very good friends with some of the other families in this group. They had met them all there, although they were neighbours with many of them. This seemed to be one of the main outcomes of this session: bringing people with a similar cultural/religious background together and extending their social networks within the local area. Soor, who had been herself a parent at Namaste and was now the admin person in WCC, explained this situation to me:

"First I don't think anyone knew each other, but then they began to become friends and start meeting outside of the centre (…) especially with the Namaste group, where if they don't know anyone, if they recently moved into the country, and they come to the (Asian) group, they don't know anyone in their area, then they start to know. And sometimes they live on the same street, but they wouldn't talk to each other, but if they come here, so it's like 'oh yes, you live there' (…) and even in other groups, not just this one, in the Stay and Play, you see parents saying let's get together that day (…) it's easier to talk here, because, sometimes you're just passing and you wouldn't say 'hi, hello', it's hard, you're busy outside, isn't it? in here is just like the sort of atmosphere where you get to talk to people, you ask them what do you do? so it's easier to talk I suppose than outside over the fence or whatever, isn't it?" (Interview with Soor, January 2013).

For this purpose, tea was key. That was the moment when grandmothers and parents came together; helping each other holding a cup of tea while the other served fruits for a group of children; bringing tea for the mums at the babies zone and chatting while drinking it. For children, snack time was also an important part of the session, as they chose whom they wanted to sit with, establishing their friendships. The tea, however, was in risk of disappearing when a new hot drinks policy arrived to WCC. An accident had occurred in another children's centre of the country in which a child got scalded with a hot drink. This unfortunate incident escalated into the creation of a hot drinks policy in 2012 that was applied at different times in children's centres in diverse locations. The policy stated that no hot drinks should be available in any room where children were present, and that hot drinks may be offered in a designated, safe area, with no children around (Sure-Start, 2012).

The problem in applying this regulation to WCC was that there was no space for having a separated room where adults could enjoy a hot drink. And even supposing that there was a separate room, mothers with babies or small children would not be able to go there. The hot-drinks policy and its effects on WCC, particularly for the session for Asian families, reflect two different issues. First, it is an illustration of how

this place was part of a larger institutional structure. This meant that things happening in one place of the country could affect circumstances in a completely different setting. The national level institutional structure acted as a means for mobilising experiences, practices, discourses and policies across the country, affecting children and parents' experiences of inhabiting a children's centre anywhere in the UK. And second, it constitutes an example of how certain cultural practices such as preparing and drinking tea in a particular way may sustain a community that has moved away from its original geographical settings. As a product of diverse political phenomena such as imperialism, wars, education and so on, these cultural traditions were brought into the children's centre of this small English town. As a consequence, samosas, spicy sauces and tea were essential elements of what WCC was for some of its attendees.

These brief stories show some of the many places to which the town was connected through the mobilities of its inhabitants and the circulation of policies. They also show that the connections to, for example, India, were the product of different movements. International scale movements, even if they had been performed days, years or decades ago, had an impact on the current everyday interactions and mobilities of these families. In this sense, the children's centre was the place where all these diverse histories of mobilities met and created new social and cultural bonds within the place of Wishwell. In doing so, they came into interaction with other elements of this hybrid space: the buildings and history of the town of Wishwell; technologies and artefacts that connected the children's centre to a wider scale of policy and intervention, and, as I will discuss next, discourses and policies related to the UK government agenda that overlapped and sometimes conflicted the interests of the people involved.

5. The Solihull approach: the evaluation of children and parents

Nigel Parton (2006) has described how the changes to child services and policies introduced by the UK New Labour government were based on research from the nineties that situated child development as a key aspect of new children's policies and services. These changes also held a notion of children as future citizens in need of protection and safeguarding (Parton, 2006). Both perspectives were tightly related, as argued by Clarke (2006):

> "The social construction of childhood as a period of innocence and vulnerability, and of children's development as shaped by experience, means that infancy represents a unique opportunity for intervention" (Clarke, 2006: 701-2).

Within the logic of the 'social investment estate' (Bustelo, 2007; Lister, 2003, 2006), Sure Start took on the role of surveillance in relation to young children's development, with the understanding that:

"Investment in children's well-being and education represents the epitome of prudent long-term investment, which promises to save on future expenditure by avoiding the costs of future social exclusion. Children also offer the means for 'reforming' parents, by reinforcing their responsibility to enter the labour market to support them" (Clarke, 2006:702).

As if 'appropriate' development could guarantee social integration, individual and national wealth, the developmental approach characterising the age-related Assessment and Action Records (AARs) for children in care was expanded towards general children's services. Assessment aimed at determining how far children were progressing in different developmental dimensions, and whether they were being given the necessary experiences and services (Parton, 2006). The 'social investment state' was therefore translated into institutional assessment of children's development.

The Solihull Approach embodied this developmental perspective in WCC. This approach (developed in Solihull, UK, around 1996 at the request of the local health visitors who felt "they needed more help to work with families with children with common difficulties" (Douglas and Brennan, 2004:90)) was: "a model integrating psychotherapeutic, child development and behavioural approaches for working with children with sleeping, feeding, toileting and behavioural difficulties" (Douglas and Brennan, 2004:90). It constituted a theoretical model that aimed at informing practice through a pack of resources and courses. The approach was taken not only by health practitioners and not only in Solihull but it expanded to other practitioners, institutions, parents and localities (JillRogers-Associates, 2004). Its use had been also expanded so that it was seen as a way for staff to think about their work with children and families and not only a strategy to be used with families experiencing difficulties (JillRogers-Associates, 2004).

In WCC the approach was materially present as a big folder that was pointed to me as one of the first readings to do when I became a volunteer: the 'Solihull Approach resource pack, the first five years'. The pack included a robust guide for staff, in which the approach was explained in detail. It also included an information leaflet for parents that aimed at "understanding your child's behaviour" through "developmental and emotional milestones", bearing in mind that each child may reach these milestones earlier or later than what was estimated (JillRogers-Associates, 2004). The information leaflet summarised a series of "emotional" and "developmental" milestones according to age. In reference to these milestones parents could assess their own child(ren). Interestingly, many of these milestones referred to features of children's bodily movement.

Developmental assessment was a constant mediator in the relationships between the institution (WCC) and the children and their parents. On the one hand, this was accomplished through explicit observation and assessments carried out by the health visitors at the health checks in the centre: they would observe the children while asking questions to their parent (mother most of the times that I observed this) about the

children's behaviour at home, number of words they said and movements they could perform. On the other hand, there was a more informal but constant observation of the children during the drop-in play activities. These observations were discussed later on by the staff and volunteers, identifying concerning situations or issues to focus on in the next sessions, such as parent involvement in children's play, motor skills, speech and so on.

6. Those hard to reach: the evaluation of the children's centres

The first evaluations of Sure Start were negative in terms of its initial targets (Belsky et al., 2006; Glass, 2005; NESS & Anning, 2007; Tunstill, Allnock, Akhurst, Garbers, & NESS, 2005). Early assessments indicated that a large part of the population that Sure Start was aiming to reach remained marginal to the initiative, becoming what was generally referred to as "those hard to reach": minority ethnic communities, refugee communities, working parents, single parents, teenage mothers, workless households, fathers and sometimes working class families (Garbers et al., 2006; Gustafsson & Driver, 2005; NESS & Anning, 2007). The programme was questioned in terms of its success in reaching the most disadvantaged families, while children's centres were seen as being "over-used" by middle class parents and children, as argued by David Cameron in a public speech (Cameron, 2010). Moreover, according to some studies, Sure Start was having beneficial effects for middle class families but negative effects for the most deprived families (Belsky et al., 2006).

However, the evaluation criteria of Sure Start has been criticised from different perspectives. First, for giving the programme a deadline that was too narrow for demonstrating its success in relation to its targets. And second, for assessing the children's centres only through pre-defined criteria that did not allowed space for unexpected positive outcomes (Clarke, 2006; Horton & Kraftl, 2009a, 2009b).

Jupp has defined children's centres as spaces of policy interventions and as hybrid spaces in which "everyday life and emotions always 'exceed' either policy or theoretical frameworks" (Jupp, 2013: 173). However, the evaluation of Sure Start was not able to capture the complexity that resulted from the interactions between heterogeneous agents in the children's centres. As acknowledged by the NESS team: "programmes were required to work in partnership with local stakeholders, and through consultation with parents, to design and deliver services tuned to local priorities. Each programme was different" (NESS & Anning, 2007: 2). However:

> "The National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) team faced the challenge of producing quantitative measures of the qualitative processes of implementing a diverse range of SSLPs, in different contexts and at different stages of their service history" (NESS & Anning, 2007: 2).

Evaluation was carried out through 'policy aligned research', through NESS and locally initiated evaluations. The indicators were derived from the stated aims of the policy programmes, in evaluative mode, without space for considering aspects outside of that predefined frame of assessment (Jupp, 2013:176). Clarke (2006) explains this form of evaluation as part of the social investment on pre-school education as an exclusively future-oriented goal:

> "The evaluation of the benefits of pre-school education is essentially future-oriented (preparation for school), with little interest in the quality of the experience for its own sake and the benefits to children in the present (...) pre-school care and education become something that is particularly needed by 'disadvantaged children', and by parents living in workless households, with reassuring evidence that non-maternal care is better that arriving at school with what is identified as 'no pre-school experience' (i.e. no experience of formal care/education outside the home - plenty of experience, but of the wrong kind)" (Clarke, 2006: 714).

As Clarke argues, the risk of placing too much emphasis on the social investment rationale is that it narrows the perspective of the benefits to the actual return of the state's investment, "losing sight of the inherent benefits of, and social justice arguments for, provision of services for children and support for families" (Clarke, 2006: 702).

7. The end of the Asian group: from Wishwell to where?

Horton and Kraftl have asked the question: "what else matters?" (2009b), in relation to the outcomes of the children's centres for the people involved in them. They identified different ways in which the users of a children's centre articulated their experiences. One of them was the centre's 'life-changing' capacity, explained as: "a shift from emptiness, stress, anxiety and sadness to warmth, happiness and opportunity" (Horton & Kraftl, 2009a: 18). A participant of their study expressed this shift in the following way: "I walk down the street now doing the shopping and I see people to say hello to". This was an experience that, as Horton and Kraftl put it, "revitalised the spaces of the local community such that 'doing the shopping' had become a positive, sociable activity" (Horton & Kraftl, 2009a: 18). But the evaluation of Sure Start did not ask how the children's centres had impacted their neighbourhood in the sense shown by Horton and Kraftl (2009a) and here in relation to Wishwell. In the same way, despite being called *children*'s centres and despite how vital children's behaviour and perspectives are in the shaping of spaces (Gallacher, 2005), children's experiences and perspectives were not a dimension in the evaluation of Sure Start – and, in a wider context, there is a lack of geographical research on how pre-school children experience the spaces they inhabit (Horton & Kraftl, 2011).

Instead, the children's centres were asked to report on their attendances registers, in order to determine whether the target population was using the facilities provided or not. In the context of national funding cuts to diverse public services, the result was that many children's centres across the country saw their budgets drastically reduced, whilst some of them were closed or merged. From 3,231 children's centres in April 2010, 3,116 children's centres remained in April 2013 (4Children, 2013). WCC's budget was reduced on a 40% between 2013 and 2014. The centre had to restructure its services accordingly: as a way of counterbalancing the funding cuts they opened a day nursery for children aged two. As the centre was small and the staff limited, some sessions had to be closed. In September 2013 was the last session for Asian families at WCC. In an interview with Sarah, the children's centre's coordinator, about how the cuts were affecting the centre's dynamic, she referred to this situation:

> "The nursery was the way to survive (…) but because of the size of the building we couldn't do everything, and obviously staff wise, we couldn't (…) we had to close (the group for Asian families) to make room for the nursery, a baby group we had to close (…) I think some of the parents were upset, because they said why are you closing a group that is targeted at Asian families, and you are having another group that is for all people… so that was a difficult decision (…) so what we had to do, when we were looking on the Soft Smart, we had to identify the children's centre neighbourhood, you know, where everybody comes from is divided into smaller patches, and so there's kind of areas of deprivation, so we looked where those parents were coming from in terms of that (…) a lot of them were coming from the more affluent areas, where they… they are confident parents, happy to access to all sorts of other places, so that's what determined that really, 'cause we are meant to be targeting those that are coming from the lower deciles, you know (…) all in all it's been a very difficult year" (Interview with Sarah, July 2014).

Immediately after closing this session, however, a new group was created at WCC to compensate the loss of the others. The new session was a universal group led by Juliette. I offered to help there, and she welcomed me to do so. She explained that she wanted to:

> "work with the senses, working with materials that children could touch and feel. She said the children would be 'playing but not just playing', so 'we could look at what they are doing, how they are doing with their developmental skills, fine motor skills, and so on'" (Fieldnotes: WCC, October 2013).

From the beginning, many people came. Some of them were old attendees, some others were new. The sustainability of this new session, however, was in question, as well, as Sarah suggested on our last interview:

"There have been things that we can't do. Me, as a manager, I've tried to keep it as it was, and I think sometimes the staff would have to say to me 'but we can't do it, we haven't got the resources to do it', so for me that's been important, listen to that (…) so we haven't been able to run some of the speech and language (…) you're not providing something you really believe in… probably we're working towards more and more targeted work, and that's the way it may be heading. So you know like the universal group, it will be way in up whether we can continue with that… because it's like no targeted, but is so important because that's when you meet parents coming, that's when you pick up all sorts of work, and if it goes that's a real shame" (Interview with Sarah, July 2014).

Hybrid constellations: concluding remarks

In this chapter I have aimed to show Wishwell as a "constellation of temporary coherence" (Massey, 1995), connected to other places and people near and far, and Wishwell Children's Centre as a "hybrid space" (Jupp, 2013) made out of heterogeneous entities. In what sense, then, has a picture of the town emerged as a constellation whose coherence is only temporarily accomplished? How were the heterogeneous entities of WCC integrated into the constellation of Wishwell?

The town of Wishwell emerged here as a place historically constituted in relation to other localities. The economic and technological shifts that have taken place nationally and internationally also affected the structure and inhabitation of this town: from farming to industry; and from the collapse of the local industry to a diversification of productive activities in the context of wider distances being part of the active space of the inhabitants of the town. Although the town was not significantly productive (neither in farming nor industry) within its physical boundaries at the time of the study, its inhabitants had a wider range of movement than previous residents, thus their economic activity spaces connected Wishwell to a wide range of localities within and outside the country. Wishwell emerged as well as a place constituted by diverse groups of people that constituted at the same time diverse areas within the town, mainly in terms of socioeconomic characteristics. Variation across time and space meant that the boundaries of Wishwell were not easy to grasp as a single line dividing its inside from an outside space. This was due, on the one hand, to the ever-shifting administrative boundaries of the town and the implications that this had for the perception that its residents had of them. On the other hand, the diversity of its inhabitants in terms of socioeconomic conditions, geographical and cultural origins, economic and social activity spaces meant that there were manifold "maps" of Wishwell overlapping, coinciding and conflicting, rather than a single line trace.

However, the identity of the town as a "community" acted as a "boundary object" (Star, 2010; Star & Griesemer, 1989) that held together all these diverse views of the town and forms of inhabiting it as a more or less unified experience of what people identified as Wishwell. A key place or object (boundary object as well) in this regard was Wishwell Children's Centre, where diverse constituent parts of the town met, and where they also encountered elements coming from further away, such as objects (the blue triangle and Indian food, for example), people (staff that did not live in or around Wishwell and people from far away towns and countries), technologies (Softsmart, toys, assessment tools), policies (Sure Start) and discourses (Solihull approach). These elements came together to be part of what WCC and Wishwell were in the perspective of the children's centre users, forming what was to some extent a coherent picture of the town in a certain moment.

Its inhabitants and users saw Wishwell and WCC as coherent places in terms of constituting an entity or unity that contained all the diversity within them (within their names, their boundaries, their practices and experiences). However, this coherence was continuously re-arranged as the town and the centre changed: the boundaries changed, thus what was part or not of this coherent body changed too; people left and came; rules and regulations shifted, forcing practices to change or dissolve, making them temporarily coherent and sometimes, perhaps between transitions, incoherent places that did not match people's expectations of them. Their names, however, remained – (at least until I changed them for pseudonyms) – as one of the few continuous elements of these constellations.

Part IV From cocooning to Skyping: mobilities in young children's everyday lives in Wishwell

In part III, I used Massey's conception of place as a "constellation of temporary coherence" (1995) to describe the spatialities and connections that characterised Wishwell and Wishwell Children's Centre at the time of the study. In my account children were not the focus of attention. The description made visible some of the usually "unobserved places" (Ansell, 2009) to which children's lives were connected. Examples of these were: the historical configurations of the town, parents' workspaces and regulations, events occurring elsewhere, and changing national and local policies. In part IV I will focus on the practices and experiences of mobilities that were part of children's everyday lives. These include, mobile practices carried out not necessarily by children themselves but by other people and artefacts that nevertheless relate to young children's mobile lives.

The structure of part IV is based on the interconnected types of mobilities identified by Sheller and Urry (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007), namely: corporeal travel of people; physical movement of objects; virtual, communicative and imaginative travel (Urry, 2007: 47). However, this analytical organisation of data will highlight the interdependencies between these forms of movements and the impossibility of isolating them when constructing the accounts of children's mobilities that compose this section. Therefore, these forms of mobility will be critically addressed and adapted to the observations emerging from the data and the particularities of the observed group of children and families. The study of young children's mobilities will suggest the necessity for richer categories of movement that cover not only the purposeful and rational travel (of people and objects through physical, virtual, communicative or imaginative means) between what is usually identified as places or locations, but also the smaller scale - not necessarily conscious and with rationales that might escape adult rationality - bodily movements "within place" (Casey, 1996) or between "children's places" (Fog & Gullov, 2003). This implies discussing the notion of scale in terms of how narrow and wide is the range of movements and distances between places that we are willing to take into account when observing mobile practices and experiences. This will prove to be a key issue when looking at young children's mobilities.

Chapter 9 will focus on the places, experiences and aspects that composed children's physical travels in and around Wishwell; Chapter 10 will focus on the movement of objects with or related to children's own movements; Chapter 11 will explore the virtual, communicative and imaginative mobilities that were part of the compositions of movement that shaped young children's lives in and around Wishwell. Chapter 12 will discuss the discourses that underlie the representations and meanings of young children's mobilities in Wishwell.

Chapter 9: The physical travel of people

> "(…) physical travel involves lumpy, fragile, aged, gendered, racialized bodies. Such bodies encounter other bodies, objects and the physical world multi-sensuously. Travel always involves *corporeal* movement and forms of pleasure and pain. Such bodies always perform themselves in-between direct sensation of the 'other' and various sensescapes" (Urry, 2007: 48).

This chapter is divided in two sections: the first one, '*I'm experimenting at the moment': young children's spatialities in and around* Wishwell', presents the manifold places or destinations that were the focus of young children's physical – and other forms of – travel. In doing so, it identifies four types of places or destinies: places around Wishwell such as playgroups and shops that formed part of children's weekly schedules and activities; places such as farms, fields, woods and parks in which children were supposed to approach nature in the form of animals and vegetation; sacred places such as temples and churches; and spaces of encounter with family. In this section, the experiences that children had of these varied places are explored. The second section, '*Bodily movements of young children in and around* Wishwell*'*, discusses diverse aspects of young children's physical mobilities such as babies' bodily movements; the movement *between* places *within* place; the transformation of places in relation to children's changing mobilities; moral geographies of parenting and safety regulations; the limitation of children's corporal mobilities through the use of artefacts; and the agencies of nature's rhythms in physical movements of children in Wishwell.

1. 'I'm experimenting at the moment': young children's spatialities in and around Wishwell

The families I met in Wishwell had weekly schedules that usually combined 'local' activities - such as activities held at WCC but also other playgroups held at churches or churches' community halls – that they took part of on a regular basis, with visits to family or friends (leaving particular days and times for that purpose, although the specific relative or friend visited may vary), shops and staying at home. These schedules also involved privately financed courses or memberships in some cases (such as baby development, swimming lessons, touristic attractions, and so on), as well as religious activities that implied the visit to certain sacred places, on a more or less regular basis. Visiting family involved, for many of these children, far away trips to other towns or cities within the UK and also abroad sometimes. What all these travels had in common was that they involved the children physically travelling and being physically present at those places, getting into interactions with the diverse spatialities they found there: architectures, objects, food, people and activities.

1.1 Places around Wishwell: playgroups, soft-play centre, Mother Care, Pixie Studio and Pets at Home.

> "So Tuesday I'm experimenting at the moment, but I'd really like something local" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

After Jasmine was born Gabrielle stopped doing many of the things that she had established as part of her weekly agenda with Lillian, her first child. Later on, while Jasmine was growing up, they were establishing a new weekly schedule according to the girls' sleeping patterns, season of the year and locally available activities. At the time of our first interview, they had an already established daily routine for everyday except Tuesday. In a recent past, when Lillian was a baby, they used to attend the mother and toddler playgroup at St. Mary's church in Wishwell on Tuesday mornings. That playgroup was cancelled when the organisers moved out of town, thus the attendants had to find other places to go or other things to do on Tuesday mornings. This was what Gabrielle meant when she said that she was 'experimenting' at the moment: they were trying different playgroups and things to do that day. With 'local' she meant somewhere she could walk to with the pram – or 'pram-pushing distance'. For Gabrielle, the playgroup at St. Mary's community hall was ideally located in that sense. She had also made friends there, and looked forward for the group to be restarted. For that reason, Gabrielle together with some other mothers decided to reorganise it themselves. Among the other mothers was Jeanette, who used to attend there with Dorothy and Jack. As she recounted:

> "they (organisers) left for London so they said well, everything is there, if someone wants to take the group over, you know, they can do that. And (a woman) who is a member of the church, she gave her (...) all the contacts and that kind of things. And then Gabrielle, myself and a couple of other moms volunteered to help. I guess we had also already found other places to go to as it was closed for some time… and I guess it's not always been the same (…) it was a certain group of mums that used to go, but now their children have grown up and like Dorothy outgrown some of the groups as well, so it's never really the same the same (…) but yeah, that's how I got involved in that. Helping up setting up, and a craft activity and trying to keep the group as it was really, and introducing it to some new people, but also trying to keep it to a minimum amount, not too big I think, capacity is about 24 children" (Interview with Jeanette, April 2014).

St. Mary's mother and toddler group was held in St. Mary's community hall, in the room known as the 'old school'. The first school of Wishwell had been located there, an old building with high windows. The playgroup was run with the help of volunteers who prepared hot drinks and snacks for the children, with a contribution of £1 per child:

"There were two rooms joined together through the open door in-between. The bigger side was full of toys over the floor spread on rugs and blankets. There were chairs around the room, but many women (there were men at all) were sitting on the floor near to babies and children. In the back room there were two long tables and chairs (children's height) with animal toys (Fisher Price type) over them. As soon as I came in the room, I recognised many people from WCC (…) but they looked more relaxed and empowered of the situation here: they were leading the activities, tidying up without anybody telling them to do so (…) here the space and organisation enabled them to adopt a more relaxed attitude: the children were never too far or unseen' they could clean or tidy up by themselves if they did a mess and there wasn't anyone assessing their children's 'progress' or their own motherhood – at least not explicitly" (Fieldnotes, St. Mary's playgroup, January 2014).

The dynamic in the playgroup was hectic. It was difficult to focus on one single child or situation, as many things were happening at the same time all the time. The room was full of toys of different kinds, around which children played on their own or together with other children, fought and moved. Here, children such as Lillian and Dorothy met weekly. One of the days I was there close to Lillian in the back room, I observed her playing with Dorothy around Peppa Pig toys. When I came closer Lillian turned towards me and showed me Peppa Pig's family caravan:

"Lillian was putting the Peppa Pig plastic characters on the Peppa Pig caravan seats (…) Daddy Pig was on the driver's seat looking backwards; Mummy Pig was next to him, looking forwards (...) I wondered why was Daddy Pig on the driver's position, as Gabrielle is usually the one who drives Lillian and Jasmine around (…) Then, while Lillian was sitting Peppa and her brother on the back seats, I realised that the caravan seats had protruding circles of different sizes that fitted only a particular character's bottom, so there wasn't any other possible way to distribute the family members. The driver's seat circle was just the size of Daddy Pig's bottom; the seat next to him had a circle with Mummy Pig's size, while the back seats had circles with Peppa and her brother's size" (Fieldnotes, St. Mary's playgroup, April 2014).

In this situation there were many aspects related to mobilities: first, it was through physical mobility that Lillian had come to the encounter of this particular object, Peppa Pig's family caravan, and it was through physical mobility that this toy had come (through donations) to be in this place. Second, it was traditional family roles as expressed in family physical mobility that had defined the series characters' positions in their vehicle. Third, it was Lillian's bodily movements that recreated Peppa Pig's family positioning in the toy caravan, encountering the materiality of the toy – its design and parts – affording only a restricted distribution of the characters. The toy did not allow children to imagine mobilities and family relationships in a different way – for instance letting the children characters drive. And fourth, it was my own

experiences of mobility with Lillian and her family that led me to be *wondered* (MacLure, 2013) by this situation, and to contrast it with Lillian's own experiences of physical travel.

At the end of the same day, as Gabrielle and Jeanette tidies up after everybody else left, Lillian, Dorothy and Jack had a moment on their own with the empty room for themselves:

> "When everybody left (…) the room was empty, only chairs remained by the walls (…) now that there was 'space', Lillian, Dorothy and Jack, the only children that stayed there while their mothers tidied up, did something that they had not done while all the toys and other children were there: they started chasing each other, running in circles. They lay down next to one another, laughing, rolling on their sides, and climbing on top of each other. Lillian stood up and put her head on the floor saying: 'I'm upside down!' the others stood up too. Lillian and Dorothy were looking at each other, making eye contact and smiling for a long time, then running around again (…) Jack went to the back room (where all the toys had been stored) and came back with the big car (a big plastic car that children could ride on. This car was usually the object of conflict between children during the playgroup sessions). The girls immediately turned their attention to it, and the three children started pushing each other trying to go on the car, until Jeanette came and took the car away from them. Jack cried and went down to the floor. He kept crying when Jeanette said 'bye Jack, we're all going'. We all left the room then" (Fieldnotes, St. Mary's playgroup, April 2014).

The place, the 'old school' room, was converted in a different – transient – place every time the playgroup was set. The room was populated by objects and people, so that the space was differently experienced when it was full than when it was empty: young children related to each other in a different way, as shown in the previous account, when toys were not mediating their interactions. As with Peppa Pig's caravan, their attention was focused on things most of the time, rather than on other people. When they were left 'alone', without the company of things, they turned their attention and affects towards the other children and moving their bodies in the space became a reason of joy.

All the playgroups I learnt about in or around Wishwell – except for the ones held at WCC – constituted transient places that were usually set once a week. This was the case of Springton Church's playgroup, a group in a nearby town where Gabrielle, Lillian and Jasmine attended. It was held in the main hall of the church, so that the altar was converted to a hot drinks area, with a flask, teapot and cups placed over the table where usually the priest put his text. Babies crawled over the altar, and underneath it was full of toys and a blanket for the babies' zone. In the other side of the church, near the entrance, a coffee morning was held on the same day and time. There, old people had tea and chatted sitting on small tables placed around a kitchenette. This was an interesting use of the space of a church. As Gabrielle pointed out, it was

convenient to have both activities – the children's playgroup and the coffee morning – at the same time saving in heating costs. This meant that both very young children and very old people, in addition to middle-aged mothers, shared the space of the church for a while every week. However, there was no interaction between these groups, separated as they were by the chairs:

> "Several rows of wooden chairs and bibles separated the elder from the youngest. Although it seemed quite normal for these groups to be separated, suddenly struck me the fact that they were completely segregated, their activities not relating to each other at all, beyond sharing the same roof and the heating (which wasn't on yesterday!)" (Fieldnotes, Springton Church playgroup, March 2014).

In the playgroups held by WCC it was also interesting to observe a very sharp cultural difference between the British and Indian groups and families in relation to intergenerational relationships: whilst in the universal groups most children attended with parents or childminders, in the session for Asian families many children attended with grandmothers. This resulted in the interaction between at least three generations, as parents were present as well. The Asian group led me to the observation of another place in Riverton: a soft-play centre. WCC was closed because they were doing some works to the building. The children's centre arranged for the group to meet at the soft-play centre with a discounted ticket price. In this place I observed a captivating form of intergenerational interaction through movement.

The soft-play center was basically a warehouse with a big soft play see-through structure built out of metal frames, nets made out of thick chords and metal joints, and fitted with sponge and plastic cushioned borders, mats and punch balls. The structure was almost as high as the building, so that it could be climbed and then slide down on the toboggans. Next to the soft play structure there was a small babies area with a plastic balls swimming pool and some other equipment. I went there as a mother, as a researcher, and on one occasion as a mother *and* researcher. They were all very different experiences. Going there with 5 or 6 year old children meant parents could sit at a table, have a coffee and a chat while the children went into the structure, climbed, slithered down the toboggans and climbed again. I never went inside the structure when I was there as a mother. Going with WCC, it was a very different experience, mainly because most of the children were very young, and children under two were not allowed to climb the structure unaccompanied by an adult. This meant most of the parents and grandparents were also climbing and sliding. I went inside the structure too – partly because of my interest in following the children, partly because my help was needed. Sai came to me and said there was a mother who may need help up there. It was Bebe, a mom of 2-year-old twins, who was struggling to follow them. I took off my shoes and stood for the first time on the soft material of the structure flooring. I started walking and suddenly had to bend down, crawl and climb:

"I asked Bebe if she needed help. She said yes, especially when they go in different directions. So I followed one, she followed the other. Saif was smiling at me, partly hiding his face. Then he ran away. Bebe said 'Oh, I go with Saif, you go with Ragi!'" (Fieldnotes, Namaste at soft-play center, September 2013).

Bebe told me about the difficulties of moving around with the two boys, as every time they were left to roam around, they would run in opposites directions. They usually used a double pushchair that Bebe said was very light and easy to move around, because it was designed with wheelchair measurements, so it fitted most of the places that had 'accessible' designs.

I got to the top of the toboggan. As a young child, I had once observed another child's accident falling down from a toboggan. Although nothing serious happened, it made a big impression on me, and I had never ever slithered down a toboggan in my life. I sat down and looked at the children and adults sliding down. One of the mothers asked me if I wanted to go with them, but I said 'no, thank you, I don't like it'. During a couple of minutes, I saw many grandmothers, old women dressed with their saris, wrapping their long scarves around their necks and holding the end with one hand while with the other hand they held their grandchildren on their lap, so that they could safely slide down together. One of them was scared, and she told me she had never done it before. But her grandson insisted that he wanted to go down with her. She looked at me smiling, sat down, arranged her dress, scarf, and grandson over her lap, and went down slowly, pausing at the halts of the toboggan. Sai was there too and she was also scared of doing it. After a while looking at the grandmothers we decided to slide down together, for the first time in our lives.

The image of Punjabi grandmothers sliding down with their grandchildren encapsulated diverse forms of mobilities: these women had all come, at some point of their lives and under different circumstances, from India to the UK. They were in this soft-play centre following their grandchildren's spatialities and, literally, following their routes inside the soft-game structure. The children's movements were encouraging the grandmothers' to move after them, including special kinds of movement – sliding down a toboggan – which they had never performed before. This movement was performed by them in a particular way, according to their dressing, which made this movement different to the sliding down of other adults there: they were elegantly holding their scarves *and* their grandchildren while going down, and this was a gesture that all of them repeated. For children, this was a moment of mobile intergenerational interaction: they were, within this place designed *for* children having fun with older generations, in a way that differs from the idea of 'isles of childhood' through which some scholars refer to the places for children (Zeiher, 2002). This was not, however, a characteristic of the soft-play centre in itself, but rather of the way these particular women and children related to each other in this place.

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Families' weekly schedules in and around Wishwell had room for more infrequent or less organised trips to shops too. Among the ones I observed were Mothercare and Pets at Home. They had in common that they were both branches found in similar retail parks across the UK. They both sold products partially directed at children, although they were not designed as places *for* children. Despite of this, they were frequented by many children and their parents. In her diary about Suzanne, Louise mentioned going to Pets at Home with Suzanne and her grandparents. As I asked about this, Louise referred to these places in these terms:

> "(…) it was just one Sunday, we were coming back from somewhere and it was raining, oh, no, it wasn't raining, and I said to Samuel we should go to Pets at Home some day, when it's raining, and so it was that day that we said oh' let's go to Pets at Home, she can see the rabbits and stuff… it was brilliant, free entertainment (…) she's just like wow! (…) there's rabbits, and gerbils, and fish, and iguanas and, you know, she thought it was great, you know, 20 minutes, attention span of a toddler, perfect. And then also, another free activity, you can just get to Mother Care, and they have that Early Learning Center, at the back of Mother Care, and they have lots of toys out (…) an it's close as well… but it was just really funny when my parents were here and I just thought we got to go out of the house, it was raining and… Pets at Home!" (Interview with Louise, September 2013).

Mothercare sold babies, young children and pregnant women's clothing; baby and child furniture and accessories; car seats, safety gadgets; toys and it also had a photo studio. As explained by Louise, there were some toys available for children to play with while parents browsed around. That area was, within that bigger place, a place *for* children. I joined Deva and Heet one day. They were going there for Deva to have a photo session. This was a periodic ritual since he was born: every three months he would have a session. Some of the chosen pictures hung from the walls in their house; others were given to grandparents or sent to relatives in India:

> "We arrived at Mother Care (…) and went straight towards the studio. They were setting up so we waited in the entrance. There was a stand full of small wheeled toys on sale: a little wooden car with a bear-driver; baby airplane and car, etc. Deva's pushchair was standing next to this stand, and Deva started moving on his seat, stretching arms, clearly asking to go down. Heet took a while before letting him down (taking her bag off, unwrapping herself as it was hot inside, looking inside the studio and so on). When she let him out he went immediately towards the toys. He took one and walked away with it in the opposite direction of the studio. Heet went after him and brought him back (…) The studio was a small rectangular room. There was a black background (…) in the middle of the set there was a big box covered with black fabric where Deva had to sit (…) there were lights around it, a camera wheeled stand with the camera connected through a

cable to a box on the roof (…) there was a computer in the side where taken pictures appeared and the photographer checked whether Deva had a nice expression on them(…) Deva was sat on the box, but he didn't want to stay there, and he was trying to go towards his mother and to run towards the toys outside (…) but he was held by her and sat back again (…) The photographer took a giraffe puppet and put her right hand into it, showing it to Deva with a 'child-like' adult voice while moving the puppet over Deva's head. Her left hand was on the camera ready to press the button when he smiled. Deva was looking at the giraffe but he didn't smile until the giraffe tickled him (…) but his smiles were very fleeting; most of the time he seemed uncomfortable and was attempting to leave the set (…) The assistant formed Deva's name with big letter blocks (…) the idea was to have him lying on the floor next to his name taking the picture from above. Between Heet and the assistant they tried to put him in place and keep him in that position, but he refused with all his might. Deva started crying. They tried to hold him like that, with the giraffe doing all the attempts to entertain him, the camera ready to shoot (…) Deva kept struggling, they couldn't take any picture in that position, until Heet said 'oh, no, he doesn't want to' so they released him" (Fieldnotes, photo studio with Deva, October 2013).

After the session was finished, we had to wait around half an hour for the pictures to be ready – while the photographer selected the better shoots and applied some effects to some of them. During this time, Heet browsed around the shop and Deva cried every time the buggy stopped moving –calming down as soon as the pram resumed its movement.

1.2 'Poo on your shoes': farms, woods, ponds, messy-play and children's contact with 'nature'

There is widespread literature on the relationship between children and nature; its benefits and the negative outcomes because of the lack of it in urban environments (Blair, 2009; Kahn, 2002; Louv, 2005; Ridgers, Knowles, & Sayers, 2012; Wake, 2008). Within this literature, there is a sharp division between culture and nature that is usually understood as tantamount to the urban/rural divide (Wells, 2002). Urban children are seen as deprived of opportunities for experiencing natural environments in their everyday lives - what Louv has coined under the notion of 'nature -deficit disorder' (Louv, 2005).

Wishwell bounded with countryside and woods, as well as the green areas and fields that it had within. For parents, these were all appealing features about living there, as they were seen as opportunities for children to approach 'nature'. Their location by the edge of town meant that families like Suzanne's made quite an intensive use of these spaces, mainly because they had a dog and were very aware of the dog's need for walking. Their dog's needs were translated into family mobility practices such as walks in the fields or in the woods, which were also seen as instances for Suzanne to enjoy an 'outside walk'. Louise referred to the fields 'across the road' as:

"just so close, so handy, I mean because of course she can walk now, but the only problem with the fields is not, because there's a lot of dog walkers around there, and some people don't always pick up after their dogs and things like that, so it can be a bit dirty sometimes, and you don't know what you're walking in, sometimes, I mean, usually is fine" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

This perception of the fields as 'dirty sometimes' was shared by Robert – Tabby and Mark's father. The road where they lived ended in a pebble path into the countryside, where sheep quietly grazed over wide green fields. They had chosen that house, among other things, because it was so close to that area. However, only very rarely they went there. When I asked Robert about this he said that the last time they went there was when his mother was visiting. She had critically said that the children did not walk enough, and she encouraged them to have a walk in the fields. Robert did not like doing that because he knew there would be dog poo on their shoes on the way back, and that was what happened. Tabby stepped on poo and her shoes got dirty. His mother understood what he meant after all.

The view of the fields surrounding the town in its dirtiness echoes Wells' findings in her study of children and nature in London (2002). Nature was perceived by children as polluted by and polluting the city, with an experienced reality that contrasted with ideal representations of nature as 'pure' and beautiful (Wells, 2002). Wells argues that children's understanding of nature in the city challenges the nature/culture divide. In the case of Wishwell we can see some of that too. Louise's words portray this dialectic rather than dualistic dilemma: the fields, perceived to be a nature area, are polluted by dog poo. Dogs, as well as their poo, constitute 'forms of nature' (Wells, 2002). However, in the case of Wishwell at least, dogs are not wild animals but human companionship. The presence of dogs and dog poo in the fields around Wishwell was not the product of what is usually understood as 'nature', but the result of human inhabitation, animal domestication and cultural practices (such as not 'picking after their dogs'), supporting Wells argument that:

"While it is true that the way forms of nature live or grow in the city are shaped by the urban environment, it is also true that forms of nature in the countryside are shaped by human interventions in the rural environment" (Wells, 2002: 302).

In Wells' perspective, the way in which nature is brought back into the urban, disrupting the boundaries between nature and culture, is through consumption practices that commodify nature and its forms:

"Parks, pets, gardens, zoos, city-farms are all contexts in which children, and others, disrupt through practice the discourse of pure boundaries. This disruption of pure boundaries, I argue, is accomplished by reconfiguring these forms of nature as belonging in urban culture. This reconfiguration involves bringing nature into culture through consumption practices. These

consumption practices resignify forms of nature as part of urban culture. The signification of the urban is achieved through the presence of multiple consumption opportunities" (Wells, 2002: 303).

As I observed in fieldwork, the commodification of nature forms is not exclusive to strictly urban environments. It constitutes a way in which 'nature' is accessed in diverse environments: in towns close to the countryside, like Wishwell and Riverton, and also in the countryside, in leisure parks and farms where animals and dung are spatially segregated from the children and other visitors' spaces. Animals are close enough for touching them if desired, but there is a line – a fence – separating both worlds: natural and cultural. I observed this when accompanying Lillian, Jasmine and Gabrielle to a family leisure farm outside of Wishwell. Here, clear material boundaries between humans' pathways and animals' habitats were only trespassed by the strong smell of animals and by the possibility for children to feed the animals through the fences, or to hold some of them (guinea pigs for instance) at certain times under the control of staff.
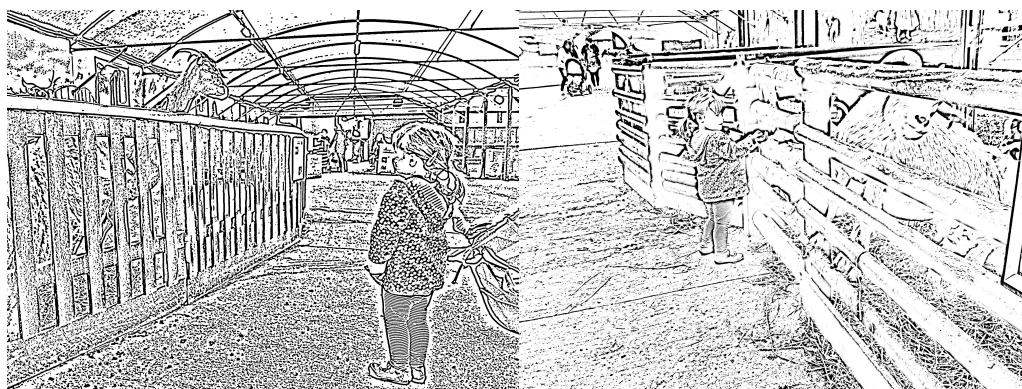
Advertised as a children's farm, it was not a working farm but a place where farm animals (and others) were exhibited, animal food was sold for children to buy and feed the animals, and activities such as a 'guinea pig world cup' were held. The guinea pigs had a miniature city where they slept, ate and moved around. Some of the other animals' houses had paintings of Peter Rabbit and its friends on the walls. Gabrielle bought a cup of animal food and we all fed the goats, except for Jasmine who was looking from her pram, smiling, laughing and shaking her feet in excitement. After letting the goats take the food from our hands, my hands felt wet and sticky with saliva: this was a close physical contact with 'nature' in the form of goats. However, balance was restored after visiting the lavatories in the middle of the farm, where we were able to wash our hands with warm water and soap – and were Lillian could reach the tap at the children's basins.

Lillian and Jasmine had been many times to the farm, as Gabrielle had bought an annual pass. Feeding the animals was something that Lillian took with her towards other spaces in which she was in contact with animals – real or imaginary. On a visit to a park in Riverton, for example, she spent a long time next to the

ducks pond doing the gesture of feeding them, with no real food. Later on that day, into a winter house with a fishpond, Lillian sat on the floor throwing small bits of soil and branches to the water, saying that she was feeding the fish. On a visit to another town, her mother told me, where they had planned to visit a park, Lillian did not leave the car park because, while her mother got Jasmine ready on the pram, she started feeding imaginary ducks with the pebbles on the surface of the car park. That was enough entertainment for her, and in the end they spent an hour there instead of going to the park.

Children's fascination for feeding the animals expresses a desire for contact with 'nature' that is not only about passively 'being' in nature, but about physically engaging with other beings, especially other non-human denizens. There is, as well, a desire for physically engaging with diverse materials and textures that relate to the nature/culture divide in terms of hygiene and a distinction between clean and dirty, tidy and messy, pure and polluted. These dichotomies were expressed in WCC every time the staff organised a 'messy play' activity for the children. Acknowledging that at home children were not offered the possibility of exploring materials such as water and painting because of the mess that this involved, the children's centre playgroups many times included activities in which children were encouraged to touch materials such as soil, jelly, raw pasta, cornflakes, dry leaves and, if weather was dry and warm, water. However, many mothers did not like these activities, and tried to (literally) move their children away from the spaces where they were taking place. Some of them would actually lift them up and direct them in a different direction if they were approaching to the water or other materials. Sometimes, knowing in advance that this may be the case, they would dress their children with waterproof clothes. Most of the time mothers allowed them to do 'messy-play' only for a short time. This attitude towards children getting dirty or wet generated some sort of tension with the staff, as for them messy play was necessary for children to explore materials, their textures, behaviours and 'natural' laws, all of which seemed to them essential in supporting children's physical and cognitive development. Sai, for example, would sometimes take a girl on her arms and bring her to the sandpit if she noticed that her mother was avoiding this place. At the same time, however, Sai would intervene in children's 'explorations' if they were not performed in the way that she found appropriate – for example if children were randomly throwing sand around them

instead of putting it in the buckets with the spades, Sai would take the spade from their hands and 'show' them 'how to do it'.

There are, in all these cases, 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' ways (in the perspective of adults) for children to relate to 'nature' – whether it is in the form of animals, places, materials or Physics' laws. What Wells (2013) calls the commodification of nature implies the organisation and segregation of what is messy or impure. In that sense, it is not surprising that farms were a popular form of nature in children's lives, as agriculture, as its very name signals, implies an entangled relationship between nature and culture, in which human control organises the ways in which plants and animals live and grow. In the same way that many children's gardens are organised and purified of risks through paths, design and the very selection of specimens (Byrd, Taylor-Haque, Tai, McLellan, & Knight, 2007), children's farms apply order to what could otherwise be wild animals, dirty paths or a focus of disease.

1.3 Bending down: sacred places, sacred movements

Among the places that children visited regularly were diverse temples in Wishwell and Riverton: the Gurdwara, or Sikh temple, the Hindi temple, the Methodist church and other Christian churches that, as previously recounted, hosted transient children's playgroups. As I will discuss in this section, children's relationship with religion or spirituality entailed different forms of mobilities: first, travelling to the sacred places where their families' religions were collectively practiced constituted a physical form of travel. Second, practicing or performing their religious rituals implied bodily movements that children learnt from a very young age. These movements were performed in tandem with particular spatial and social features of the different sacred places and religions. And third, the expression of religiosity many times implied the physical travel of objects and people – not necessarily the children themselves but sometimes part of them – that enabled the interaction between sacred places, people and objects with children.

Gurdwara is the worship place of the Sikh community, originated in Punjab around 1500. The first Gurdwara was built in 1521 in Kartarpur, in Punjab (BBC, 2014). The word 'Gurdwara' can be translated as 'the residence of the guru' (BBC, 2014) or 'a door to the Guru' (Mandair, 2013). The Guru, however, for the last three centuries has been embodied by the sacred scripture of the Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib, rather than by a person, as Heet explained to me. The scripture, nonetheless, was treated as a person and needed to be read all the time:

> "The Guru Granth Sahib has no real parallel in other Indian traditions. Its immense importance in the Sikh way of life is most obviously manifested in the central place given to the Sikh scripture in the physical layout of a Gurdwara" (Mandair, 2013: 108-9).

The scripture is made out of hymns and it is composed by poetic verse. The purpose of listening to the reading-singing of these verses is that conscious and unconscious aspects of the listener's mind get into dialogue, so that: "When these two different aspects of the mind speak to each other, it is said to be attuned to the oneness of all existence" (Mandair, 2013: 112). In doing so, the Gurus aimed at conveying experience "through feelings and moods because they make up an aspect of consciousness which cannot be reduced to conceptuality" (Mandair, 2013: 112).

There were about three hundred Gurdwara in the UK at the time of this study (Talwar, 2013), and one of them was located in Riverton, serving as a place of communal worship for the Sikh inhabitants of the Riverton-Wishwell- Weiston and surroundings area. Every Gurdwara had a kitchen-dining room or 'Langar' where food was served for free to the members of the community or to any visitors.

The temple was an impressive huge white building with a golden dome and Sikh flags. On entering the temple, people had to cover their hair - even Deva wore a scarf on his head. After taking off their shoes in the shoe room, they would go upstairs to the worship room. Here, there was always somebody reading aloud through a microphone the Guru Granth Sahib. It was a very big room, with the floor covered by a patterned carpet, with big white pillars. In the centre the carpet drew a path that went from the main entrance towards the altar where people bent down, touching the floor with their forehead and where they left a monetary offering before retiring towards the back of the room, walking backwards. Most of the time, adults sat down for a while, on the carpet or on the bench in the back, listening, worshiping or chatting quietly with other people.

One of the days I was in the session for Asian families at WCC Naniji, one of the grandmothers, invited me to go to the Gurdwara after the session was finished, as many people used to do – including Sai, with whom I went to the Gurdwara for the first time. Naniji was going to the temple with Resham by car, and I was on my bicycle, so we had agreed to meet at the temple. She left first. Then, when I was leaving:

> "Heet, Deva and their friends came out too. I thought I'd walk to the corner with them, but we kept walking (…) At some point they said they would come with me to the temple, so in the end I walked all the way with them. I texted Naniji and told her not to wait for me at the entrance (…) While Heet and her friend walked, Deva and the other baby were sleeping, Deva on the carrier, the other baby on a buggy (…) We arrived at the temple (…) We all picked scarves from the box at the entrance and put them on our heads. Heet put one on Deva's head, who was still fast asleep (…) Heet's friend took her baby out of the buggy and he woke up. We took our shoes off and washed our hands. Then went upstairs on the lift and into the worship room. There were four more boys inside. Naniji was already there, sitting on the floor in the back of the room, near to some other old women. I followed Heet and her friend to the front; they went with their children, at

the same time. First they put the coins into the moneybox under the altar. Heet's friend sat her son next to her; he was looking all around him. Heet, sitting on her knees, took Deva out of the baby carrier with some difficulty. He woke up and began to cry, while an old woman read the sacred book aloud in a continuous and unintelligible (for me) sound. Heet bent down and gently pushed Deva's head towards the floor too, so that both did the same movement of reverence, touching the floor with their foreheads. After that he kept crying. Then they all went back with less ceremony than other people I had seen (not walking backwards for too long)" (Fieldnotes, July 2013).

At the back of the room, the group of older children were sitting on the carpet, near to the women on the bench. Resham was handling a blue car figure. The children started running around the place, making circles around the pillars, chasing each other. After a while, one of the old ladies stood up and called three of the boys and they left the room:

> "After they left, Naniji's grandson kept playing on his own, with the blue car. I saw him making it climb a thick pillar in the centre of the room. Contrary to what I expected, nobody said anything to them (the children running and playing around the room), adults seemed relaxed about children. In general, they seemed more relaxed than I thought: a woman's mobile phone rang and she didn't look embarrassed and no one seemed upset, for instance" (Fieldnotes, July 2013).

In the meanwhile, Deva kept crying. Heet went out of the room with him and came back after a couple of minutes. He started crying again, so they went out once more. Heet's friend stayed inside. She was sitting on the bench, and her son was sitting on the floor very quietly. His mother's legs were slightly separated form the bench, creating a rectangular space between bench, legs and floor. He "went straight to cross under the legs' 'tunnel', but his mother noticed what he was aiming to do, smiled and moved her legs, closing the 'tunnel'" (Fieldnotes, July 2013). Later on I went downstairs to the Langar with Naniji and Resham to have lunch. We all cued and got our food: two different curries, some naan bread and rice pudding. The Langar had long tables, and there was a spatial division between men and women's sides. I sat on the women's side, where all the children were sitting as well. Resham was sitting opposite to me on the table. He was moving his cars over the surface, throwing them and making them crush. One of them almost fell on my side of the table, and I catch it and threw it back to Resham. This started a little game between us, throwing the cars to each other, making them talk and collide. At the same time, Naniji was sharing her food with him, bits of bread and curry. She also took out of her bag a yogurt that she started giving to him with a spoon while he kept playing with the cars, throwing them to me. Sai, from WCC was there too. She was chatting with other women nearby, and Naniji told Resham to eat his food because Sai was looking at him. Sai approached to us, and when she saw Resham she addressed him, saying that he should eat by himself: "Are you still a baby?" she asked him smiling. He was not paying too much attention

to the food as he was focused on the cars. His grandmother said it was time to go and he said he did not want to go. I felt responsible for this, as I was playing with him, so I helped him putting the cars into the bag where he carried them. He heard that Naniji and me were agreeing to meet the next week and he said: "And we can play again!"; I said "Yes, and next time I will bring my own cars!"; "I will bring my own cars too!" Resham said.

Next time I met Resham we did not play cars again, but I went to the temple with him, Naniji and her sister in law. Resham showed me how to do the reverence movement that I had always found so difficult to do: while we were in the worship room, after having done the offering at the altar, he started practicing that movement, next to me, and asking me to repeat it:

> "He started moving, putting his head on the floor, lifting his bottom at the same time, once and again (…) he did this several times until a woman and a girl with a pink scarf covering her hair came in. He saw the girl and started jumping and saying excitedly to Naniji: 'she's here! She's here!' The girl went to the altar, then she went back and sat next to the woman, just before Resham run towards her" (Fieldnotes: Gurdwara, September 2013).

Resham's lesson was important for me when I went back to the Gurdwara for the celebration of Deva's first birthday with my family. I was responsible for showing my husband and son what to do, and I felt more comfortable bending down after Resham had shown me how to do it properly. However, there were other spatial and mobile aspects of being in a ceremony in the Gurdwara that I had not learnt yet. I had always been there on weekdays, when most of the visitors (if not all) were women and children. Therefore, I had not realised that women sat on one side and men in other side when they were together in the worship room:

> "The women were all sitting very close to each other on the floor, on the left side. Some young children were sitting or moving among them. Deva was walking between the women, looking at them. The men, on the other side, were less crowded, more dispersed in their side of the room. In the back of the men's side my husband was sitting near to a group of boys (probably between six to ten years old). I could see the boys were talking and looking at something on the hands of one of them. My husband was looking at them, and then looking at me. I tried to telepathically tell him to look at them 'ethnographically' and later on report to me, as I could not sit in that side (…) Later on he told me that the boys were playing video games on a mobile phone: some of them would play while the others looked" (Fieldnotes, Deva's birthday at the Gurdwara, October 2013).

The same pattern of men/women segregation was repeated at the Langar, where all adult men ate together in one side of the room, and all women and most of the children (boys and girls) ate on the other

side. In worship room, however, children seemed to roam around the room with no gender-spatial restrictions:

> "Deva was walking around the room, among the women and crossing the room all the way to the men's side, going insistently towards the altar. Heet was going after him sometimes; sometimes his dad, picking him up and re-directing him towards the family; other times nobody would go after him and he would attempt at climbing the altar or the moneybox. At some point he started crying and Heet took him in her harms and went out through a door by the side of the room. They came back after a minute. Deva went back to roam around, until he went to the entrance door after some people that were leaving. His father stood up and went after him. He took him to the long bench at the back of the room where elder ladies were sitting. The ladies greeted Deva. His dad Matt made a small bow before sitting next to them. During that time, the boys that had been playing videogames came to greet these women too. They approached them and did a bow with their hands together. I had seen Deva doing this in the street to men wearing turbans on their heads" (Fieldnotes, Deva's birthday at the Gurdwara, October 2013).

Intergenerational relationships among Sikh families in Wishwell had the particularity of having elder and younger people in very close everyday interactions: being common for children to live with their parents and grandparents, or at least to be looked after by them on a daily basis, children and elder adults shared many of their everyday spaces and activities. These interactions were lived in a cultural context in which the elder had a key social role, for instance working as volunteers at the Langar after retired, or taking care of the grandchildren while parents worked. In tandem with this role, there was a cultural tradition of showing respect to the elder, which was embodied in the bow greeting that any child, young person or adult owed to the elderly. There was also a continuous intergenerational teaching-learning, for example around the ritual movements in the temple. Since Deva was less than a year old, his mother was already teaching him the position for reverence, moving his body so that he could perform the movement even if he was not conscious of it. A bit older, children like Resham mastered these movements and were able to teach them in turn – to younger children or visitors like me.

This was also the case in the Hindi temple, where I went with Tabby, Mark and their father Robert. Robert had converted to Hinduism after meeting Vama, but he said he was already Hindu before meeting her, only he did not know it yet. Robert and Vama lived in London before, and there was a Hindu temple there where they used to go every month and where they got married. They had an affective relationship with the priest that married them. Since they lived in Wishwell they did not go to the temple so often as the services were at times that did not fit them: "it just doesn't coincide properly with us for getting it, or the kids' bedtime or anything else, so we stopped (going), it's 7 to 9 (pm)" (Fieldnotes: Hindu temple with Tia, Mark and Robert, August 2013).

However, Robert kept going from time to time with the children to do offerings and prayers. One of those days, Robert sent me a text message inviting me to go with them. He said they would be taking some fruits as offerings, as he had 'reasons' to thank for, but it would be enough for me to take some 'copper coins' for the prayer box. Much smaller and humbler than the Gurdwara, the Hindu temple was located in a one-storey building in an alleyway near the train station. We met at the car park. They had come on their car, Tabby and Mark on their car seats. A man wearing an orange turban and a golden belt let us in, as we were not sure whether it was open. Inside, there was a room for leaving shoes, and then the main hall with a blue carpet covering the entire floor, and the kitchen in one side. There was no one there apart from us. Robert washed his hands and asked Tabby and Mark to do the same. They did, and I did too. Then he went into the kitchen and found a metal bowl where he put the fruits he had. Then we approached to the back of the hall, where many gods and goddesses' human-scale figures where standing over a low stage. They were dressed in very lively colours, like the images that usually represent them. Tabby and Mark were speaking very quietly, looking at the figures with wide-opened eyes. Robert encouraged the children to approach the figures one by one, touching the dresses of some of them, carefully. They went to the main altar and put the fruit and coins in front of different gods, from left to right. After giving a coin, Robert would bent down and asked Tabby and Mark to do the same, pushing them softly on the back of their heads so that they did the same movement as he did:

> "Tabby lay completely down, with her face touching the floor, her legs stretched to the back and her arms stretched towards the front. Mark did something more similar to what Robert was doing, bending his legs and extending his arms. After a while being like this they would stand up and look at the gods, comment something and then go to the next one (…) In the last offering Robert called me with his hand. They were moving their hands over the fire of a candle, and then putting their hands over their face, breathing. They invited me to do the same. Mark showed me how to do it, slowly, looking at me to see how I was doing, in the same way that Robert had just done with him" (Fieldnotes: Hindu temple with Tabby, Mark and Robert, August 2013).

Being close to the figures of the gods and goddesses and being able to touch them was key for Robert to feel they were being blessed and that their prayers, offerings and thanks giving were actually getting to their 'destiny'. This resulted in Robert's guilty feeling for not going to the temple more often with the children - and because of them. He had also the desire to take Tabby and Mark to London to visit their old temple and their priest there:

> "I'd like to go and introduce the kids, they've seen photos, but, you know, I'd like to actually our priest to be able to touch them" (Interview with Robert, July 2013).

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Towards the end of my study, they had not managed to go to London yet, but they had arranged for the priest to come to visit them and bless their home, which had made Robert and Vama very happy and looking forward to it.

Being in their sacred place was also important for Lillian and Jasmine's family, whose dad worked in the church. Because the girls spent so much time there, in a space that had not been thought for young children, some people had arranged a space for them at the back of the church hall:

> "We go usually on Sundays (to church), and they created the children's area for her (Lillian), because there weren't any other children, so at the back there are some toys and they take turns to help with them, while I feed Jasmine or sit with Jasmine so it's nice (…) it's mostly grandparents now, the next youngest person after Lillian is me (…)" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

However, despite having created a space where Lillian could be during the services, and having people that helped Gabrielle looking after her while she was taking care of Jasmine, the lack of other children made her think about the necessity to find another space for practicing their spirituality with the girls:

> "But I'm thinking I'm trying to get to (other church in Riverton) more, because there's children there, and there's special children's group, it should be better for her(…). (The other church in Riverton) still has regular attendants who are families with younger children (…) they organise there (an activity for children) which is on Saturday afternoon (…) and they do about six different tables, with different activities, we go to that. Tom is sometimes leading part of the music and talk" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

For Gabrielle, it was a reason of concern that the churches she participated in were not spaces welcoming for young children. Therefore, during the time our research relationship lasted, she was constantly thinking about ways of getting children more involved, planning activities and creating new spaces/events for them.

On the day of Jasmine's baptism, I was invited with my family to the service in the church and celebration in the church hall. My son came with me and it was very interesting to contrast this experience to that of Deva's birthday celebration at the Gurdwara. Whilst at the Gurdwara my son had lay down on the floor and stretched his arms and legs with a smile on his face as soon as he went inside the worship room, getting bored after a while and complaining because the live music was too loud, in the church he spent all the time the service lasted between sitting on my lap or drawing in the children's table in the entrance hall, a transient place settled especially for the occasion, guided by an adult in charge of looking after the children while parents were in the service. Whilst for Sikh and Hindu families it was important for children

to be in physical contact with their sacred places and to perform their ritual movements together with adults – and, in this sense, *learning* about their religion was partly done *through* movement - in the Christian churches there was a need for segregating children into a differentiated space and to teach them about their spiritual beliefs in a more rational but child-focused way: by telling stories, singing songs, drawing and so on in adult-led purposeful activities.

In this section I have shown the example of three different faiths and their corresponding sacred places in or near Wishwell. Through these examples, I have illustrated the importance of physical mobility for people, and particularly children, to be 'in touch' with spaces, people or objects considered sacred. In the case of Sikhism and Hinduism, ritual bodily movements emerged as key in young children's religious learning and engagement. In the case of Christian religion, the involvement of children through the creation of special places and activities for them appeared as more relevant. This responded both to the teaching of the religious beliefs and to child-care needs. In the Gurdwara this was not necessary because children and adults shared the space of worship and were allowed to move around with less restrictions than the imposed by architecture, chairs and social rules in the church. The difference between the experience of young children inhabiting the Gurdwara compared to that of children inhabiting the church also responded to religious philosophical particularities. As explained before, Guru Granth Sahib was written in poetic verse and the idea of reading these verses aloud was to convey experience "through feelings and moods because they make up an aspect of consciousness which cannot be reduced to conceptuality" (Mandair, 2013: 112). In addition to this, the Sikh cosmology argued that spiritual life begun before birth, hence unborn babies were seen as subject to religious influence. These two ideas were translated into the practice of pregnant women reciting or listening to certain verses of Guru Granth Sahib:

> "Behind this prenatal practice is the strong belief that the aesthetic-spiritual orientations of the child begin well before birth, and that immersion in the sounds and strains of *gurbani* helps to shape the developing consciousness of the unborn child in a particular direction" (Mandair, 2013: 122).

For the same reason, it made sense for young children to be in the Gurdwara, even if they were not purposefully listening to the verses being recited or paying attention to the words being read. They were still experiencing their religion through the feelings and moods created by the conjunction of this spatial setting, poetic verses, sounds and community gathering. This way of experiencing religion resonates with the notion of 'affect' (Castree, Kitchin, & Rogers, 2013; Evans, 2010; Harker, 2005; Kraftl, 2013; Massumi, 2002; Stewart, 2007) that will be discussed at the end of *'The physical travel of objects'*.

The third aspect of physical mobility involved in the expression of religiosity in young children's lives in Wishwell, the physical travel of objects, will be discussed later on in relation to the movement of objects.

This is an analytical decision that, because of its arbitrariness, highlights the interdependence between these different forms of mobilities.

1.4 'Showing the baby': visiting family, family visiting

> "My sister I see again occasionally, she's quite busy, and they have a dog, it's a bit more complicated… so we're going to meet up next weekend to show Jasmine to my mom's side of the family, and my sister will come from (where she lives) as well, we're gonna meet in a hotel in (…) to have afternoon tea, 'cause my grandma got a sister… that's where all my mom's family are, so my grandma's sister is not that far away so they will come to the hotel (…) and her husband has a daughter who is northwest as well, so she'll come down too with her partner, although he's not very well, and then (my grandma's sister's) got two granddaughters… so her two grandchildren will come as well with (her)… but they are not able to travel all of them very far, so is nice for us to go there and have a place where they'll just do afternoon tea for us, we can relax" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

As expressed in this quote from Gabrielle's interview, a new baby coming to life was a reason for extended family to meet up so that the baby could be 'shown' to all relatives. This was in the context of extended families living away from each other within England. Among the families I met in Wishwell, this was the usual situation: to have relatives spread around the country and beyond. Therefore, children being born or celebrating their birthdays or baptisms were common reasons for coming together into one single locality where babies and children could be 'seen' by grandparents and other relatives. However, travelling with young children was seen as a complex enterprise by parents. In this sense, the existence of children in the family seemed to make co-present interactions more necessary or desirable, but at the same time more difficult to achieve when getting together implied long travel.

For some families physical distance was small and it was easy to overcome with a short (half an hour) car or bus travel, such as in the case of Deva and his grandparents in Clostead. Deva and his parents had a more or less settled schedule for visiting his grandparents every Friday afternoon (maternal grandparents) and Saturday (paternal grandparents). In addition to these visits, they would sometimes meet on Sundays in a park, although Deva's maternal grandmother was partially disabled, thus her trips were restricted by her mobility possibilities and to places where her wheelchair could move smoothly. Only slightly longer was the trip that Karu and Jeevi had to do in order to visit their maternal grandparents in Hythestead. However, because Jeevi was so young and Hythestead had such a bad traffic, their mother preferred saving their visits for long weekends and school holidays, when they would go and stay there for some days, rather than go on day visits. This was also the case with Suzanne's maternal grandparents. They lived three hours away by car from her house in Wishwell, and they used to visit each other during short

breaks or holidays. Visiting her parental grandparents in France (or Portugal), however, was a whole different adventure. Suzanne had been to France three times, but not to Portugal where her grandparents spent half of the year:

> "we did think about it (going to Portugal), but… it's the travel, it's the travel, I mean, we have to flight, but even flying doesn't really help, because either if we fly to Porto or we fly to Lisbon we have to get from there to this place, so it's about 2 hours there, so… it's not complicated but we decided that we would wait a little while, and also 'cause we usually drive and we take the dog with us, and if we flew for sort of three weeks where would we leave the dog? And we… we like taking it… but France is fine because we can take him with us" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

Travelling to Suzanne's grandparents' in France took them around eight hours by car in a 'good trip' through the tunnel, which was the quickest way. Travelling with Suzanne meant they had to travel overnight, "because (…) she's not gonna sleep for 8 hours during the day so it's not fair, she's too young to be entertained in the car, you know, so we usually travel overnight, when we go" (Interview with Louise, July 2013). However, getting there was not the only difficult part. As experienced by Suzanne and her parents on their last trip to France, being away from home with young children was seen as a necessary risk sometimes. The risks and discomforts involved, nevertheless, could surpass the benefits of travelling and visiting family:

> "we want them (Samuel's parents) to come back again, when the baby's born (…) we would normally go to France for Christmas, but because Suzanne spent Christmas in hospital, she was in hospital for ten days, so we went out to France on the 22nd of December last year and we got her out of hospital on the 2nd of January, so we spent the whole of Christmas in hospital in France (…) we've just so traumatised by that experience that we just don't want to go, I don't want to go, and I will have a four months old baby, and Suzanne will be nearly two… but then the other part of me thinks well, she needs to keep that link with her family in France, and also the language, because it's Samuel who is doing all the work with French language, he's the only one that can do it, but having sort of two weeks in France twice, I mean we haven't been able to go to France for the summer, obviously we would have done that if we hadn't had another baby, but so we haven't been to France this year, which is really unusual, we usually go three, four times a year, like last year Suzanne went when she was five months old, seven months old and when she was eleven months old, an she's probably not gonna go again… I'm sitting here talking to you and I'm feeling guilty that we have said we wouldn't go, but, you know (…) It's more Suzanne than it is the baby, because a four months old is not necessarily that difficult because they have very some basic needs, don't they?" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

Samuel's parents travelled to England to spend some time with their granddaughter and to help Louise taking care of her. However, they found out then that Suzanne was not used to them and therefore was not willing to be taken or fed by them. The different distance and implications of travelling to and from her maternal and parental grandparents meant that Suzanne had a very different relationship with both sets of grandparents. However, that was also the result of differences in other forms of communication, as I will discuss in the section in Chapter 11.

Horace's extended family was also differently located, with his father's family living in different parts of England, which they would visit frequently for the weekend, especially for occasions such as a cousin's birthday -or the other way round, for Horace's birthday. His maternal family, on the other side, was spread between Austria and the Mediterranean Sea. With them Horace kept a more sporadic interaction that tended to concentrate around Christmas, when the whole family would make the effort to coincide in Austria. Horace's maternal grandmother had travelled to England when his father, who worked in the Army, was sent on a mission to Afghanistan. She had taken care of Horace while his mother Josephine worked, and she had also emotionally supported her daughter while her husband was away in war.

International travel was also part of Dorothy and Jack's lives. With their maternal family living in South Africa, and their mother thinking about the possibility of going back there some day, that far away place was constantly present in the family's plans and dreams. Dorothy had already been there, when her mother Jeanette went for her 10 years school reunion. Their grandmother had visited them in Wishwell when Jack was born, and now they were planning to travel again for their grandmother's wedding.

John Urry has argued that the need for co-presence in social relationships is a phenomenon that needs to be explained rather than taken for granted (Urry, 2007). In the lives of the young children in Wishwell, the children themselves seemed to constitute a reason for physical travel and co-presence to be necessary and worthy despite the efforts and complexities that travelling with young children involved – for parents, grandparents, and for the children themselves. 'Showing' and 'seeing' them as well as building up a new family relationship with them required people to come together sharing the same space, being able to touch each other, to hold a baby or be held by a grandparent, change a nappy, help around the house, have tea together and so on. However, physical travel had a cost that not everybody was able to afford whenever they liked. This cost could be physical - as in the case of Lillian's maternal grandmother, who was ill and physically unable to travel far and to take care of a young child who may need to be carried - or financial – as Guillermo's family, for instance, who had not been to Latin America since he was born. The cost of three intercontinental airplane tickets was not something they could afford on a regular basis. In addition to that, they were waiting for Guillermo to be a bit older, so that he could enjoy the trip and remember something about it when he was older. The financial cost of travelling, even when it was

affordable, had effects such as deciding to stay in the destiny for longer, so that the cost was 'worthy', or having less flexibility with travel dates, as tickets were cheaper that way. As recounted by Gabrielle:

> "Tom's parents if they come, come for longer, because obviously have to pay for either ferry or a flight (…) they were here for a week, (Tom's mother) came to help with Jasmine when she was born (but) they tend to put the flights in advance so they guessed when she might be born (laughs), she came about two weeks afterwards, for a week" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

Despite the costs, the help from extended family was seen as key after a child was born, hence it was among the main reasons explaining the necessity for family-related physical travel. As Louise put it, for women who had young children and did not have their family nearby, the local mother and toddler groups were specially important as a place where they could find support networks on a local and everyday basis. In her view, being close or far from family –especially female close relatives – determined different experiences of motherhood – and childhood:

> "they can pay for babysitters or nannies or nurses, whatever, but it doesn't replace like having that kind of, you know, just being able to go by, drop by your mum's, or your sister, and the people I find, even in our antenatal group, who are from here and have family here, they have such a different experience of motherhood (…) less anxious, because they'd always have someone who can maybe help them out for an hour or two, you know, if my mum lived in Wishwell, or Riverton, and I was in maternity leave, I'd be there all the time, and you think well, that's how it's meant to be" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

But being away from the family did not mean for young children and their families to be completely separated, as I will discuss regarding virtual, communicative and imaginative travel in Chapter 11. Now I will examine young children's experiences of physically moving within and between the different places presented so far, discussing the aspects that shaped these experiences.

2. Bodily movements of young children in and around Wishwell

Tim Cresswell writes: "From the first kicks of a newborn baby (…) mobility is everywhere" (Cresswell, 2006: 1). However, as an extensive literature review demonstrates, the first kicks and subsequent movements of babies have rarely been considered in the study of children's mobilities or mobilities in general. Babies' corporeal movements have been a focus of attention for child development studies (see for example Chambers & Sugden, 2006), but not for the social studies of childhood or children's

geographies. Within the mobilities perspective, mobilities are defined as forms of *travel* (Urry, 2007). Travel is broadly defined as to "make a journey, typically of some length" (Oxford-Dictionary, 2012). Here, travel is understood in the context of place as bounded locations, implying a significant distance between places. In this understanding, travel entails purpose: getting from one place to another, whatever kind of places those are. But those places are usually seen as *distant* from an adult point of view. When observing young children and especially babies, however, diverse forms of mobilities appear that do not conform to this understanding of travel.

These forms of movement constitute a category of mobilities similar to what Urry (2007) calls 'corporeal movement', which is implied in the corporeal *travel* of people. however, they do not necessarily fit within a common understanding of travel. I want to describe these forms of mobilities as observed in relation to babies and young children in Wishwell through a set of vignettes and discussions illustrating young children's corporeal movements in different contexts. In doing so, I will argue for the need either to consider corporeal movement as a different category than physical travel of people, or to expanded our understanding of travel, purpose, place and scale. In this way, the first kicks of a newborn baby (Cresswell, 2006) will be really considered as part of the wide spectrum of mobilities. It also implies paying attention to the interdependent physical mobilities of children, adults and objects.

2.1 'She wants that': the im/mobile bodies of babies

> "I sat on the floor on the babies' blanket next to Jasmine. She was sitting, her legs wide open towards the sides, moving her upper body forwards and to the sides, stretching her arms, hands and fingers as much as she could, like trying to reach something under her sight. Her mother was sitting a bit further and she told me: 'oh, she wants that toy, can you give it to her?' I gave Jasmine a triangular plastic toy filled with small circular beads that Gabrielle had pointed. Jasmine took it and shook it making a sound" (Fieldnotes, St. Mary's playgroup, April 2014).

This brief vignette shows a moment when accompanying Jasmine, her sister Lillian and mother Gabrielle in St. Mary's church playgroup in Wishwell. Jasmine was able to sit then – although her mother would put big sofa cushions all around her for helping her keeping sat or soften the fall if she fell – but she was not able to stand, crawl or walk. She could change position, but not travel between different locations within the room – or even within the babies' blanket. Her sight, however, directed her attention and allowed her to communicate her needs and interests, encouraging others to move objects of affect near to her. Sight was also key in directing others to carry her to the place, person or thing where she wanted to go, as I did in many occasions when I was holding her on my arms. Sometimes sight was accompanied by moving her upper body or arms in the direction of the desired object, person or place, making her desire to move even

clearer. In a similar way, Jasmine could direct people's attention and movements towards herself, as shown in the following extract from another playgroup, when Gabrielle had left Jasmine on a 'baby gym'[6]:

> "Jasmine was making loud noises from the floor where she was lying down. She was making a very odd sound with her throat. As a consequence, people around turned their attention to her, smiling and giggling. She was moving her legs at the same time, pushing the baby gym away from her. Gabrielle said once and again "what are you doing?" with a tender voice while putting the gym back in place" (Fieldnotes, Springton church playgroup, March 2014).

There is a curious mixture of mobility and immobility in these accounts. Curious, because both mobility and immobility are embodied in the same body and at the same time: whilst Jasmine was not able to move her whole body-changing place, she was able to move her eyes and stretch her arms and hands. She also had ways of communicating to others (through movement, sight and sound) her needs for movement: to move a toy within range; to be moved towards a different place, thing or person; or for a person to come closer or to direct her attention to her.

2.2 Babies' zone: a place within place

'Babies zone' was the name used by WCC staff and some parents to refer to the space arranged in the reception room during other drop-in play sessions for babies and their parents – mothers most of the time. It was arranged using a blue fleece blanket stretched over the floor between two large sofas creating some kind of boundaries or containers for this area. Over the blue blanket Sai and one of the volunteers, would put baskets or boxes filled with diverse kinds of toys, made out of different materials, considered as 'baby toys'. They would bring these from the playroom where they usually were, as there was also a babies' corner there. They would not choose the toys one by one; they would rather bring the baskets with whatever they had inside. As the babies started discovering what was inside, however, eventually Sai or the volunteer would intervene removing some objects that they did not find appropriate (such as a worn-out wicker basket with the fibre peeping out in a risky way) or bringing others that they considered more suitable or needed, according to their own criteria and interpretations of the babies' interactions with the toys:

> "Sai had put two wicker baskets filled with wooden toys. Later on the volunteer brought a plastic basket filled with plastic toys and commented to the mothers: "more colourful, brighter toys"; 'that's better!' said one of the mums" (Fieldnotes, Namaste, March 2013).

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[6] A baby gym was a soft and cushioned fabric surface over which a soft arch functions as support for hanging objects, also soft and colourful. Babies were supposed to lie down over this surface, while looking at the hanging objects over them and trying to touch them, pull them, push them and so on. They were manufactured by different companies specialised in baby products.

Although the objects in *baby zone* were not necessarily consciously chosen by Sai and volunteers every time, they were predefined by decisions made at the time of purchasing them. The toys were spatially classified in baskets and corners dedicated to different ages or 'developmental stages'. These classifications, however, were challenged by the intervention of diverse users of the children's centre that re-arranged the toys in every tidying-up time, and also by the diverse criteria of different members of the staff and volunteers.

In the description of the babies zone we can observe that within WCC there were spatial subdivisions that constituted places in themselves. Baby zone was not a permanent setting, but a regularly assembled set of objects and people organised in relation to a certain positioning of the 'infrastructure' (the sofas, the floor, the blanket). Fog and Gullov (2003) differentiate between *places for children* - the ones created by adults for children, such as playgrounds and children's centres – and *children's places* - the ones that children appropriate and make their own, although they were not places originally thought-of as places for children to inhabit or use. Places for children can, of course, become children's places, but not necessarily (Fog and Gullov, 2003). In this sense, WCC was a place for children, within which there were many other smaller and sometimes transient places for children and children's places. This creation and appropriation of places by the children, however, was not accomplished solely by them, but through the assembled action of mothers, staff, toys and babies. Baby zone, for example, was a transient place that emerged out of the needs of mothers and babies to be located in a segregated space in relation to older children – and their mothers – and close to other babies and babies' mothers. Internally, baby zone was also differentiated, as I will show now.

During the first couple of months I would see always at least three and sometimes up to six babies making use of Baby Zone, with their mothers sitting around them on the sofas or on the floor around the blanket. Some of the mothers would put the babies on the blanket as soon as they arrived. Others would keep them on their arms, sitting over their laps or sleeping on the pushchairs for a while. While the babies looked around the place, looked at each other and people moving around them, tried to reach something or someone with their sight, stretching their hands and arms or with their whole body rolling over the floor, mothers would talk about how the babies (and themselves) were sleeping, childcare arrangements before going back to work, the cold that they got last week, how some of them were already sitting or beginning to crawl, in comparative mode:

> "While I was sitting there, I could listen to the babies' mothers' chatting. Lots of it was about the babies' movement: crawling, standing, how old they are, comparing boys and girls, how 'lazy' they are: 'boys are lazier… well, not all of them', says one of the moms as her baby-boy is the same age as the baby girls and while they are already crawling he isn't doing any crawling (…) I see how babies move in order to interact with other babies. They turn their heads to look at them,

they push/pull their bodies while sat down in order to touch them or to reach some objects (or to take an object from another baby's hands)" (Fieldnotes, Namaste 19/04/13).

The first couple of months I was there the babies' movements were confined to babies' zone. Whatever toys they encountered and whoever were the other babies each day, those would become their space. The experience of that place also depended on the babies' bodily skills – turning, sitting, crawling and so on – the 'freedom' of movement allowed by their parents and the boundaries set up by the staff and maintained by parents. For example:

> "Jeevi and the other baby girl were sitting very close to each other on the babies blanket: their feet were touching, and they were making little noises and looking at each other while sucking some plastic rings they had found in the basket. Both babies were able to crawl, so they reached these toys by themselves (…) Other baby (boy) who was usually sat on his mother's lap was now lying next to them, facing down, moving his legs on the air and pushing the floor with his hands, trying to raise his head up and look around. He wasn't crawling yet, so he couldn't reach a different position by himself, and he seemed to be really out of the interactions going on between Jeevi and the other baby" (Fieldnotes, Namaste. 10/05/13).

In this situation, even within the boundaries of the baby zone there were different bodily positions that involved different ways of interacting with the other elements of that space. In that context, for babies to move from the position in which their mother left them - for instance lying down facing the floor, to another position, for example rolling on their side and facing upwards - meant not only changing position but also changing their relationships to other spatial elements. Therefore, the place they were part of changed too, not only in their subjective perspective of place but also in terms of how that place was composed. In this sense, it is possible to argue that a baby's corporeal movement within a blanket entails changing place, and in that way it entails a small *travel*. It is also a form of mobility: in Cresswell's notion of the politics of mobility, it is the meaning attached to the 'fact of movement' that transforms it into mobility (Cresswell, 2006, 2010b). The mothers' chat around baby zone illustrates how the babies movements – lying down, rolling, crawling, walking and all the forms in between – were charged with interpretations about these very young persons' developments (being 'fast' or 'slow') and personalities (being 'lazy'), so that their movements were associated with positive and negative values contrasted to the other babies. Babies' im/mobility was also associated to wellbeing in terms of 'normal' development, with immobility constituting a reason of concern in some cases, as I observed in another playgroup in Springton Church.

One of the ladies that organised the church playgroup introduced me to a woman and briefly explained to her that I was doing a study on children's mobility: "Mobility? Then you would be interested on my baby", the woman said, while pointing and looking towards a baby that was sitting nearby, "because she doesn't

move at all". The baby was thirteen months old. She was sitting there and touching some toys in range and therefore moving her arms and hands. But she was not moving the rest of her body – not crawling or creeping in any way, and certainly not standing or walking. The mother's tone sounded as a complaint. She looked at me as if waiting for an explanation or diagnosis:

> "I just looked at the baby (perhaps I wouldn't call her 'baby' if she was walking?) and said things like 'every child has different rhythms and times', but actually I was also a bit amazed to see that this big baby didn't move her body out of the position her mother left her" (Fieldnotes, Springton church playgroup, February 2014).

A month later I saw them again. I noticed that the baby was creeping on her bottom. I said to her mum: 'she's moving now!' and she replied: 'yes, on her bottom…', in what I interpreted as an ironic tone. The fact that a thirteen-fourteen months old baby was not walking was a reason of concern or perhaps disappointment for a mother because at that age a child was expected to be classified as a 'toddler' rather than as a baby. The concept of toddler is a category defined by movement rather than by age. A toddler is defined as: "a young child who is just beginning to walk" (Oxford Dictionary, 2012). Although this definition does not specify age, in common use the category usually referred to children over one year old and stretched sometimes far after a child had mastered the skill of walking (so that, for instance, the 'toddler's room' in WCC was the room used by children up to five years old). However, the definition of toddler was sometimes used in a more strict fashion, as experienced by Deva and his mother in a children's centre in Riverton.

Deva was a 7 months old baby when I met him. He was already crawling by then, and at 9 months he started toddling. He used to attend 'Baby Zone', a group for babies and parents held on a weekly basis in a children's centre in Riverton. They would do songs, rhymes, and stories in a circle, with mothers holding their babies or letting them creep and crawl inside the circle. They had been going for several months, so Heet had made friends there and Deva was familiarised with the other babies, parents and staff. The first time Deva went to Baby Zone being able to walk, he showed his newly acquired skill to the others in the circle, for everyone's surprise and admiration of such a young baby walking. After praising his very early steps, the group leader said, to Heet's surprise: "so, this is your last session with us Deva!" explaining that he was a toddler now so he could not attend the group anymore. When Heet told me about this some days later, she added: "but he's still a baby! He's only nine months!" The Baby Zone criteria, however, was clear about this: babies do not walk, toddlers do – and there were other groups targeted at them.

The differentiation between babies and toddlers in terms of movement was more loosely applied in the baby zone (not the session but the area) in WCC. Still, it was reinforced not only by the material

boundaries between baby zone and the rest of the place but also through parents and staff safeguarding the area:

> "A little child, already walking but not too old, crawled into the babies zone after some 'baby toys'. Her mother said 'this is baby zone!' calling the child towards the playroom. Soor commented: 'they all like babies' toys' " (Fieldnotes, Namaste 19/04/13).

Here, however, boundaries were more permeable and therefore the transitions were subtler than in the case of Deva in Baby Zone. Seeing the babies only once a week, their changes were impressive for me: the same baby that some weeks ago was sitting on a baby car seat in the edge of the blanket, was now crawling short distances getting from one basket to the another on the blanket. And the following week, the same baby was crawling *out* of the blanket:

> "Jeevi crawled to the edge of the sofa, put her hands on the top of it trying to raise. One of the mothers extended her hands towards her, but Jeevi tried a couple of times raising her legs, then went back to the floor. Later she crawled and crossed the boundary of the blanket. She kept crawling and went towards the playroom. Just when she was getting to the door (leading towards the playroom), Karu (her brother) and other boy came out of the room running. Karu saw her and immediately stopped running and jumped to land still with his legs wide open and arms up, between the boy and Jeevi while shouting 'STOP!' to his friend. So she could keep crawling into the playroom. Tera (her mother) went after her. I went too (…) in the playroom, Jeevi was sitting in the middle of the room, over the floor, surrounded by Lego-like pieces, handling them and in some way putting them together. Tera was standing next to her, talking to other people while looking at her. Children were coming and going passing next to her all the time. A girl walked by and almost steps on Jeevi's hands. Tera took her off the floor then" (Fieldnotes, Namaste 24/05/13).

Babies crawling out of the blanket created new spatial and social dynamics for themselves and other people around them. The babies could now move towards the sounds and sights that called their attention instead of only turning towards them. They could approach the things that they wanted to touch and try, widening their range of movement. This spatial widening was not exempted of restrictions though: mothers reacted to their babies new scale of movement widening their own, walking after them making sure the babies were not stepped over by older children, or that they did not get access to objects considered to be inappropriate for them. Mothers would then intervene when they thought it was necessary or when they were tired of following them, taking the babies on their arms or re-directing them– taking them from their armpits and moving them on the air, for instance - towards the places they wanted them to be. Walking after the babies took mothers to areas of the WCC they were not used to be in, thus interacting with other

people and things, just as their babies did. Baby zone, defined by particular material boundaries, objects, people and accepted ways of moving, became progressively an abandoned zone, only to be populated again some time later by new babies and parents.

The constellation of people, objects and dynamics between them that characterised babies zone was different to the spatial interactions in other areas within WCC. In this sense, babies and mothers were indeed changing place when they moved out of the babies' area towards the toddler's room or the garden. In these places they had access to other objects and people, being able to engage in interactions that were not accessible from the babies zone. It is in this sense that babies corporeal movements can be considered as part of the spectrum of corporeal travel of people. It is, however, a travel between very close places if we see them from an adult perspective, or a change of position within places. They are, nonetheless, differentiated places and they are not necessarily close from the point of view of a baby just learning to crawl or walk. From this point of view, the idea of travel as a journey between distant places and Casey's classification of movement as: movement within place, movement between places and moving by not moving (Casey, 1996) are challenged. Babies and toddlers' mobility inside the place called children's centre would usually be seen as movement *within* place. However, as seen in the previous accounts, if we reduce our scale of observation we find that the centre is constituted of smaller places between which children and parents move – sometimes creating these differentiated places through their movements – thus in a way moving *between* place, *within* place.

2.3 'Don't come to coffee shops anymore!' Crawling and running in public

Deva had not only been an early walker but also an early crawler. This, again, had spatial consequences. His mother Heet had registered for a private antenatal course held in a village near Riverton. There she met other mothers-to-be and they became her first friends as a mother. The antenatal course promoted this kind of dynamic between the new parents – especially mothers – holding a weekly coffee morning in its premises for mothers (parents, but in all the cases I heard about the mothers were the only ones able to attend because of the maternity leave policy) and babies to meet during the first months after birth. About this Heet explained:

> "After we had our babies we used to meet up at the coffee morning (…) after they (the babies) turned four, five months, or even before, three and a half months we thought the babies were old enough (…) so we used to meet up in Riverton in coffee shops. Then once he (Deva) started crawling it was difficult to control him so we meet up at our houses (…) every Wednesday (…) he's the youngest but he's the only one that is moving, the others are just sitting, that's it" (Interview with Heet, July 2013)

Louise - Suzanne's mother - had attended the same private course a couple of years earlier and they had a very similar experience to Deva and Heet's when Suzanne started crawling and walking. Louise, Suzanne and the other mothers and babies of the group were meeting at coffee shops in Riverton. When the babies started crawling they started meeting at their houses too. After some of them went back to work they tried to keep meeting every now and then at their houses. However, when Suzanne started walking before the other babies Louise found it difficult to meet inside a house. She suggested meeting at parks, but the other mothers did not see the benefits of meeting in open spaces with the unpredictable weather, as their babies were not walking yet. In some way that forced a separation of Suzanne and Louise from the group for a while. Two years after the children were born the group still kept in touch and met occasionally in coffee shops and parks. Louise told me about the last meeting in a nearby town:

> "it's so difficult to do anything now (…) there was eight of us, with like eight toddlers, all at different sort of routines during the day, and the mothers were so exhausted by the end of the day, because we didn't actually get to talk to each other, because you're just running after toddlers and whatever, and (my friend) said to me 'never again, never again', it just doesn't work, with that many of you and at this age, it's so difficult, it was quite an experience (laughs) (…) we used to meet in coffee shops, and that was doable, 'cause they weren't moving, and we met some of the girls at the (coffee shop), that's like a pub, cafe type place in (another town), and we went there, and even, Suzanne was asleep luckily, she was having a midday nap (…) but there was 2 of the toddlers who were awake and it was just, you know, they just kept running out of the coffee shop, and you know, there's a road and everything, so the moms were like running after them and bringing them back in again, and ran back out again as the doors were open (…) two boys just running all over the place (laughs), throwing things on the floors and… no, don't come to coffee shops anymore!" (Interview with Louise, September 2013).

Toddler's corporeal mobility seemed to crush with the spatiality, materiality and social order of places that were not appropriate for their mobile needs: tables too close to each other that hindered the possibility for mothers to follow their crawling babies; open doors that enabled the children to trespass the boundaries of the place within a context considered to be dangerous for them, and the existence of objects that could be broken or damaged as a consequence of children's movements. However, none of these elements actually hindered the toddler's mobility. Indeed, the space of the coffee shop offered many 'affordances' (Ingold, 2000; Urry, 2007), with close tables creating interesting tunnels under chairs and between tables' legs to crawl through; open doors inviting to explore a new spatiality, and objects appearing as interesting reasons to move from one place to another. The problem was that these elements made the movements of mothers difficult when following or controlling their children's movements, interrupting their social dynamics with other mothers. All of this in the context of a busy road viewed as a potential danger for young children running unaware of traffic risks.

In these vignettes about Suzanne and Deva there are aspects related to movement *within* place and *between* places (Casey, 1996). On the one hand, the way young children move when they are inside a place – a coffee shop or a house – defines places as appropriate or inappropriate for them. The character of these places changes together with children's changing mobility, so that the same coffee shop that used to be an ideal meeting place when Deva was two months old, became a site full of risks (of being damaged by or damaging Deva) when he was six months old. Not because of his age but because he was crawling then. Therefore, children's mobility within place affected mobility between places, particularly in terms of the chosen destiny. At the same time, shifting the destiny (from a coffee shop to a house or park) would result on different experiences and possibilities of mobility *within* that new place – with new social dynamics involved.

On the other hand, Louise's recount of meeting at a coffee shop with her friends and their children illustrates how children attempted at trespassing the boundary between movement within place and between places: an open door afforded a more fluid connection between the inside and outside of that place, making the boundary permeable and less recognisable for children moving around. Adults' fears of children moving beyond their sight or hand-range, or when moving with children on the road, were tackled in different ways in different spaces, as I will show in the next section.

2.4 To leash or not to leash: moral geographies of mothering and traffic regulations

"Young children should not be out alone on the pavement or road (…) When taking children out, keep between them and the traffic and hold their hands firmly. Strap very young children into pushchairs or use reins (…) Children should be taught the Code and should not be allowed out alone until they can understand and use it properly. The age when they can do this is different for each child. Many children cannot judge how fast vehicles are going or how far away they are. Children learn by example, so parents and carers should always use the Code in full when out with their children. They are responsible for deciding at what age children can use it safely by themselves" (Department-for-Transport-and-Driving-Standards-Agency, 2007:13-14).

During fieldwork I observed many young children and parents walking on the roads attached to each other through a rein that held children's wrists, harnessed their chest or a small backpack. Although any of the parents who participated of the study used a children's leash to move with their children on the road when I was going out with them, the image struck me, as in my view the traffic and people density in the area did not seem to justify the use of such and artefact. Reins were seen among families having a stroll in the park, parents doing the shopping or browsing along the road. Sometimes child and adult walking together, the adult following the child around the park; sometimes standing outside a shop, the child looking at something else – the cars, people, animals – while the adult browsed or chatted to other adults. Once I

saw a boy trying to run away from his (apparently) grandmother, pulling the leash with all his strength, giving up and going down to the floor on 'four legs' in the end.

Discovering this artefact as a mediator between children and adults' interactions on the move directed my attention towards the wider range of artefacts that were part of children-adults mobility practices, usually related to safety matters. Parents' decisions about whether to use or not these artefacts or which of them to choose seemed to relate, on the one hand, to local childcare or parenting cultures (Aitken, 2000; Holloway, 1998). On the other, it seemed to translate and respond to national legal regulations in relation to children and traffic, as shown in the quote at the beginning of this section.

As I was becoming interested on this items, I mentioned it in my conversations with parents. As a result, for instance, Gabrielle commented that her husband would use a children's leash for holding Lillian sometimes when taking her and Jasmine to the children's centre, if she wanted to walk. This would help him pushing the pram with Jasmine on it without the risk of Lillian running away from him. Another parent, Louise, had contradictory thoughts about it:

> "Louise said some of her friends had bought leashes for their children. She wasn't very keen to the idea, and Samuel (her husband) was completely against it. BUT some days ago they opened the door and Suzanne run outside to the road, they had to run after her. After that, Samuel said 'maybe we can buy a lead if you want'... Louise is not sure about it, although now she understands why some people use it. 'Suzanne is just beginning to be adventurous', she added" (Fieldnotes, Louise and Suzanne, July 2013).

In this case it was not only Suzanne's recently acquired capacity to walk and run what concerned her parents and made them consider the possibility of getting a children's leash. Rather, it was a new attitude or will in her, described by Louise as being 'adventurous'. Louise's point was not to stop Suzanne from being adventurous, but to prevent the risks of it – which does not necessarily mean that the leash would do that for them. What are the risks of running out to the road? Their house was located at the end of a non-exit very quiet road, so cars did not run through it. What was this fear about, and where did it come from then?

Louise explicitly acknowledged that the idea of restraining Suzanne's movements with a rein had come from her friends who were also parents, some of whom were using a leash with their own children. It was, in that sense, a matter of what Holloway calls 'local childcare cultures' or a 'moral geography of mothering'. This is defined as "a localised discourse concerned with what is considered right and wrong in the raising of children" (Holloway, 1998: 31). Holloway (1998) argues that moral geographies of mothering, although they can make mothers knowledgeable and empowered as social actors in the local childcare

system, also produce normative visions of mothering. In this regard, she agrees with Valentine (1997) on the influence that other local families' practices have on the definition of children's safety measures and spatial boundaries, as well as "in shaping and validating parents' interpretations of their children's level of competence" (Holloway, 1998:45). At the same time, Holloway and Valentine observe that some parents feel pressured to conform to these local cultures even if they do not fully agree with them (Holloway, 1998; Valentine, 1997). This feeling of pressure and discomfort was expressed by Louise when talking about her friends using the children's reins as something that she disliked, but at the same time understood and felt compelled to use with her daughter as soon as Suzanne had a moment of 'adventure'.

Valentine argues that: "unable or unwilling to trust their children to manage their own safety in public places most parents actively control and restrict their children's use of space" (Valentine, 1997: 72). Whilst with older children safety and competence are negotiated through the establishment of spatial boundaries and rules (Valentine, 1997), with younger children safety and competence were negotiated in Wishwell through joint mobile practices aided by artefacts, of which reins are only one example.

As I have discussed so far, the decision of using or not an artefact such as a child rein was related to local parenting cultures. However, these local parenting cultures and parents' fears and concerns were in turn specific responses to national safety standards and legal regulations, as it was expressed on the Highway Code: "strap very young children into pushchairs or use reins" (2007: 13). Within the same Code, drivers were warned to be especially careful when passing near to an ice cream van, as children may suddenly appear from behind the vehicle, more concerned about the ice cream than about the traffic (Department-for-Transport-and-Driving-Standards-Agency, 2007). In this context, young children's incompetence was taken for granted. Transport and driving standards were also based on the notion of children as especially vulnerable subjects on the basis of their body size in relation to car design, as expressed by the many legal regulations and the artefacts legally required when having a child as car passenger.

Places like WCC constituted nodes for the communication of traffic policy and regulations. One example of this is the road safety advice found in WCC in different forms: posters, leaflets and people. One of these leaflets stated that: "From the moment you know you are pregnant you will need to start thinking about road safety for you and for your child" (see anonymity file for reference). Advice went all the way from pregnancy and car safety through the different safety requirements for babies, toddlers and older children when being on a car, a bicycle, walking on the road, and also at home or just outside the door:

> "The home environment can be dangerous if you drop your guard. Toddlers in particular do not have the ability to understand or react to sounds or moving objects in the same way adults do. They do not anticipate danger and can easily put themselves in harms way" (See anonymity file for reference).

This kind of message was reinforced by images displayed around WCC, such as the poster: "Are children there? Be aware!" warning parents of the risk of running over their own children in the driveway. The children's centres' work with other agencies could be observed in relation to road safety, not only through printed material distributed or exhibited at the centre, but also through institutional visits. One day, for example, a lady from the local council Road Safety Unit came in, giving leaflets and chatting with mothers and grandmothers. The leaflets that the lady was handing out were about I-Size, a new European-wide safety standard for children's car seats. As explained on the i-Size website:

> "i-Size is the new European standard for child car seats. i-Size seats will fit every i-Size approved vehicle and cars will need to be i-Size compliant to achieve the Maximum Euro NCAP rating. The i-Size regulations are designed to provide children with additional protection and safety in the car. i-Size does not replace the existing R44/04 legislation, but runs alongside it. The key differences are increased support for the child's head and neck and better protection in the event of both frontal and side-impact. The seat's five-point harness ensures that the child stays in the seat even in a rollover accident. i-Size also helps parents choose the right seat more easily by classifying seats by the child's length/height rather than weight. It can be used in most cars that have IsoFix fittings, which have been standard in the majority of cars since 2007, and which make the seat easy to install correctly. The legislation also states that the child must travel rearward-facing up to a minimum of 15 months old" (Stennik, 2013).

The Road Safety lady was there, in the children's centre, introducing a new child seat standard to the parents. Compared to the (then) current legislation (R44/04), there were some important differences that might have notorious impacts on children's mobility and mobile experiences: first, whilst the R44/04 legislation focused on the child seat only, the i-Size standard referred to child seats *and* cars, creating a new differentiation between children-appropriate and non-appropriate cars. Second, while R44/04 created different children's categories of child seat according to children's weight, the i-Size standard was based on children's length/height, in both cases associating these features to approximate age. A third important difference was that the i-Size standard would make rearward facing travelling mandatory for children up to 15 months (In-Car-Safety, 2014). The new standard, although running along the existing R44/04 legislation so far, was supposed to replace it at some point (Stennik, 2013), approximately in 2018 (In-Car-Safety, 2014).

There are well-justified safety reasons for advising baby seats to face backwards. Nevertheless, looking at all the babies that travelled in this position I wondered how that experience was for them: what do they look at, how does the movement feel, and whether not to being able to see the people who is sitting in the front – many times their mother or father – could be in some way stressful for them (and for parents), as it has been observed in the case of pushchair travel (Zeedyk & National-Literacy-Trust, 2008). It constitutes one more differentiation along the life cycle, as babies (now up to 15 months in the whole of Europe) were the only car passengers sitting in that position. I looked for example at Jasmine and Lillian on the car: whilst Lillian sat on her forward-facing seat and looked at a printed Google map and signalled her mum whether to turn right or left, looking through the side windows and the windscreen, Jasmine lied down on her rear-facing baby seat and looked at the colourful fabric caterpillar hanging from her baby seat handlebar trying to touch it, probably also looking at the dark seatback and the sky through the side window. They both inhabited the mobile space of the car at the same time going through the same spaces the car passed by. However, they were positioned differently and thus they experienced the same space in very different ways.

Change comes quickly, though. The first time I went out with Heet and Deva he was facing backwards on the car, clinging to his teddy monkey, not able to see Heet. After he turned one Heet began looking for a new car seat. I went with them to Mothercare and Mamas and Papas[7] with this purpose. First we went to Mother Care, where Deva had a photo session first. A saleswoman showed her different models and

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[7] Both Mothercare and Mamas and Papas were UK based retailers specialised in baby and child products. Both brands were present in many cities and towns in the UK. The local ones were in Riverton.

explained the benefits of a very expensive one that had a peculiar hard cover in the front that: "in the worst scenario, protects the internal organs of the child... you can repair the legs, but not the organs", she said (Fieldnotes, Deva and Heet, October 2013). Heet looked at the seats, but she did not make a decision. When I saw them again Deva was sitting in the back of the car facing forward on a new child seat. When I went on the car I could look back and see his face, talk to him and see how he looked through the side window, still holding his teddy monkey.

The safety artefacts that worked restraining children's movement were sometimes experienced as physical and emotional discomfort, as observed in some situations. Suzanne' and Deva's mothers referred in similar terms to this discomfort in their diaries:

> "We go to Weiston park at 3 pm. Suzanne goes in the car seat which she is not too happy about! Sometimes when she has just waken up I feel like she wants to run around and not be strapped in to the car but I keep saying to her we are going to the park and she is happier talking about what she wants to do at the park – the swings, slide, etc" (Suzanne's diary, August 2013).

> "On the journey back (from Legoland) he (Deva) was not happy. He had his afternoon nap too late (5.30-6.30) so he did not sleep on the way back. He was crying so much he was sick. We had to stop at the service station branch at the M40 to calm him down" (Deva's diary, 09/07/13).

The mobile discomfort created in part by safety gadgets generated diverse tensions: between children' and adults' perspectives; immediate comfort and long-term safety; happy family journeys and unhappy situations while travelling, and so on. Parents' main priority, however, was clear: children had to be kept 'in place' for securing a safe travel. Echoing this priority, I found in a shop in Riverton an 'anti-escape system' described as a device that prevents children from "slipping their arms out of their car seat harness":

> "It simply fills in the gap at the side where the child would normally squeeze their hand through and stops the problem occurring. It doesn't interfere with the harness mechanism, it takes just 20 seconds to fit, its simple safe and brilliant. If you have ever driven a car with an escaping child in the back seat you will appreciate just how brilliant this product is, please do tell everyone you know about it, as the consequences of using a car seat without the harness fitted correctly are horrific and something that no family need suffer. Suitable for age 15 to 30 months" (5 Point Plus Car Seat Anti escape System, in www.amazon.com).

It is possible to observe that, as children grow older, not only their shoes and clothes need to change, but also car seats, baby carriers or pushchairs. They change according to size, weight, age and mobility means and parental preferences, in compliance with road safety legislation and advice. In addition to this,

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there were forms – strategies and artefacts – for restraining children's mobility by keeping them 'in place', preventing movement rather than allowing it in a safe manner. These were ordinary and still objects such as doors and locks that prevented children from going out of the house or other places, as well as going inside restricted or forbidden rooms, without adult supervision and permission.

2.5 'Not good with roads': locks and doors in the control of young children's im/mobility

On my first visit to Tabby and Mark's house I noticed that Robert, their dad, was unlocking the door before opening it to me. He explained that the children could open it if it was unlocked and "Tabby is not very good with roads". So he locked it again after I came in, leaving the keys hanging from the lock. Three months later, I noticed again that the three of them were behind the door while unlocking it for me. This time Mark showed me how to lock the door:

> "'It's a tricky door', he said. It was actually tricky to lock it, and to close it. He told me I needed to pull the handle up and then turn the key. It worked. I said 'very good Mark, you know how to do it!' Robert laughed behind me: 'yeah, that's why we have to keep the keys hidden'. He took the keys and put them somewhere away" (Fieldnotes, Tabby and Mark, 02/10/13).

For Mark to learn how to lock and unlock the door meant the possibility of gaining access to the outside, into the road and potentially public space. But the acquisition of this new skill was not paired, in his parents view at least, with the capability for going outside the house on his own and keeping safe. In the cases described by Valentine (1997) children's safety in public spaces was negotiated through the definition of spatial boundaries. That boundary, in the case of Mark and Tabby, was the door of their house. Doors constituted an important but usually unnoticed element in how children's spaces were managed by adults. This was particularly relevant in the children's centre, where the doors were used as a flexible boundary within the building, between its different rooms, as well as between the inside and outside.

For example, the toddlers' room door was ritually opened at the beginning of the session and closed before singing time. There were always a couple of children who did not want to leave the playroom and tried to stay there playing while the others were singing. But Sai made sure that they were all outside and closed the door - which could not be opened by parents as it had a code (nor by children, as the code and handle bar were too high for them anyway) – while a volunteer cleaned the room.

One morning, after all the children and parents had gone out into singing time, I was standing by the toddlers' room door and a little boy came and pushed it. The door was locked, and even if it was not, he could not reach the handlebar. He looked up to me making a moaning noise and pointing towards the

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door. He was clearly asking me to open it – in the same way that Jasmine asked for a toy or for somebody to take her somewhere else without words. I could not help him, first because I could not go against the session leader rules, and second because I did not know the code! I told him we were singing now, but he stayed there, looking at me, pointing and pushing the door until his mom called him.

For the safety of children please can you keep the door closed

The main door at WCC used to be unlocked. It was so heavy that it was very difficult for a young child to open it. When crowded sessions were over, however, it was a messy time when people were leaving, wrapping up the children, chatting and saying good-bye at the same time. A couple of times children run out of the building without parents' noticing. One day I saw that a boy had made his way almost to the outside alleyway. His grandmother was upset and shouted at him: "Somebody can take you away, then we can't save you. You have to stay with me!" He stopped running to listen to her, and then he kept running through the alleyway, his grandmother behind him.

As previously shown, this kind of situation was tackled sometimes through the use of artefacts like children's reins. In other cases, however, the fear of children running away in the road or any public space resulted in adults deciding not to go to certain places with young children. That was the case, for example, of Naniji, who preferred limiting her trips with her grandson Resham to the children's centres rather than going to parks or other open spaces where they went only occasionally. When walking, some families tackled fear of traffic through more organic measures. With organic I mean that they were not mediated by artefacts such as the leash and did not stop themselves from going out, but people related their bodies in a preventive way. When walking home from St. Mary's church playgroup with Lillian, Jasmine and

Gabrielle, for example, Jasmine and Lillian were on the pushchair – Lillian on the top seat, Jasmine in the bottom underneath Jasmine. We were walking along Wishwell's main road, which had constant traffic and very narrow sidewalks. On the way Lillian decided that she wanted to walk. Gabrielle helped her alighting and told her to hold my hand, as the sidewalk was so narrow that Gabrielle could walk next to her with the pram. I took her hand without thinking about which side Lillian was in relation to the road. We walked for a bit but just a moment later Gabrielle turned back and asked me: 'can you swap sides with her?' Only then I realised that Lillian was walking on the side of the road, closer to the cars, while I was on the inside, closer to the houses. We changed sides and from then on I have always done the same when walking with my son or any other child.

2.6 'Nature's' rhythms and young children's physical mobilities: sleeping on the move and weather permitting

> "(…) children's moving bodies formed clashes and frictions with their surroundings, including topographical features, the weather and co-travelling parents and siblings. We paid particular attention to the ways in which children's agencies were shaped by a series of cyclical rhythms, for instance weather changes and bodily circulation. Cyclical rhythms remind children that everyday life is crisscrossed by temporalities that cannot be ordered purely at will. Our bodies especially run through multiple affective states throughout the day, feeling energetic, hungry, fatigued and restless in shifting proportions" (Kullman & Palludan, 2011: 356).

As asserted by Kullman and Palludan (2011), children's mobilities and agencies are interrelated to diverse cyclical rhythms that shape humans' everyday lives. Among young children in Wishwell, I identified two main 'natural' cyclical rhythms that were tightly interrelated with their everyday mobilities: sleep-wakefulness rhythms, and what was condensed under the notion of weather. Although these are natural phenomena produced by circadian rhythms, rotation and translation of the Earth, the ways in which they are interpreted and experienced vary according to social, geographical and cultural particularities (Kraftl & Horton, 2008). In the next sub-sections I will explore how these two phenomena were entangled in young children's physical mobilities in and around Wishwell, arguing for the necessity for research on children's mobilities to pay closer attention to these aspects.

a. Buggy nap: Sleeping on the move and moving around sleep

> "Over a third of most human lives – and hence one third of human geographies – is spent asleep" (Kraftl & Horton, 2008).

Kraftl and Horton (2008) have encouraged geographers to consider the manifold practices and experiences of sleep, sleeping and sleepiness "*seriously* as a focus for theoretical, empirical and even critical research". They argue that "sleep is a fundamentally spatial, and spatially-productive phenomenon", so that "some understanding of sleep, sleeping and sleepiness (and attendant experiences, social/spatial manifestations, and material paraphernalia) should afford new understandings of both the 'human' and 'geography' in human geography" (Kraftl & Horton, 2008: 510). The authors highlight an almost complete lack of attention towards 'every-night life' and sleep among geographies in general and geographies of children in particular. However, echoing Kullman and Palludan emphasis on cyclical rhythms, they assert that:

> "Much of the spatio-temporal organization of society is predicated upon not only wakeful but *sleeping* rhythms that are not only natural (the circadian rhythm), but which are socially constructed and take a full part in the organization and proper functioning of society. These issues are so fundamental – and in many ways so simplistically blatant – that this is perhaps why they have gone virtually unnoticed" (Kraftl & Horton, 2008: 517).

The same lack of attention towards sleep is observed among mobilities studies, which in general focus exclusively upon awaken practices and, as also pointed out by Kraftl and Horton (2008) in relation to human geography, intentional action (Manderscheid, 2014). Not surprisingly, young children's sleeping patterns were not a pre-defined focus of my research. Nevertheless, sleep emerged in the observations of children's mobilities in two senses: first, as a relevant aspect of young children's experiences of physical mobility, with manifold examples of children sleeping on the move as a practice encouraged by parents or spontaneously accomplished. Second, sleep appeared as a key element in the organisation of daily routines in general and particularly mobilities, which were re-organised around young children's sleeping patterns or accidental naps, as I will show now.

Sleeping on the move

> "she doesn't want to go for a nap, but she wants a nap, she's at that sort of age where she doesn't want to go for a nap but we know the day will be unbearable is she doesn't have a nap (…) I started doing the buggy walk (with a friend and her baby), sleeping, and I realised that it meant that we (me and my friend) could chat, while they (Suzanne and my friend's baby) were asleep" (Interview with Louise, September 2013).

Whilst sleep has been a neglected realm of human life in human geography, it has received some attention within anthropology and sociology (Gottlieb, 2004; Kraftl & Horton, 2008), recently explored as a social and cultural construction as much as a biological experience (Gottlieb, 2004). Sleep has also been

a key theme for health research (Kraftl & Horton, 2008) and developmental psychology (Gottlieb, 2004). The latter has documented that "repetitive motions tend both to lull a wakeful baby to sleep and to encourage a sleeping baby to remain asleep" (Gottlieb, 2004: 174). The anthropologist Alma Gottlieb (2004) compared how while in the US "Many desperate parents with cars have spent hours driving babies on aimless rides through the countryside – knowing that the moment the car stopped, the baby would awaken" (Gottlieb, 2004: 174), Beng mothers or 'baby-carriers' (closest translation to the role of 'baby-sitters') in West Africa sometimes:

> "put their understanding of this principle to work without elaborate technological apparatus. They may take a long walk with a baby strapped to their back (say, to a faraway field or to another village to go visiting), knowing that they are giving the baby a good nap. Or a Beng mother or baby-sitter may keep her baby on her back while she does all manner of work, ranging from washing dishes or laundry, to pounding corn in a mortar, to carrying logs for firewood. When the baby is attached to a working woman whose position is constantly changing, the baby may fade in and out of sleep, depending on the interruption to the rhythm of the carrier's movements" (Gottlieb, 2004: 174).

Gottlieb also observed that Beng people do not expect babies to fulfil certain sleeping patterns and they have unpredictable short naps along the day while they are carried by their carers. Instead, middle-class Euro-American parents of infants are attached to three sleep-related goals: the first goal is that babies should start having a small number of long naps at predictable times of the day for predictable lengths of time, as soon as possible; second, babies are expected to sleep at night for progressively longer intervals; and third, babies should learn to sleep alone during day and night as early as possible (Gottlieb, 2004). In addition, these naps and sleeping routines are expected to happen in certain places -a cot, within the house - and in certain positions –horizontally, lying down. These sleeping ideals are spread through manifold parenting guides and books, media, experts, family and friends' advice (Gottlieb, 2004; Kraftl & Horton, 2008).

Although this middle-class Euro-American approach to babies' sleep was observed in Wishwell too, young children's mobilities revealed sleeping practices that had more in common with Beng babies than Gottlieb thought in relation to her fellow North American parents. Rather than having exclusively immobile and spatially limited naps, babies and young children in Wishwell were used to sleep on the move, or to move while sleeping. However, as observed by Gottlieb, most of the time these practices were mediated by technologies such as car seats, prams or baby carriers. These were also present among Beng babies, although Gottlieb did not pay particular attention to artefacts such as the slings that women appear wearing in her pictures.

For example, as expressed by Louise, Suzanne was not considered a *'good napper'*, meaning that she would not fall easily asleep in her cot. Louise, together with a friend who lived nearby and had a baby the same age than Suzanne, had discovered that their babies found it easier to fall asleep when moving on their prams. This became a social practice for these two mothers, who realised that they 'could chat' while the babies (and later on toddlers) slept on a buggy walk around the neighbourhood. Louise had also acquired the practice of taking the dog for a walk with Suzanne on the baby carrier, where she would fall asleep when she was a young baby. Not always purposefully, it was very common for babies and young children to fall asleep while they were going somewhere, as I observed in many occasions. It was common for children to be left sleeping when they arrived home slept. Sometimes this would be on a car seat, the pram or the cocoon, in the entrance hall or sometimes in an outdoor space.

Moving around sleep

> "we didn't manage to come to the toddler group at the children's centre for a while because she (Lillian) was sleeping in the afternoon, but now they've moved it to the morning, on Monday morning (…) so we'll probably be able to do that" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

Parents in Wishwell not only searched for mobile practices that aided their babies falling asleep, but also organised mobilities around sleeping patterns, supporting Kraftl and Horton's argument that: "(…) wakeful socio-spatial rules are inherently but often implicitly underwritten by the organization of sleep" (Kraftl & Horton, 2008: 516-17). This meant, on the one hand, that parents' knowledge of their children's sleeping patterns was used, for example, in the organization of long trips. On the other hand, young children's sleeping patterns resulted in moments of relative immobility in which the children as well as the adult carer(s) would stay at home for children's sleeping time and organise mobilities and social activities according to predictable sleeping patterns or change plans if a child fell asleep at an unexpected time of the day.

In Gabrielle's account, their weekly schedule changed when Lillian started having an afternoon nap, preventing them from going to one of WCC's toddler's group. Naptime became a time of relative immobility for the family, changing their agenda accordingly. This kind of practice resonates with Gottlieb's (2004) observations about Western families for whom children's sleep must happen within certain spaces and times. It also resonates with her argument about middle-class parents' sleep-related goals, among which is the predictability of naptimes. Unpredictable naps meant that children would not fall asleep the number of times, for the length or at the time they expected, sometimes affecting their mobilities, as recounted by Heet in relation to their journey back from Legoland. It also meant that previously planned trips had to be delayed or sometimes cancelled – as I experienced a couple of times when I was going to meet a family and the meeting was cancelled last minute because the child fell asleep unexpectedly.

Sleep was not necessarily a burden for young children and their families' mobilities. It was also, in certain occasions, a facilitator of mobility. For example, as recounted in section 1.4, Suzanne's family would travel to France over night, so that Suzanne would sleep most of the time and did not need to be 'entertained' on the car. Therefore, the family organised their travel according to Suzanne's sleeping patterns. Sleeping was also positively valued by parents when they wanted to have some social interaction with other adults while on the move, for instance on the buggy walks that Louise had with her friend, or when meeting friends in a café when Suzanne was 'luckily' sleeping, while other toddlers were running all over the place.

An association between moving and sleeping was also observed when young children were soundly asleep on the pram, and a pause on the walk made them suddenly wake up crying – a cry that would not stop until the march was resumed by the pram-pusher. It was also interesting to observe how young children usually fell asleep in one place and woke up in a completely different setting: a park, their house, the children's centre, the supermarket, another country or a hotel, as in the case of Deva when he went to Legoland:

> "Today at 11 am we set off to go to Windsor. Matt drove his car. Deva slept all the way until we got to the hotel. He woke up wondering where he was" (Deva's diary by Heet, July 2013).

This is a spatial and affective experience that remains unexplored by researchers on children's mobilities. It is an experience characteristic of the experience of being a child and hence being transported while sleeping, without being conscious of the destiny of the trip – although it shares some aspects of adults' experiences of long travel mobilities, such as on airplanes or buses, when most of the trip is ideally slept.

Intermingled with these sleep practices were safety discourses, for example in relation to infant sudden death and its possible associations with certain artefacts and parenting practices, such as leaving babies sleeping on a pram outdoors (PR Newswire, 2014) or 'bed-sharing' with babies (NHS, 2009). For example, according to a leaflet produced by the NHS found in the folder given to mothers-to-be in Wishwell, "The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a cot in a room with you for the first six months" (NHS, 2009). The same advice was given to Louise by a health visitor after Leonard was born, on her first home visit. In this sense, Kraftl and Horton argue that:

> "the rise of the sleep expert also signals an opportunity for geographers interested in the inter-mingling of spatial scales (through practise, texts and materials) to consider how the medicalization of sleep is constitutive of new connections between the small (domestic) and large (public) scales. For instance, parents are now bombarded with information on children's sleep from experts, various media, friends and community members, and family members. In order to proceed at all (with getting children to sleep), they must negotiate this information through various

practices, and in different settings. Whilst the sleep experts' tips for designing the perfect sleeping atmosphere may penetrate the bedroom walls (and be repeated in bedrooms elsewhere), a parent's interpretation of media hype around sleeping routines may both integrate with bedroom design, and be played out in discussions at the local playgroup, or in the internet chatroom" (Kraftl & Horton, 2008: 515).

Kraftl and Horton suggest four possible realms in which geographies of sleep, sleeping and sleepiness could develop: the architecture of sleep; sleep, health and the raise of the expert; sleep, difference and childhood; and sleeping bodies and intimacy. in this regard, the data emerging from my study suggests that sleeping not only relates to still architectures of sleep and practices carried out within fixed spaces, but it also takes place while moving, particularly in the case of young children whose sleep seems to be encouraged by bodily movement (Gottlieb, 2004). Therefore, young children's sleep on the move and moving around sleep can be seen from these four perspectives too: sleeping spaces can be mobile and composed by artefacts of mobility rather than by fixed architectures. Experts' advice in relation to sleep impacts the organisation of children and their families' mobilities and social activities. It can also have direct relation to mobility artefacts, for instance discouraging the use of prams in outdoor spaces for sleeping. Regarding sleep, difference and childhood, young children's mobile sleeping patterns constitute them as different subjects with differently arranged sleeping routines to those of older children and adults. These discourses create differentiated mobility and sleeping practices and experiences. For example, awakening in an unknown space, which for an adult would be an uncomfortable or even traumatising experience, for young children is an everyday story.

b. 'Weather permitting': on the agencies of atmospheric conditions on young children's mobilities

In her book '*Vibrant Matter: A political ecology of things'*, Jane Bennett (2010) discusses the implication of taking "seriously the vitality of (nonhuman) bodies" (Bennett, 2010: viii). By 'vitality' she means: "the capacity of things –edibles, commodities, storms, metals – not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents and forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own" (Bennett, 2010: viii). She wonders what difference would it make to different social realms if these *things* were treated "not simply as a resource, commodity, or instrumentality but also and more radically as an 'actant'?" (Bennett, 2010: viii). Bennett takes the notion of 'actant' from Latour, defining it as "a source of action that can be either human or nonhuman; it is that which has efficacy, can do things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events" (Bennett, 2010: viii). It is in this perspective that weather emerged in young children's physical mobilities in Wishwell: as an actant capable of altering the course of events. In the literature on children's mobility weather is vaguely mentioned through expressions such as 'weather permitting' (Horton et al., 2013) that echo the ways in which people referred to the weather in Wishwell: "if the day is nice" or "if there is nice weather". However,

its effects are taken for granted rather than explained or described. In this section, I will focus on how the atmospheric conditions and seasonal changes in Wishwell affected children's lives physical mobilities in terms of the places they visited or not, the un/predictability of their plans, the transport means and the artefacts employed for dealing with the atmospheric elements hence counterbalancing their otherwise immobilising effects.

Not surprisingly, the rain was one of parents' most feared elements that had the power to make last minute changes of plans, as I recorded many times in text messages with participants when arranging join-ins:

> "The weather forecast is for rain – if it's really bad we may stay at home, will let you know " (Gabrielle's text message, February 2014).

The weather forecast was a relevant tool when planning outdoors trips with young children. However, because it was not trusted, cancellations or confirmations of pre-arranged plans were usually made at last minute:

> "(…) let's see what the weather is like, then we can decide what to do" (Text message from Gabrielle, February 2014).

Atmospheric elements such as heavy rain or snow were commonly associated with staying at home or choosing indoors playgroups. Staying at home was sometimes seen as a challenge for parents, as expressed in a text message conversation with Gabrielle:

> "the girls are well though it is getting challenging thinking of how to entertain them when the weather is cold & wet. They are not keen on being indoors too long" (Text message from Gabrielle, November 2014).

As mentioned in section 1.1 of this chapter, unexpected places such as 'Pets at Home' gained a different function as a result of specific weather conditions, as recounted by Suzanne's mother.

> "When she wakes up we want to go out of the house (but it is raining) so we go to Pets at Home to get some things for the dog. It's great for children if it's raining as they have rabbits, mice, reptiles and fish to look at. Suzanne is happy in the car and is chatting to herself. She is fascinated by the animals, especially the fish (…). We get back home by 4,30. The rain has stopped so we go up to the park with the dog" (Suzanne's diary, by Louise, August 2013).

Children's spatialities varied according to the change of seasons. While in winter indoor places such as WCC were key for children to be out of their homes and still be warm and protected from the elements, in summer outdoor possibilities increased, hence the attendance to the children's centre tended to diminish. As explained by Gabrielle:

> "we've gone (to Springton church playgroup) since she was pretty small, like 3 weeks old, and we stopped in the summer because we were going out more into parks, but other than that we'll come" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

In a similar way, Jennifer explained how her way home from nursery with her two sons changed accordingly: "It really depends on the weather. If it's nice you know, we'll stretch it out and go to the park on the way home" (Interview with Jennifer, may 2013). Winter was not only about rain and cold, but also about darkness that discouraged the will to go out with the children as in brighter times of the year, as recounted by Louise about the family walks with the dog and a newborn baby on a baby carrier:

> "Charles, the dog, needs like a good walk, which is good, because means you have to get out, comes rain or shine, you have to be out, which is really good... but in the deepest darkest winter I'm not sure how..." (Interview with Louise, September 2013).

'Nice weather' was usually translated as not-rainy and ideally sunny. However, a truly nice weather was a complex balance between warmth and cold, humidity and dryness, darkness and brightness, and cloudy and sunny skies... because as Gabrielle told me, it could sometimes be "A bit too sunny for little ones" (Gabrielle's text message, June 2014).

The unpredictability of local atmospheric conditions meant that many times it was not possible to decide whether to go out or stay at home in advance, for the rain could find people in the middle of a walk or a too hot sunny day could strike in the middle of a day out. And even if negative atmospheric conditions were known in advance, sometimes it was not an option to stay at home, when the reason for mobility was unavoidable. In all these cases, the role of transport means and artefacts of mobility was key in enabling young children's mobilities while protecting from the undesirable elements such as wet or extreme warmth. As it will be further discuss in relation to the use of diverse mobility technologies such as prams and baby carriers in Chapter 10, their use varied not only according to children's bodily growth and changing mobile skills, but also according to shifting weather conditions:

> "we got (the papoose) about four months ago, when the weather was starting to get nice spring time, and we use it all the time, so Samuel might take Suzanne on that (…) we were lucky that

she was so small, because we used it (the Baby Bjorn carrier) until she was nine months I think (…) it was winter then so it wasn't really practical" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

While these artefacts were more suitable in 'favourable' (spring-summer) weather, there were other artefacts especially designed for 'adverse' weather conditions. Among these, there were clothing items such as coats and raincoats purchased at stores or gloves and blankets made by aunts and grandmothers that acted as key objects in enabling young children to go out in the cold. These implied longer preparations before going out, sometimes involving struggles between children not wanting to wrap up and adults fearing children would get a cold if they went out unprepared. This preparation also entailed a bolder boundary between inside and outside environments, with temperature difference being more pronounced between both spaces.

Other key artefacts in this regard were plastic rain covers attachable to buggies, umbrellas, sun hats and sun lotion. Special clothing and mobile accessories formed part of seasonal compositions of mobilities, covering children's bodies and increasing their agencies for dealing with the 'rhythmic agencies' (Kullman & Palludan, 2011) of cold air, rain, sun and warmth. In this way, although atmospheric conditions and elements had, in Bennett's terms, an undeniable 'vitality' and can definitely be seen as actants in children's physical mobilities, their agencies become entangled with the manifold 'compositions' (Nansen et al., 2014) that formed part of young children's mobile practices and experiences. Therefore, the potential effects of these atmospheric elements were complemented, increased, neutralised or counterbalanced by the action of other elements such as the handmade and manufactured products mentioned above.

Chapter 10: The physical travel of objects

"What constitutes social life is fundamentally heterogeneous and part of that heterogeneity are various material objects (including 'nature' and 'technologies') that directly or indirectly move or block the movement of objects, people and information (…) it is necessary to examine the many ways in which objects and people are assembled and reassembled through time-space. Objects themselves travel across distance; there are objects that enable people to travel forming complex hybrids; there are objects that move other objects; there are objects that move that may mean that people do not move; there are objects and people that move together; there are objects can be reminders of past movement; and there are objects that possess value that people travel often great distances to see for themselves (…) As they intermittently move they may resist or afford movement of other entities with which they are tightly or loosely coupled" (Urry, 2007: 50).

Based on Urry's consideration of the diverse ways in which objects can be involved in mobilities, in this chapter I will focus on: objects enabling or hindering young children's bodily mobilities; safety artefacts in children's physical travel; joint mobility artefacts; objects as mobility companions; the movement of objects of value or towards valuable objects; and objects as traces of past movement as they emerged in Wishwell. In doing so, I will understand objects as:

"something that people (or, in computer science, other objects and programs) act toward and with. Its materiality derives from action, not from a sense of prefabricated stuff or 'thing'-ness. So, a theory may be a powerful object" (Star, 2010: 603).

The notion of 'affordances' - as developed by Ingold (Ingold, 2000) and Urry (2007) - will be key in understanding objects' agentic potential:

"(…) different surfaces and different objects, relative to the particular human organism and its technologies, provide affordances. These are objective and subjective, both part of the environment and of the organism. Affordances steam from their reciprocity through people's kinaesthetic movement within their particular world. Affordances constrain behaviour along certain possibilities (…) Given certain past and present social relations then particular 'objects' in the environment affords possibilities and resistances, given that humans are sensuous, corporeal, technologically extended and mobile beings" (Urry, 2007: 50-1).

The affordances of objects in different aspects of children's mobilities will be explored in the next five sections: first, *Swimming like a shark: 'SwimFin' and the agency of children-artefacts'* will discuss objects

as enabling and/or hindering young children's bodily movements in diverse contexts; in '*Assembling the pushchair: mobile technologies in children-adults corporeal travel*', mobile technologies in children's physical mobilities will be explored, focusing on prams, carriers and other artefacts as mediators of children-adults relationships on the move, whilst acting as objects that move other people; in '*Bracelets and baby hair: sacred objects, sacred movements*', as a continuation of part 1.3 in chapter 9, I will focus on the movement of people towards sacred objects and the movement of sacred objects extending children's action spaces; in the fourth section, '*Leaflets and magazines: between places and people*' certain kinds of objects will be seen as mediators in children's mobilities, connecting them to people, places and objects through their physical mobilities; finally, in '*Butterflies and bracelets: where have you been?*' objects will be presented as traces of past movement, discussing its methodological potential.

1. Swimming like a shark: the agency of children-artefacts

"Because we grow so slowly, we have completely forgotten – even though we see our own children doing it – how we used, without any fuss, to move around stools, boxes or upturned buckets just to be able to reach the light-switch, the door latch, shelves, cupboards or window sills" (Ward, 1979: 22).

In Chapter 9 some artefacts emerged as part of young children's mobile practices, such as the children's reins, car seats and doors. These constituted safety matter that was key in the regulation of children's corporeal mobility. However, there were other artefacts involved in children's mobility that did not necessarily constitute 'safety matter' or, in addition to their safety features, afforded particular mobile interactions between children and adults and/or access to otherwise non-accessible places for children - as suggested by Ward (1979) in the quote above. These artefacts will be the focus of this section, discussing in relation to them the notion of relational agency (Ansell, 2009; Bennett, 2005, 2010; Latour, 2005; Prout, 2005a; Turmel, 2008) in young children's corporeal mobility (Kullman, 2010; Kullman & Palludan, 2011; Nansen et al., 2014). This discussion will follow Mikkelsen and Christensen's (2009) notion of interdependence; Nansen et al.'s (2014) concepts of collaboration and compositions; and Kullman (2010) and Kullman and Palludan's (2011) use of agency in relation to children's mobility. I will refer here to how these ideas can be further developed when discussed in relation to young children's corporeal mobility *within* place or in unusual contexts such as water. I will illustrate this through three vignettes: *Lillian and the stand*; *By whom the bell tolls?*; and *SwimFin: swimming like a shark*.

1.1. Lillian and the stand

On the first day I went to Lillian and Jasmine's home, while interviewing their mum Gabrielle, Lillian was moving around the house, coming and going from the room where we were talking to other places within the house, carrying with her different things:

> "While Gabrielle was still breastfeeding Jasmine, Lillian said something about 'the stand'. Gabrielle explained to me that she wanted her stand, which was probably in the kitchen. I asked Lillian if she wanted me to help her searching for it, she said yes (…) it was in the entrance a room, a dark green plastic stool. (…) carried it all the way to the room where her mum was, and put it next to a cupboard. Lillian climbed the stool and stretched one of her arms while standing on her tiptoes: she wanted to reach the highest cabinet, which had a white ribbon tying the handlebars together. She realised that she couldn't open the cabinet's doors and asked me for help, calling me and pointing to the cupboard. Gabrielle said to her: "lots of things you didn't use to be able to do before!", and explained to me that there were glasses in there, and with the stool she could reach them so she had closed it with the ribbon. I said to Lillian, who was expecting me to help, 'I'm sorry, I can't help'. She repeated after me: 'I can't help, I can't help'" (Fieldnotes, Gabrielle, Lillian and Jasmine at home, October 2013).

Gabrielle commented about this:

"that's got glasses in so... we didn't show it to her, she just started carrying it (the stand) around when she needs it (...) actually we bought it for me so that I could reach some cupboards, she has one upstairs for the sink, but now she uses that for the sink but also for other purposes (laughs)" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

The stand had created a new way for Lillian to relate to the space of her house, extending her mobile and spatial range upwards. At the same time, this entailed some problems in Gabrielle's perspective, who had taken measures as the white ribbon for preventing Lillian opening the places she was not suppose to access to.

1.2 By whom the bell tolls?

Among the many things available to children in the children's centre were some musical instruments such as rattles, marimba and bells. They were never purposefully used by staff in any guided activity. Instead, a child would become temporarily interested in one of them and as a result many other children would become interested and have a go playing the instrument. The wooden marimba that appeared one day made a low and subtle sound when hit by (usually improvised) sticks in the hands of a child, thus people around would praise them and encourage children to play it. The marimba was a big and heavy artefact that remained still in its position on the floor while children took turns (or struggle between them) at making:

"a very nice sound that didn't make anyone complain or attempt stopping the children. I saw some of them playing it in pairs, trios or on their own; then trying the sound when hitting other things with the sticks, such as a chair or the floor. Their faces after every sound showed surprise and pleasure" (Fieldnotes, Namaste, May 2013).

Other instruments were not celebrated and encouraged in the same manner. That was the case with a set of colourful small bells. They were made out of metal and had a handle that made it portable. Each of them had a distinct colour and tone:

"A girl is making the bells sound now. A very little child comes in the toddlers' room walking with strong steps, he goes straight to take a bell left in the room, then makes it sound, continues walking and shaking it looking at his mum. Bells are now distributed all over the place (...) Karu takes a dinosaur and a bell that was left by one of the other children, and off he goes to babies' zone where his mum and sister are. His friend goes with him, after taking a bell too. They shake bells over their mums (...) Bells keep sounding all over the centre (...) I can hear them *all* the time, very loud sometimes. A boy shouts 'stop it!', some mothers try to make them stop too. They

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boys are in the back of the room now, one of them stops for making an Easter basket. Just a short try, then he goes back to play the bells with a third boy" (Fieldnotes, Namaste, March 2013).

The set of bells being moved by the corporeal movement of children around the centre, between the toddler's room and baby zone, is a movement that temporarily unified the space of WCC, filling it with the sound of children moving with bells on their hands. This was a sound that was neither the bells' sound nor the children', but rather a sound only accomplished through their related agencies, given by the materiality of the bells and children's capacity to shake their hands and walk.

1.3 SwimFin: swimming like a shark

"(…) the first truly new development in the teaching of swimming for decades – tried and tested to assist anyone in learning to swim. Unlike arm-bands, noodles or other devices, SwimFin works in harmony with the body, helping to develop a better and more natural swimming position" (SwimFin, 2014).

I was invited to go with Tabby, Mark and Robert to the swimming pool in a sports centre where they had a family membership. Although the two children were not able to swim by themselves, I observed how they were able to move in the water and around the pool without needing their dad's physical support. They had, however, the physical aid of a particular kind of floater:

"Robert was carrying a pair of shark-like fins and he adjusted one to Mark's chest with two straps attached to it. I helped Tabby with hers. I had never seen a 'SwimFin' before. According to Robert, an Olympic swimmer designed them as children's floaters. (Then, inside the small pool) Mark could go on his own – well, not quite, with the aid of the SwimFin – from one side of the pool to the other, moving his arms and legs, probably touching the bottom of the pool from time to time. The fin was on his back, so it did not interfere with the movement of his arms or legs. Tabby was more attached to Robert for moving and she cried a couple of times (…) after a while she went out of the water (…) then she stood in the edge of the pool and jumped into the water towards her dad with no previous warning (…) (Later, in the big pool) Robert advanced pulling Tabby from her hands or she would hang from his neck. Mark advanced with the aid of the fin. He'd go out, walk/run to the other side of the pool and go into the water again (…) I thought about the role of the fin, making an important difference to how Robert, Tabby and Mark were there and related to each other" (Fieldnotes, Tabby, Mark and Robert, Swimming pool, April 2014).

If the SwimFin was not used by Tabby and Mark, if they had just come to the pool with their dad and swimming suits, the interaction and dynamic while being there would have been quite different: Tabby

would not have felt confident for jumping several times into the water, and Mark would not have been able to go from one side of the pool to the other while his dad stayed with Tabby in one corner.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Nansen at al. (2014) see children's mobility as "enabled and configured through a diversity of relations and materials" or, what they call 'compositions' (Nansen et al., 2014). Also within an understanding of mobility as relational, Kullman and Palludan (2011) argue that rather than becoming independent:

> "(…) our capacities to move are enabled through attachments to surrounding people, spaces and technologies rather than through becoming independent from such attachments" (Kullman & Palludan, 2011: 354).
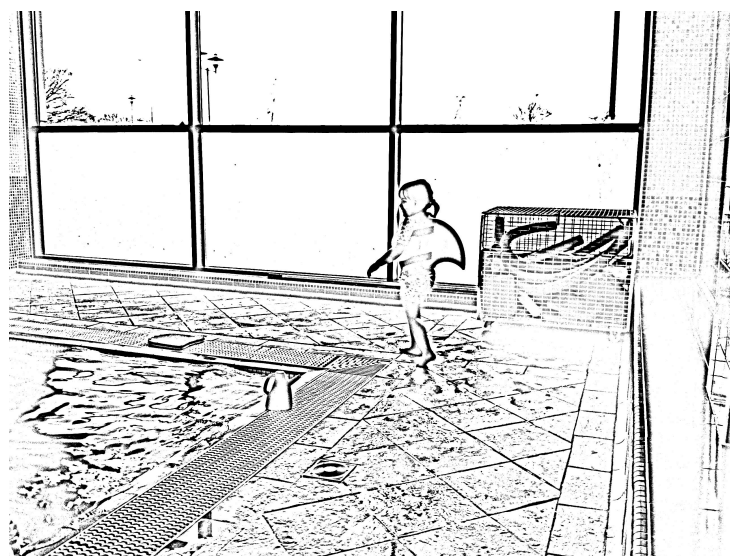
These attachments or compositions, however, shift along our life cycle not necessarily in a linear and progressive way but through transitions (Kullman, 2010) and following the organic rhythms of the body and its growth, varying by season, day and night (Kullman and Palludan, 2011). From this perspective we can see, for example, how enrolling (Latour, 1993) the stand into her indoor mobile practices allowed Lillian to partially overcome the constraints that her size meant in her relation with the domestic space. The stand formed part of a temporary composition between her body and skills, her knowledge and curiosity, the floor and the cupboard. Within this composition, the stand acted as a collaborator expanding Lillian's agency *upwards*, and for a while gave her access to the higher and unknown space of the cabinet. However, that composition encountered another composition formed by Gabrielle, her knowledge of Lillian's interests and skills, the cupboard's handlebars, a white ribbon and Gabrielle's knowledge of how to make a knot – which was useful only under the premise that Lillian *did not* know how to untie it.

In relation to the bells in WCC, it is not possible to disassociate these objects from the children shaking them. For a bell to accomplish its identity, it needs to make certain sound or at least to have the potential for doing so. It was the children who *activated* that potential in the bells. Making that sound, being an agent in its accomplishment was a reason in its own right for children to walk around the children's centre and shake their arms and hands. Therefore, at the same time the bells activated children's movements and made them audible, making everybody notice their routes and their existence. In this mutuality we see that not only the bells were collaborators in children's mobility, but children were collaborators in the bells mobility too. There is something especial in the agency accomplished between young children and objects through sound and noise, something that captivates their emotions and attention: a way of relating to the surrounding world in which the agencies of matter are made explicit for children in the collision between objects and children's physicality: materiality, strength, movement and stillness.
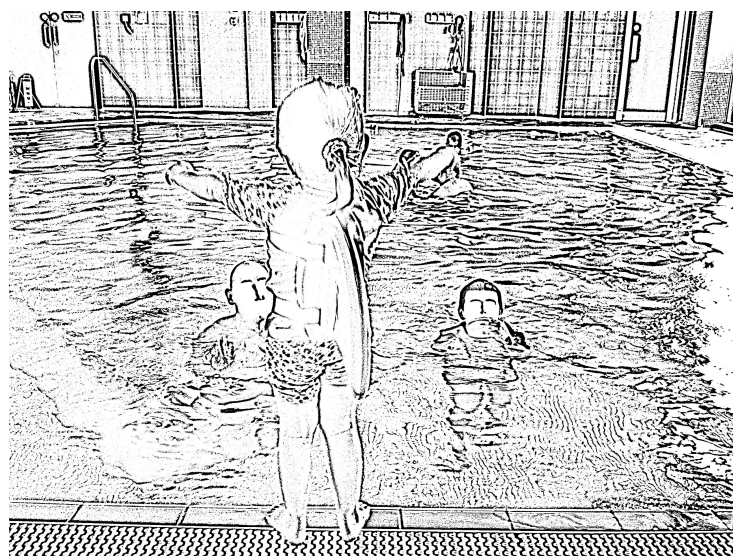
A similar kind of collaboration between children and objects' physicality is found in the composition between Tabby and Mark's bodies, movement and the SwimFin. In this composition, however, there are other elements such as their dad, his body and skills, and the water – all of these colliding in an aquatic environment, in which the agencies of bodies change in relation to the more common human space on the ground. Tabby and Mark's usual way of relating to their father on the ground – walking near to him, but not necessarily holding hands all the time, running away from time to time, for example – shifted by the agency of water. Here, young children who are not able to swim and whose size does not allow them to touch the bottom of the pool with their feet are more physically interdependent with others.

Those others could be adults, as I observed in a 'Little Splashers'[8] lesson accompanying Deva and Heet. Here, artefacts such as a foam squares and some water-toys had an important role in the class dynamic, but the main support for babies were their parents' bodies through holding, hugging and jumping games. But those 'others' could also be artefacts specifically designed for that purpose, like the SwimFin. In this case, the 'enrolment' (Latour, 1993) of this plastic device inspired by shark's anatomy into Tabby and Mark's aquatic *composition*, when attached through the straps to the children's chests and *mobilised* by their movements into the water, created a *hybrid* of human body, physical laws, animal anatomy, human design, water and materials such as plastic and rubber. As a result, Tia and Mark were able to float on the water, and the collective formed by the children and their father in the context of the swimming pool took a different direction compared to the one it would have taken if the SwimFin would not have been part of it: their relationships were mediated by this artefact that to some extent defined the ways they were attached to each other while into the water, *forming*, *defining* and *disarming bonds* (Latour, 1993; Turmel, 2008).

2. Assembling the pushchair: mobile technologies in children-adults corporeal travel[9]
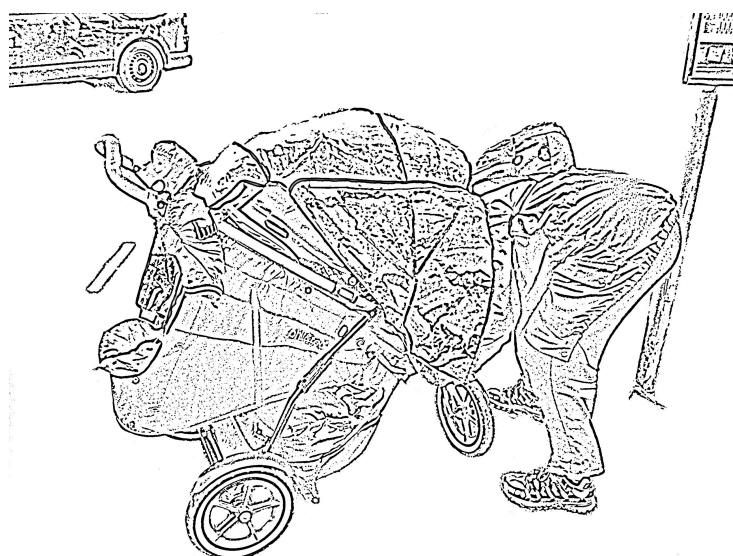
"Lillian chose to walk for a bit. She had strenuously attempted to crawl out of the pushchair for a while. Her mum Gabrielle had just stopped to offer her a supporting hand to get onto her feet. Now standing next to us, Gabrielle told Lillian to hold my hand, encouragingly asking me: 'Can

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[8] 'Little Splashers' is a private swimming class for babies and young children in the UK. It offers classes in different towns and cities across the country: "Our program is specially designed to teach your baby to swim by introducing correct swim practice's at an early age creating happy foundations in the water. Lessons are a partnership with you, during each course we will teach you our 'swim parenting' skills and techniques, which you will find interactive and fun and enable you to tune into your little ones progression. Through our 3 stage program your baby will become a Little Swimmer" (http://www.littlesplashers.co.uk/content/our-programme).

[9] Part of this section has been discussed in Cortés-Morales and Christensen (2014).

you hold her hand?' I did. The sidewalk was quite narrow, so Gabrielle was walking in front with the pushchair where Jasmine was sleeping inside her cocoon, attached on the bottom of the pushchair (…) Our walk was very slow and often interrupted, as Lillian stopped at flowers she spotted at the side of the road: 'Look at that one!' she would say to me pointing to a flower. I replied dutifully: 'Oh, yes, tulips!' or 'oh, orange flowers' and 'purple flowers', beginning to feel real engagement in Lillian's company and the flowers we encountered. I asked: 'Which one do you like the most, Lillian?' and so on. Every so often I observed Gabrielle made a halt to see whether we were catching up with her, and I said 'ok, let's go Lillian' as I was aware we were slowing down the walk home (…) After a while Gabrielle asked Lillian if she wanted to go on the buggy again and Lillian agreed. She climbed onto her seat (…) we kept walking, but for the remainder of the walk I noticed how I was now chatting with Gabrielle, whom I had direct eye contact with, and none of us spoke to Lillian, who sat with her back to us looking ahead on the pavement" (Fieldnotes, walking from St. Mary's church playgroup to Lillian's house, May 2014).

Noticing the difference that the pushchair made to my interaction with Lillian and her mother – from talking with Lillian about the things we saw on the way while walking together, to talk exclusively with her mother when she was on the buggy - made me realise that the same thing had happened many times when walking somewhere with other children and their parents: while moving, the interaction was concentrated between the adults, at a different level of altitude and behind the buggies. Many times the conversation was *about* children, but they were not participating of the interaction. They were rather eating, singing, bubbling, swinging their legs and looking at the things in front of them, pointing them perhaps, sometimes complaining, uncomfortable with the safety belt or hidden under a rain cover. Or they were, many times, sleeping.

In an exploratory study Zeedyk (2008) compared the impact of away-facing (when the baby or child is facing away from the person pushing the buggy) and toward-facing (when the baby or child is facing the person who is pushing the buggy) buggy design on adult-child interaction (in terms of speaking) and child stress levels (with sleeping and heart rate as indicators). The observational part of the study showed that:

"(…) the majority of buggies observed were away-facing. Away-facing buggies were found to be associated with a reduction in speaking for both parents and infants; for infants, the reduction rate was one-third and for parents, the rate of speech halved. Interestingly, infants in toward-facing buggies were twice as likely to be sleeping as infants in away-facing buggies, an unexpected finding that has tentatively been interpreted as an indicator of stress levels" (Zeedyk, 2009: 3).

A second and experimental phase of the study confirmed these observations and showed that:

"mothers spoke more when travelling with their infants in toward-facing buggies; when they were in away-facing buggies, maternal speech dropped by half. They also showed that mothers and infants were both more likely to laugh in the toward-facing orientation, and that mothers were aware of and surprised by this overall change in communicative interactions with their babies. Finally, the results yielded further tentative evidence for the possibility that buggy orientation could influence child stress: infant heart rates fell slightly when moved into a toward-facing orientation, and they were also more likely to fall asleep in this orientation (Zeedyk, 2009: 3).

Zeedyk's findings support the idea that artefacts of mobility can have a key role in defining the kind of interactions that children experience on the move, suggesting that the change in my interaction with Lillian was not only circumstantial. Instead, Although Zeedyk refers specifically to buggy designs in terms of orientation, her observations could be extrapolated to other technologies of adult-child physical mobility: baby slings, diverse forms of front and back baby carriers, bicycle front and rear seats, car seats facing forward or backwards (that, as discussed before, is not only a matter of design and preference, but it is related to traffic and safety regulations), children's reins or, as in the previous vignette, holding hands while walking or walking close to each other. The argument made by Zeedyk also opens a potential space of dialogue for studies on children's everyday mobilities (or mobilities in children's everyday lives) and child developmental studies.

Zeedyk's observations focused exclusively on buggies. As I observed them in Wishwell, however, child and adult joint mobility practices often combined diverse forms and artefacts of mobility. These compositions varied in time and space according to manifold aspects, among which I identified children's size and weigh in relation to adults size and relative strength; children's preferences and resistances; distance to be travelled; whether it was a single-destiny trip or a multi destiny-purpose travel; weather conditions; seasons; parents' skills, knowledge, preferences and parenting cultures. In what follows, I will share excerpts from interviews and fieldnotes as well as some images in which some of these diverse compositions emerge.

At the same time that Lillian was walking next to me and subsequently riding the pushchair, her little sister Jasmine was lying down in her cocoon, in the bottom of the pushchair. The cocoon was a detachable part of the pushchair, but also an artefact in itself, at least in the way that Gabrielle used it. It had the shape of a baby moses basket, but it was made out of a contemporary bright green fabric, matching with the rest of the pushchair. It had a zip up cover so that, once the baby was inside, only the face was uncovered, resembling the shape and function of a caterpillar's cocoon. The cocoon could be fitted at the bottom of the pushchair or carried from the handlebars.

The first time I saw Gabrielle at WCC I did not see Jasmine, who was about one month old, until Gabrielle took the green cocoon that was on the floor and moved it closer to her: there was a baby sleeping inside! In WCC Gabrielle would take the cocoon from the handle, carrying Jasmine inside, and put the cocoon on the floor near to where she was, moving it with her when changing place, following Lillian's activities:

> "(…) it's an interesting artefact not only in itself but also because of the attitude that it seems to create or support in Gabrielle, very relaxed about the baby. She's not over the moises all the time, she goes and has a look from time to time, but for instance she went outside to bring a bag from the pushchair while the baby was in the toddlers' room on its own" (Fieldnotes, Little Explorers, October 2013).

Gabrielle's 'relaxed' attitude, however, was not exclusively the result of the cocoon, but the consequence of a series of elements acting together, or not. The cocoon was in that moment an appropriate artefact for carrying Jasmine because she was then a baby that needed a lot of sleep. She did not attempt to crawl out of it, and her weight made it easy for Gabrielle to carry it around. The appropriateness of the artefact depended as well on aspects of the place in relation to which it mediated Jasmine and Gabrielle's interactions:

> "Cocoon they call it. I started using it in the toddler groups. That's part of the pram really but… I don't have a sling to put Jasmine in, so I prefer her to be flat actually and not to have to carry her all the time. And it's OK in toddler groups that are not so busy, but once there are some bigger toddlers around… is not easy to put her somewhere (…) I came across that problem last week (…) because St. Mary's toddler group is closed I was looking on Tuesdays for different options, so we went to (another) church in the town centre (in Riverton) to a toddler group (…) but I felt there were too many children for the size of the room, and it was difficult to manage with two

children, especially with a baby, 'cause you couldn't go in the baby room 'cause I had to be with Lillian (…) it wasn't catering for people with two really, unless you came with a sling, so I had to have her safely on me, but I thought in the end I don't want to go somewhere (…) if I have to use a sling, I want to go somewhere… more relaxed" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

Rather than changing mobility forms or artefacts according to the places they would visit – for instance swapping the cocoon for a sling if they went to that playgroup - the cocoon defined which places were appropriate for them to be in or not, as Gabrielle explained. In other circumstances, however, they would adapt their forms of mobility according to the available elements and the places they were going to. The pushchair was, in this sense, a constant agent in Jasmine, Lillian and Gabrielle's mobility: it was flexible, so that it could be folded and unfolded and attached and detached in relation to other technologies of mobility, such as the cocoon in the previous example, or the car and bus as in the following accounts:

"Wednesday (we usually go to playgroup in) Springton, that's the group we go to, usually I got the car, but we didn't have it this week (because Tom needed it for work) so we went by bus, it's 2 buses, but I like it, I like the group of people and mums, so it's partly for her (Lillian), but also for me too (…) She really likes the bus actually (…) the pram is quite big and a bit heavy, so the bus doesn't stop in a convenient place, but they do have a ramp, and I just found out you can ask them to put it down" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).
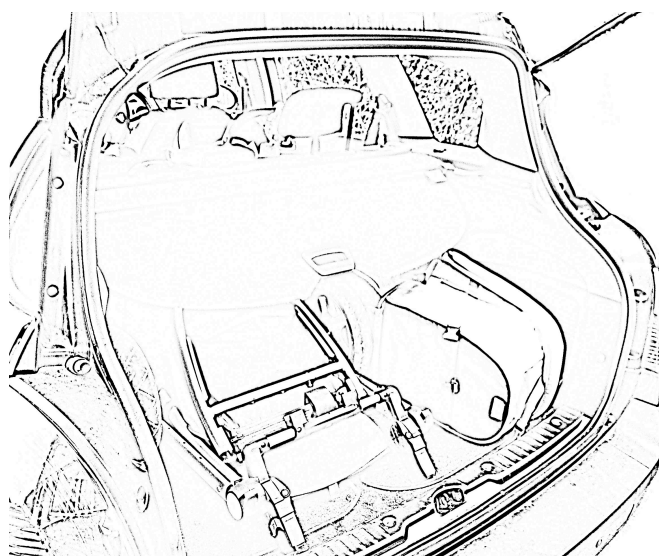
In this extract we see how the pushchair was defined in relation to Gabrielle's physicality (the pram being heavy); the bus design (the pram fitting in, and the bus having a ramp) and to what Gabrielle knows about the bus' affordances (you can ask them to put the ramp down, which was a recent discovery that changed their experience of travelling by bus with a pram). The bus design was a key aspect of the experience of moving with or on a pushchair. For example, on the trip to Springton referred by Gabrielle in the previous quote, she was asked by one of the bus drivers to fold the pushchair as the two pram spaces were already

being used. Gabrielle was not able to do this, as Jasmine was sleeping in the cocoon. Luckily, one of the other people with a pram folded it, making space for Gabrielle, Jasmine and Lillian. Later on during the same trip, a woman with a baby on a pram wanted to come on the bus but there was no space for them. Putting together these diverse compositions of mobilities relied to a great extent on Gabrielle's knowledge, skills and physical strength. This was explicit on the occasions when she could not put together certain elements:

> "(…) sometimes I go, if there's nice weather, to (a park in Riverton) with them (…) but I've only done that the first time last week with both of them, because I haven't figured out how to collapse the pram and put it in the car (laughs), so I've only been using it on the bus (…) I couldn't work it, I had a lesson from Tom, it just felt too stiff but I wasn't doing it right" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

Or, in a different context (and leaving the pram aside):

> "(..) by July I got too pregnant to lift her (Lillian) into the (supermarket) trolley very easily, so I started doing online shopping, and now with two of them it's easier to do the grocery shop online, but I was thinking maybe later today or tomorrow I might go out with both of them, I haven't gone with both of them on a trolley, but I might go and get a couple of things (…) She (Lillian) keeps her interest for longer if she sits in the big bit of the trolley" (Interview with Gabrielle, October 2013).

Gabrielle's physical changes during pregnancy in conjunction with Lillian's growth and the supermarket trolley design resulted on Gabrielle deciding not to go to the supermarket with Lillian (and later on with Jasmine and Lillian) anymore. Instead, she started doing online shopping, therefore requesting the products to be moved towards her. But that 'anymore' was temporary, so that at the moment of the interview she could already see a change coming in which she would start doing supermarket shopping again, this time with the two girls on the trolley. Change was constant in young children and their families' mobilities in Wishwell, so that the places visited as well as the forms of getting there were constantly experimented and, even if they turned out to be good or enjoyed, they would have to change again soon according to children's growth, mobile skills, sleep routines, weather and so on.

Illustrating this constant change, Louise told me about the different carrier devices that they tested with Suzanne while she was growing. They started with a baby sling: "like a big scarf, the initial one I got, I had a romantic idea of me walking around with this like scarf tied around me, but just wasn't practical at all (laughs)" (Interview with Louise, July 2013). They got then a small baby carrier that did not work for them,

and then another, 'Baby Bjorn' one with which she was very happy and Suzanne seemed to feel very comfortable in it:

> "I had a like a it's called a closer baby carrier, which is just for when they're really really tiny and facing you… I had one of those but… she didn't like it, because I think she felt too squashed, especially when she got a little bit older, I think she felt too squashed, and you know, the Baby Bjorn thing, the make named Baby Bjorn, it's just fantastic, it was the best thing (…) B-J-O-R-N, like I'm presuming it's like Nordic, and it's when they're under, it's up to you, but they recommend that they can obviously carry the head, you know, the head is quite sturdy, before you face the backwards, but Suzanne was very, 'cause she stopped wanting to go to sleep in the carrier, 'cause I used to take her out with the dog and she'd just go to sleep, it was great, being able to walk places with that… I used it all the time, I never used the pram, for the first six months, that's why I'm not getting a double buggy for this one (Leonard), because I think it would be a waste, the best place to have your baby, at least for the first sort of 4, maybe 5 months, is there! (…) you can get it different makes, but Baby Bjorn was because it had like back support on it, but it wasn't huge, it was very comfortable to wear and I saw some baby carriers would be like you know, hanging down, or they'd be like a sling almost, not good for your back, and I think this one was just fantastic, and she loved, as soon as she was facing outwards, she just loved it and it became not somewhere that I would put her so that she would have a nap and I would take the dog out, but when she got older, it was, you know, she'd be looking around" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

In our first interview Louise told me how fascinated she, her husband and Suzanne were with a recently acquired 'papoose', a back carrier that had replaced (for a while at least) the pram and the Baby Bjorn once it was too small for Suzanne:

> "Samuel might take her out in the afternoon to give me a break (…) depending on how the weather's like he might take her to (one local) park or (other local park) (…) and because we've got a *papoose* now so where she can sit in the back… so, that's become one of our new favourites, (the papoose is) like a backpack that she sits in, because I always used to have her on a Baby Bjorn, like a front carrier (…) facing out, but then she just got too big for that, and she was often on the pram, but we kept saying we must get a back carrier, because of course we have the dog as well, so we do walk, like in woods where you can't take a pram necessarily, so we got that about 4 months ago, when the weather was starting to get nice spring time, and we use it all the time so Samuel might take Suzanne on that (…) they'd take the car and then they'd walk around the golf course or in the woods" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

Two months later, however, the papoose was obsolete in their mobility composition:

> "we used to take the dog there (to some woods outside Wishwell) quite a lot and when Suzanne
> was in the Baby Bjorn we'd take her there all the time (…) now she's too big for the back carrier
> (…) Suzanne doesn't want to be in the back carrier, she doesn't want to be in the pram, but she
> won't walk for a long time, which is fair enough, I completely get that we're not gonna be able to
> do like a 5 mile hike with her, but we have to be constantly like 'come on, we're nearly at the car,
> nearly at the car'… the back carrier, that didn't last very long, she's just too heavy for it now, I
> though that would last a bit longer (…) the carrier would carry her, it has enough capacity for her,
> but Samuel just gets back pain with her on it, especially, sometimes she wants to get down, she
> wants to get back up again… so, now have to do very short walks with her" (Interview with
> Louise, September 2013).

Mobility artefacts changed to a great extent as a result of children's growth. This was also the case of
Deva, who for the first months of his life saw the world from a baby carrier, very close to his mother, when
going to a walking-distance place. Although they had a second hand pram given to them by Heet's aunt,
she said to me that she did not like taking Deva on the pram, so it was stored in the attic. Some time later,
however, the situation shifted: Deva had become too heavy for the carrier, so they started using the pram.
Heet said this would not last long, as Deva was starting nursery and then he would only move by car.

The change between mobility artefacts, however, was not necessarily linear and progressive. For example, although Heet did not plan to use the buggy anymore once Deva started nursery, later on he got ill many times and went back to moving on the pram for going to town. In Suzanne's experiences with manifold forms of carriers, pram and the idea of a rein going around her parents' heads, it was very clear that rather than a simple step from one form to another there was a constant experimentation with different forms that varied in efficacy according to moods, seasons, bodily growth and capacity. In our second interview Louise was still reticent to use a rein with Suzanne. What had made her thought about it initially – Suzanne running out of the house towards the road – was not a problem anymore. However, there were new situations that brought the idea back now and then:

"she doesn't do that anymore (running out towards the road), whereas before she would turn back with the cheeky look and start running towards the road, now she doesn't… if the door was open, she would think she's going to the car and she would go to whichever car, if Samuel is taking her out, he would say 'we're going daddy's car' or whatever (…). (However,) we walked to the park in (a gated community in Wishwell) on Sunday, and she didn't want to be in her pushchair, at one point, and she didn't want to walk, she wanted like Samuel to carry her, and he was like 'no, you either go on the pushchair or you walk', and when we tried to put her on the pushchair, as we got to the road, she didn't want to go on the pushchair, so she was crying as we were putting her in the pushchair, and we did lots of like distraction techniques with the dog and stuff, you know, 'we're gonna follow the dog, gonna follow the dog!', and luckily she calmed down quite quickly, but I was thinking, if she wanted to carry on walking we'd have to have some kind of reins or whatever, because is such a busy road, and there's like a junction and everything, so there's where I can see the reins being a good idea, but I don't think she'd be happy with them anyway, I think she'd be just as unhappy with us controlling her like that, as she would be having to go into the pram, so I just think, we're better off just putting her in the pram or making sure when she's walking it's safe, so that's what we try to do (…) she was allowed out of the pram where it was safe for her to walk and she couldn't really go anywhere…" (Interview with Louise, September 2013).

Children and parents experienced changes in their mobility practices not only along their life cycles, but also as a continuous feature of their routines. In this sense, change was the result of work schedules, weather, energy and mood, as Jennifer (Finley and Jacob's mother) put it:

"Some days we walk (to nursery), it depends, if Peter is on a shift it means he can take us to work, so that's basically a day shift, 3 out of 5 weeks, Peter drops us off at school and then he goes to work. If he's on one of his other shifts, it means we'll either catch the bus or I'll take them down on the pushchair, or if it's nice Finley would ride his bike and Jacob I would push him on his bike (…)

F93 we'd take if we were going on the bus, or we'd just get straight Froilan Road and then cut across the field, if we were walking, on the bikes or the pushchairs. And then coming home, 'cause Peter is always at work, or he doesn't pick them up, so we usually get the bus back unless we are going into town, some days we are going into town straight from the nursery (…) Some days of course we'd walk home, if it's nice, we'd walk home, either with or without the pushchair, depending on if we're taking it down with us. Jacob isn't great at walking distances so the only way to do that is to make him walk distances, if you know what I mean, to build his stamina up. But if it's nice, and if we haven't got the pushchair or the bikes with us then we'll come across Acre Close Park to walk home and then they can play in the park for a bit and then we walk home" (Interview with Jennifer, May 2013).

Each of these compositions – going by car with Peter, taking the bus with or without pram, walking with pram or bicycles and so on – implied diverse technologies and also diverse interactions between the people involved. These modes of travel and technologies sometimes defined people as more or less able, for instance Jacob was considered as 'not great at walking distances' and, while his brother rode his bicycle, Jacob was pushed by his mother.

The papoose: travel and transformation of joint-mobility artefacts

There is a thread emerging here that although I did not follow within the extent of this research, it is important to highlight. This line is the travel and transformation of joint-mobility artefacts, its names, design and functionalities, across places and cultures. This refers, on the one hand, to the movement that the actual devices found in Wishwell had done from the places where they were manufactured to Riverton or Wishwell's shops and homes. On the other hand, and this is the aspect I want to highlight here, their design, function, materiality and use had moved between cultures, countries and times, being copied, adapted, re-created, fell in disuse and came back to fashion again – perhaps in a new material, form, place and functionality. An example of this is the baby carrier. This device had a long and vast history around the world before being used by babies and parents in Wishwell. Louise, for example, used the term 'papoose' for naming the back carrier. When I asked about the name – which I did not know – she reflected:

"I was gonna say it's a papoose, but is not, a papoose, I don't know why I'm calling it that, I just had that name in my head… I think it's because my parents call it a papoose, but it's just a thing that you have on your back, it's a back carrier" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

The term 'papoose' denotes today (in the US and UK) "a type of bag used to carry a child on one's back". It comes from the Algonquian 'papoos', which means 'child' or child carrier (Oxford-Dictionary, 2012),

specifically a cradleboard, which is a form of baby back carrier traditional in Native American cultures (Kavasch & Baar, 1999). The name's travel reflected particular cultural connections (between Native American cultures, English migrants and England). Whilst the form of what is called a papoose now has changed and diversified, the basic function and position remains. It would constitute a study on its own right to follow the mobilities of the papoose carrier, from its original form and use in Native American cultures all the way to Wishwell. Although I have not done so, imagining this mobility (and briefly studying it) makes visible the manifold contexts in which these artefacts emerge, and how the uses and interactions they afford have also changed across time and space. For example, while in Wishwell baby carriers were usually employed for travelling between places – from home to the children's centre and so on – or going on leisure walks, sometimes in combination with other mobility technologies such as the car, bus or pram, people in other cultures used baby carriers on a more constant basis, so that babies can be carried while adults – or older children – carry out their work - domestic tasks, agricultural activities, commercial jobs and so on (see for example Gottlieb, 2004), all of which required adults to be mobile.

Baby carriers constituted in the UK a specialised industry that had developed according to new materials and constantly updated design. This development was not exempt from problems related, for instance, to safety and quality matters, as demonstrated by the manifold news about accidents caused by artefacts' design failure or parental negligence, legal plaints, compensations and recall of products involving pushchairs and baby carriers (see for example: "Baby Bjorn carrier recall," 1999; "Child died in pushchair," 1963; PR-Newswire, 2010). At the same time, this specialised industry currently in economic growth ("Global baby car seat, baby stroller and pram market analysis and forecasts 2019," 2014) coexisted with more traditional designs and uses such as the basic slings (as in Louise's 'romantic' idea) brought from other countries or crafted in the UK in small production scale. These mobile artefacts were also part of processes of design and patenting ("Baby Bjorn intros Baby Carrier Miracle," 2011; "A baby carrier," 1892; "The baby carrier," 1924) that would be interesting to follow up as one of the 'unobserved places' (Ansell, 2009) of childhood, in terms of design and innovation from an anthropological point of view (Suchman, 2011), dialoguing with the already existent literature on infant mobility artefacts focused on safety matters (see for example: "Assessment of babies for car seat safety before hospital discharge," 2000; Borges-Polli & Polli, 2015; "Car seat safety for preterm babies and babies with breathing problems," 2000; Lopes, De Barros, & Santos, 2008).

3. Teddy monkeys, books and music: everyday travel companions

On the trips I accompanied children and their families, there were some recurrent items accompanying their travels that appeared as important and affective objects for children. This was the case, for example, of a soft toy monkey that Deva usually carried with him, on the car and on the buggy. It was a colourful

fabric monkey that Heet bought in Mamas and Papas, in Riverton. In the car, Deva would hold the monkey close to him during the whole trip. On the buggy, the monkey would sit next to him or be held on his hands. When he started nursery, he wanted to bring it too. The monkey echoed what Winnicott called 'transitional object' (Aitken & Herman, 1997; Kullman, 2010):
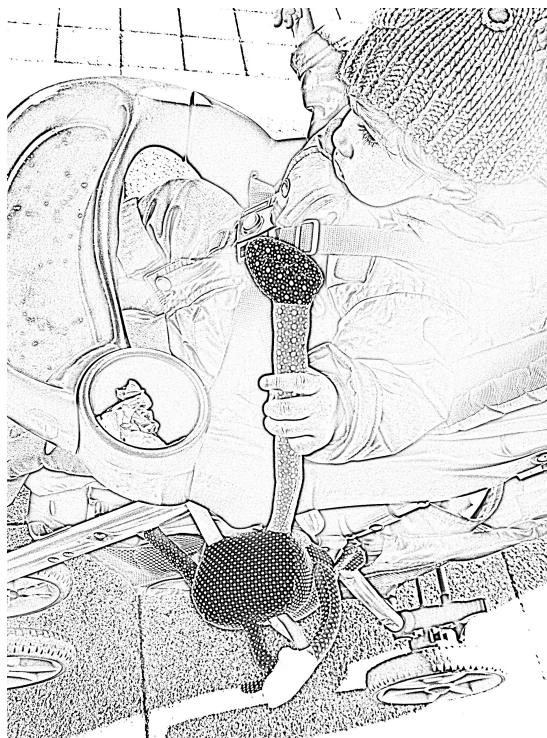
"The transitional object is contradictorily both an inseparable part of the child and 'not-me', part of the environment. Accessible whenever needed, the object instils a sense of trust and control in children and accompanies them in the exploration of the world" (Kullman, 2010: 833).

But for this object to be '"accessible whenever needed", it required the collaborative action of Heet, in this case, for she needed to be aware of the monkey as an important item that she could not miss among the list of things she needed to carry every time they went out. This was so much so, that when Deva started carrying the monkey with him to nursery Heet decided to buy a new monkey, exactly the same brand, design and colours than the other one. She ordered it online and collected it in store one day when I was accompanying them. Deva was happy to suddenly have a new monkey with him, and held it the rest of the trip in one hand, and a little car in the other. Heet made this purchase foreseeing the possible lost of the monkey and the emotional distress that this would mean for Deva. She also did it for making the travel logistics easier for her: now they could keep one monkey in the house, and one monkey in the car.

A wide range of objects was also observed in children's cars for their entertainment on the move. These varied from favourite books to pencils and old printed Google maps. Although there was diversity in terms

of which objects were necessary on the car, and these varied from day to day sometimes, it was generally perceived by parents and demanded by children as a necessity: travels had to be done in the company of certain items that made the time spent on the car more fun and helped children distracting from the discomforts of being sat and restrained for so long.

This mobile time was, for some parents, a time they had to make the most out of it, encouraging children's development through talking, looking at books, practicing sounds, seeing or thinking. This was the case with another relevant object that accompanied their travels: music. In Deva as well as Lillian's cars there were children's CDs. Deva had some of the 'Baby Einstein' collection[10], whilst Lillian had a couple of CDs that her mother had bought from early Learning Centre in Mothercare. Gabrielle told me she had been inspired by the songs they were singing at Chatter Matters in WCC:

> "Lillian was beginning to count, so I thought it'd be good idea to have some songs (with numbers)" (Fieldnotes, trip to Springton playgroup, March 2014).

The CDs had usually faster versions of classic songs, particularly children's nursery rhymes and lullabies, sung by child-like adult voices, with electronic-digital instrumentation. Gabrielle and Lillian enjoyed listening to these songs on the car and singing them together. At the beginning of one song Gabrielle would comment: "Oh! This one is good! Shall we sing Lillian?" and raise the volume, while Lillian would follow the songs pronouncing some of the words or the endings of some of them. The space of the car and the time spent travelling was experienced then as a potential space for promoting child development through singing songs and practicing words, as well as for sharing music - listening and making. This is a space that only recently and emergently has been focus of attention from this perspective (Huisman-Koops, 2014; Waitt, Harada, & Duffy, 2015).

4. Bracelets and baby hair: sacred objects, sacred movements

Although this was not a widely observed form of movement, the mobility of sacred objects appeared as a special and relevant form of mobility in some of the young children's lives. This resonated with Urry's (2007) observation that: "there are objects (that) can be reminders of past movement" and that "there are objects that possess value that people travel often great distances to see for themselves (Urry, 2007: 50).

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[10] "The Baby Einstein Company is the award-winning creator of videos, DVDs, music CDs, books and toys that introduce babies and toddlers to the world around them through the use of real world objects, music, art, language, science and nature.
The range aims to enrich the play experience between child and parent or caregiver, by creating products that positively encourage and help parents in everyday play with their children" (The Baby Einstein Company, http://www.babyeinstein.com.au/about/01-01_aboutus.shtml).

However, the examples that I will present do not completely fit in any of these categories, highlighting the complexity of different forms of movement and the interrelation between them.

When I first met some Sikh families something that called my attention was the silver or golden bracelet than many of the babies and children wore, as well as their parents and grandparents. The name of this bracelet was 'kara'. According to custom, it is usually given to babies after birth and name giving ritual, 'janam sanskar', when babies are brought in front of Guru Granth Sahib for the first time (Mandair, 2013). Among its possible meanings, the bracelet's circular shape acts as: "a reminder of infinity and so of God. Sometimes Sikhs describe it as a 'handcuff' to God, or explain that the sound of its chinking against their desk as they write is a reminder to use their hands only for good purposes" (Nesbitt, 2005). On the one side, wearing the kara made people's religious identity visible and easily recognisable, as one of the 'five Ks' or visible symbols of Sikhism (Nesbitt, 2005). In that sense, the use of the bracelet tied children and adults alike to their ethnic and cultural community. On the other hand, the kara had a particular role in relation to children, connecting them to their relatives as well as to their religion and community. Among the Sikh children I met, it was common that the kara had been given by their grandparents - usually a golden bracelet, more expensive than the silver ones that some parents preferred for their babies. In some cases, the bracelets had been purchased by grandparents in Indian jewellery shops in the UK. In other cases, the bracelet had been brought from a trip to India, where grandparents had visited sacred places where they bought the kara for their new grandchildren. In this sense, this object had a role in terms of performing and sustaining relationships at a distance (Prout, 2005b).

The kara was an object that had moved with grandparents to their grandchildren; the bracelet became then an object that continuously accompanied children in their bodily movements, becoming part of them and 'other', at the same time, forming an hybrid of humanity, organic and mineral matter, religion, family relationships and affective bounds. At the same time, the bracelet was a trace of past movement: it signalled the recent trips of their grandparents to India or elsewhere, where the bracelets were purchased. It also signalled movements performed in a more distant past, such as the migratory movements of their grandparents in the 50's and afterwards, as a product of which these children were wearing a kara in Wishwell in 2013-14. It also signalled how the Sikh religion and customs had moved together – and probably been transformed on the way - with the people that carried them across wars, continents and cultures (Nesbitt, 2005). The kara around babies' wrists trespassed geographical scales: while babies remained unaware of the significance and history of this de/attachable part of their bodies, the connections to far away places, past histories, movements and people were embodied around their wrists through this 'handcuff' (Nesbitt, 2005).

Still within the realm of sacred movements and objects, another example is illustrative. This time, it was a hi/story from Tabby and Mark's family. When Mark was very young their maternal Hindu-Indian

grandparents, who lived in London, had travelled to India to visit Hinduism's sacred places. Among the things they carried with them:

> "Vama's parents took a bit of Mark's baby hair, which was cut for the first time at the Hindi temple in Riverton, to India. They put it in one of the sacred natural flames where there is a big temple. Some god's parts are supposed to be buried there, and Robert told me that the Muslims and other invaders have not been able to turn these flames off. Taking Mark's hair there was a form of blessing that they did for their grandson" (Fieldnotes, at home with Tabby, Mark and Robert, July 2013).

This account implies the movement of an object, Mark's hair, which was human but detached from the human body. In this way, the piece of hair extended Mark's bodily existence towards a space far beyond his space of perception and direct action, hence extending his 'agency' to be blessed by another object: a sacred eternal flame. The movement of his hair meant that he did not need to move in order to receive this blessing. However, the hair needed to be carried along the corporeal travel of Mark's grandparents to India, which had a mainly religious purpose: they were travelling there in order to be physically close to a valuable object for their faith. In some sort of opposite movement to the one signalled by the kara in Wishwell, Mark's hair came to India to signal the connection between that place and a far away town in Britain and, particularly, its connection to an unseen young child there.

This dimension of the movement of objects tells us about some of the possible ways in which children's heterogeneous lives are made out of "various material objects (including 'nature' and 'technologies') that directly or indirectly move or block the movement of objects, people and information" (Urry, 2007: 50). But as seen in these two examples, the way in which objects act in relation to humans and movement is not straightforward. It rather develops in multiple directions and through manifold means, extending human's agencies through their affordances in unexpected ways. The two stories also demonstrate how objects matter and become, through movement, objects of affect towards which people move or move with.

5. Leaflets and magazines: between places and people

In her study of local mothering cultures in the Sheffield area at the end of the nineties, Sarah Holloway observed, among other things, the key function of local magazines in the creation of mothering social networks, local childcare knowledge and culture, and the spreading of developmental discourses (Holloway, 1998). Although Holloway's emphasis was not on the mobilities that these material resources implied, her account implicitly referred to manifold forms of movement that resemble those I observed in

Wishwell in relation to a particular kind of objects: leaflets and magazines referred to local activities but also to wider ideas of child development and rearing practices.

These objects had travelled from wherever they had been designed and produced to the place where they were exhibited or handed out to people in Wishwell. Their physical travel continued once somebody took one of them and put it into their pocket, bag or hands and took it home, to the car or put it in the bin. If their explicit purpose was accomplished, the information they carried would become knowledge in their readers and holders. Otherwise, the fragility and flexibility of these objects meant they could end up in the bin without having been read or looked at. Their materiality offered alternative affordances such as becoming drawing material for children or a piece of paper where other kind of information such as a phone number or address could be written, transported and kept.

Among the leaflets found in WCC there were some informational ones – such as the ones about car safety, babies' health, child development and so on – whose mission was to communicate certain topics or to transmit an idea related to children and parenting. There were others whose purpose was to inform people about the existence of places, activities or services. Their purpose was also accomplished, to certain degree, once they had been read. However, their potential for mobilising did not end there: if effective, these objects would get to the hands of people who were actually interested on the activities or services advertised by the leaflets. They would generate further movement, but in this case the movement of people. In this sense, the leaflets became mediators between places and people that acted together with other agents such as midwives, health visitors or children's centres. This was the case, for example, of many of the leaflets contained in the folder that mothers-to-be or new mothers received. Heet, for instance, had known about the session for Asian families through this means, as the health visitor included a leaflet in her folder, knowing about her Asian origins. Heet and Louise learnt about the private antenatal classes they took through a leaflet given by the midwives too. These leaflets invited them to a free early pregnancy class, which mobilised them, first, to approach the institutions in question. Later on, the leaflets generated frequent travels to that place, once they decided to sign in the antenatal full course. And even once their babies were born, still as a consequence of the action of the leaflets, they kept meeting with their new acquaintances in the institution or elsewhere.

In a different way than cars and pushchairs, leaflets also contributed in the process of young children and their families getting to certain places. This was also one of the roles of Toddle About magazine, which was at the same time a local and non-local publication. The magazine contained, on the one hand, general advice about parenting and child development. On the other hand, it was produced in different regions of the country, and therefore part of the magazine varied catering for the particular areas in which it operated, advertising local activities, groups and businesses related to toddlers and their parents (Toddle-About, 2009). The magazine was distributed, among other places, in WCC. Some parents were

registered to receive each issue for free in their homes. The publication had a double role. First, in the same way than leaflets, it announced events and activities going on in the area, hence it worked mobilising people to get to these places. It was one of the main sources of knowledge in this regard, mentioned by all the mothers I met when I asked how did they know about the playgroups and other activities they attended. And second, as also observed by Holloway (1998), the magazine had a role in mobilising ideas and discourses about parenting and child development.

Gabrielle told me, for instance, about an approach to babies and toddlers called 'attending' or 'descriptive commentary' that she read about in Toddle About magazine. The approach was presented in the magazine's blog in the following way:

> "What if I was to tell you that there is a simple way of interacting with your baby, toddler and child that strengthens your relationship, builds their self-esteem, encourages creativity and learning, promotes good behaviour and makes it easier to manage more than one child at a time? What if it also enabled you to support your child with areas they are struggling with – sitting still, concentrating, playing with others, managing strong feelings, tidying up, doing the ironing – well, maybe not the ironing! I'm not exaggerating; this simple technique exists and is called **attending** or using **descriptive commentary**" (Andrews, 2014).

Descriptive commentary is generally defined as talking about what the child is doing while the action is being performed: "It conveys in descriptive language what the child is seeing, touching, feeling, hearing, smelling, or tasting" (C. Montgomery, 2009). According to this approach, when putting into words what the child is doing or feeling, the child is given "the appropriate language for her actions and teaches concepts without being intrusive about it" (Montgomery, 2009). In practice, the approach is translated into instructions for parents to interact with babies and toddlers, with the main mission of 'simply': "describing what your child is doing. For example: "*You're putting a green block on top of the blue one*", "*You're pushing the train around the track*", "*It looks like you're wondering what to do next*" (Andrews, 2014). It emphasises that parents should avoid making questions about what the child is doing and the narrative should center on the child as the actor of the scene, therefore sentences should begin with 'you' or the child's name (Andrews, 2014; C. Montgomery, 2009; Oxfordshire-County-Council, undated). Interacting with young children in this manner was supposed to support language development without putting emotional pressure on children (Montgomery, 2009; Oxfordshire County Council, undated). The idea resulted appealing to Gabrielle, who told me that she was willing to apply some of these principles in her own relationship with her daughters. As observed by Holloway (1998), the information gathered by mothers through this kind of sources shapes their understandings of child development. Furthermore, "it can directly shape what mothers want for their children or it can be used as a lens through which they

interpret their children's behaviour" (Holloway, 1998: 39) and, I would add, their own forms of interacting with their children.

6. Butterflies bracelet, little airplanes and maps: where have you been?

The last form in which I want to explore the role of objects in mobilities in young children's everyday lives is as traces of past or current mobilities. Although this form emerged before, for example in relation to sacred objects such as the kara, here I will focus on objects that appeared as more explicit traces of movements performed by the children or people around them. I will argue that this feature of objects has a methodological potential in allowing the researcher to explore unobserved movements. In doing so, I will refer to three brief illustrations: Lillian's butterflies' bracelet; two small British Airways toy airplanes in Tabby and Mark's house; and an old printed map that Lillian used to look at when travelling on her car.

On a car trip with Lillian, Jasmine and Gabrielle I observed that Lillian had a small plastic bracelet with butterflies on it. She fiddled with it during the trip, putting it around her wrist and taking it out. I had previously been with my family to a 'butterflies farm' and I wondered if the bracelet came from the same place. Later on Gabrielle was telling me about their experience of travelling by train to London with Lillian some time ago. Among other places, they had visited the Natural History Museum and, as Gabrielle added: "There was also a tent with butterflies outside. There's where she got that bracelet from" (Fieldnotes, trip to Springton playgroup with Lillian, Jasmine and Gabrielle, March 2014). In this occasion, I did not ask explicitly about the origin of the object. However, our conversation took as there, revealing the potential of focusing conversation around objects of any sort. The bracelet was, in fact, a souvenir of Lillian's visit to the butterflies' tent, the Natural History Museum and London. It was a travel that had implied a train trip – which was not common for Lillian because, as Gabrielle said, although Lillian liked it, "she wouldn't stay still", with all the trouble that that may imply for adults chasing her around. The bracelet had, therefore, the potential to reveal mobilities – destinies and experiences – undertaken by children themselves. In addition to that, the souvenir had become a companion in future mobilities and, perhaps, a 'transitional object' that accompanied Lillian in her movements between more and less familiar places.
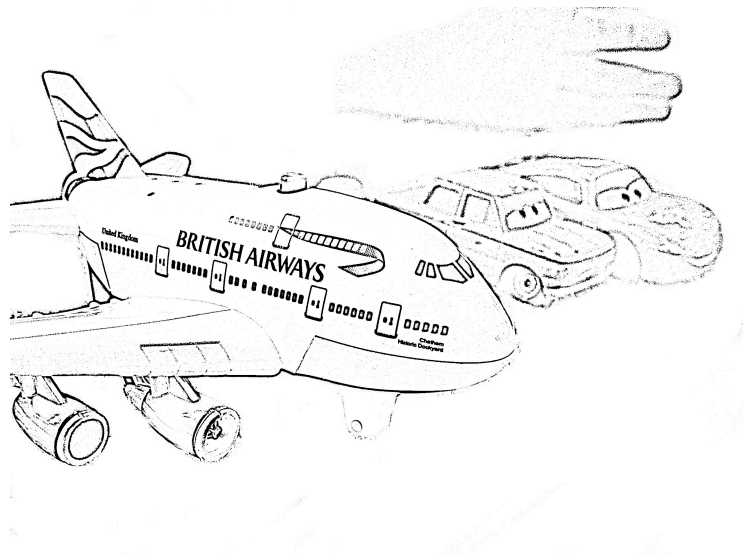
Aware of this potential, I started asking more explicit questions about some of the objects I found in children's houses or accompanying them in their trips. for example, I asked Tabby and Mark about two little airplanes with the British Airways logo that I saw in their living room. I asked whether they had travelled on an airplane when they got them. The answer was that Vama, their mother, had brought them from an airplane travel to Edinburgh. This was only one among many other traces of their mother's travels, such as children's magazines and small toys that she bought on her way home from various locations. These objects were traces of the mobility performed by others. As such, there was also an affective dimension to it, as these objects where affectionately purchased by Vama while being away from her children; for the children, they constituted a hinge between the places that their mother had visited and home at the moment of the reunion; and they were extensions of their mother's affect once she was gone again.

The final example is a printed Google map that Lillian had with her in the car in many of the trips I did with her. As soon as we departed, she would take that map on her hands – a crumpled A4 sheet of paper – and concentrate on it, giving instructions to Gabrielle while she drove. Her mother would engage in the game, asking her in which direction she had to turn in the corner. Lillian would point in one direction and, as it was not the direction that Gabrielle needed to take, she would say "that way? Are you sure? I think it's the other way", while turning in the direction that she already knew she had to go. I asked Gabrielle what map was that? She explained that they had recently been to the town where Tom lived when they met, visiting friends and family. While being there, they had gone to a zoo and that map had the directions from their accommodation to the zoo. Lillian got fond of that map that she kept on the car near to her seat. On the one side, the map revealed a particular travel performed by the whole family. On the other side, it was a trace not only of their destiny but also of a form of travelling: Lillian's dynamic of looking at the map and giving Gabrielle instructions while she drove reflected one of the ways in which the family interacted while on the move when going to unknown places. The map was, at the same time, a companion in

Lillian's car travel, unveiling unexpected affordances for entertainment, learning and family interaction on the move.

Paying attention to these humble objects not only revealed mobilities incurred by the children themselves or their families. It also uncovered the potential of these items as tools for exploring people's mobile practices and experiences beyond the ethnographer's gaze. This addresses the challenge that: "In the field, the ethnographer is limited by the physical fact that she or he can only be in one place at a time" and that "Of particular challenge are momentary and occasional events" (Christensen et al., 2011: 6). Therefore, these objects - in conjunction with other techniques such as interviews, diaries and conversations - helped me getting to destinations, modes of travel, family interactions on the move, and emotional aspects of these movements that normally I would not have been able to intuit or directly observe – and that participants would not necessarily have spontaneously told me about.

In terms of the emotional aspects involved in the movement of these objects, the growing interest on affect and emotion in relation to childhood and children's geographies (Evans, 2010; Harker, 2005; Horton & Kraftl, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; Jensen, Sheller, & Wind, 2015; Jupp, 2013; Kraftl, 2013; Longhurst, 2013) offers interesting perspectives from where to approach the affective dimensions of mobilities and objects or 'more-than-human' agents. These dimensions escape a tidy classification as the one offered by Urry (2007) from the mobilities perspective. Affect generally refers to "the influence of one thing over another" (Castree et al., 2013). More precisely, in human geography it has been understood as "the wide range of registers—beyond sight, image, and word—in which humans interact with, make sense of, and experience the world", which can take the shape of a material thing, a force, a theory, and a mode of expression (Castree et al., 2013).

According to Castree et al. (2013), affect, as a material thing, "is the medium through which the body relates to the materiality of the world in a manner that is outside conscious thought and intentionality"; as a force, it is "a sensation, a kind of invisible presence, something felt, and known to be there, but at the same time intangible and not quite there; an emotive predisposition for, and response to, a particular set of conditions". In these two senses, affect relates to "embodiment and how corporeality is choreographed in the world in largely subconscious ways". In terms of theory, affect embodies a critique towards dominant perspectives in geography that "tend to ignore affect and focus on the conscious, cognitive aspects of human thought and practice". In this sense, affect is associated to non-representational theories and approaches to human embodiment, practice, and performance, focused on "how bodily capacity can affect others or be affected". In terms of human expression, "affect concerns how emotional responses are manifested through an event and how situations unfold in action" (Castree et al., 2013). Work on affect in human geography has tended to emphasise the relational aspects of emotions, conceptualising affect as 'trans-individual' or 'pre-personal' (McCormack, 2003, in Kraftl, 2013: 17). In this sense, emotion is understood as 'subjective content' and therefore defined as 'personal' (Massumi, 2002) and subject to representation and recognition (Harker, 2005). Affect, following a different logic, is understood as 'intensity' that "exceeds representation" (Harker, 2005: 55). As Christopher Harker concludes:

"affect can be thought of as flowing between bodies and is thus inter-subjective, or better still asubjective, since it 'escapes' actually existing structure things" (Harker, 2005: 56).

Peter Kraftl has highlighted the 'more-than-social' and 'more-than-representational' character of emotions, focusing on the hybrid compositions of childhood and the material and biological processes that are part of these compositions and emotions. Therefore, on the one hand, the notion of affect makes explicit the role of heterogeneous elements that participate in the processes that we usually identify as purely human, such as affect and emotion. On the other hand, a focus on affect allows us to position social phenomena in multiple scales at the same time, in the sense that:

"Ordinary affects are the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies and emergences (…) Ordinary affects are public feelings that begin and end in broad circulation, but they're also the stuff that seemingly intimate lives are made of. They give circuits and flows the forms of a life" (Stewart, 2007: 2).

Looking at the manifold objects that move with, around or between young children from Stewart's (2007) perspective allows us to see how the capacities to affect and to be affected, seemingly contained in people, are actually put in circulation by objects such as the kara or the teddy monkey. They move

between diverse scales, from wider religious identities and economic interests of business companies, to intimate family bounds, and bodily positions.

Chapter 11: Virtual, imaginative and communicative travel

I was doing some shopping in Riverton when I suddenly realised that the main road was crowded with people of diverse ages standing on the pavement and looking towards the road. The people in the shop turned their attention and walked towards the exterior to *see* something. I could hear a military band approaching: it was a parade celebrating the return of British troops from Afghanistan. This event made me aware that the children whose lives I was studying lived in a country involved in war. The war, however, was physically located outside and faraway from Britain, and its effects were not materially or in any sort of way evident to me in Wishwell. I wondered, then, how some of the children might be connected in one way or another to this war, even if it was not through a direct or physical involvement, but in the form of an unobserved place.

Some time later, through Gabrielle I met her friend Josephine. She lived in Wishwell and had a young son, Horace, whose father Julian was in the army. Some time before, Julian had been sent to Afghanistan for six months, when Horace was two and a half years old. During that time, the family kept in touch through Skype[11] and FaceTime[12]:

> "we would Skype every week, so he (Julian) wouldn't miss any of the milestones, you know, Horace's speech developed so much since the day he left in January, when he came back you could actually have a conversation with him, you couldn't do that in January (when he left)" (Interview with Josephine, July 2014).

Horace experienced the separation from his father – his physical mobility towards a war conflict in Afghanistan – from the living room of his house, where he discovered unexpected ways of father-son interactions and uses for virtual technologies:

> "every time there was bad signal and it went blank, Horace thought Papa is hiding, so he'd go 'where's Papa? where's he gone?' and then he appeared again because the signal picked up again, and he'd go 'there he is!' (…) or Julian would put the camera away from him and then we would be there again, he was playing, you know, pick a boo sort of thing (…) we both had an

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[11] "Skype is a software application that since 2003 has been enabling millions of businesses and individuals, including mothers and children, to make video and voice calls, send instant messages, and share files with other Skype users over the Internet (...) In the first half of 2010 Skype users made 88,4 billion minutes of Skype-to-Skype calls, and approximately 40% of these were video calls" (Longhurst, 2013).

[12] FaceTime is a feature of Apple devices such as IPhone, IPad and Mac computers that allows voice and video calls between these devices: "Hang out with friends in one town. Visit family in another. Make that important meeting. While you're watching the match on TV. With a tap, you can make video calls over Wi-Fi from your iPhone, iPad, iPod touch or Mac to someone else's. You can even make FaceTime calls over mobile networks on iPhone or iPad. And be there in person, even when you're not" (Apple-Inc., 2015).

IPad, so it was easier to walk around (…) and sometimes (Horace) would sit here in the evenings, because of the time difference so only certain days and times we could Skype, so it would usually be evening time for us, so just before going to bed I'd let him watch a little bit of CBBS and he sits down and has his milk, you know calm down, and I would bring the IPad in here and he would Skype then" (Interview with Josephine, July 2014).

Having sustained his relationship with his father for such a long time through virtual means, Horace became familiar with the combined affordances of Skype, FaceTime, email and the post for interacting with Julian. As explained by Josephine:

"(Horace) understood that he could see Papa, as he calls him Papa, on the video, and he would talk to him and he would show him drawings that he made with the childminder, things like that, so for Julian it felt like he's not missing anything, it was quite nice. So that would happen pretty much every week, then of course emails, I sent photos regularly, and also in return Julian would turn the camera and show his accommodation, his tent, so Horace he knew his Papa was on a tent and things like that, so it was quite nice. If we hadn't had that it would've been really really difficult. But we would also send little parcels out, so we'd make something, Horace'd make something and put it in a parcel and drop to the post and we'd say we're gonna send this to Papa now and when he got it he would show it on camera 'I got your parcel Horace!' so yeah, for Horace it was easy 'cause even in the day he left Horace didn't really understand… he said bye bye Papa, as if 'I see you later', there were no tears or anything, not for him anyway (laughs)" (Interview with Josephine, July 2014).

This excerpt from Josephine's interview shows how a young child experienced from Wishwell the British involvement in a worldwide political and armed conflict materialised in Afghanistan. The settlement of the British army there came to Horace's field of perception in the form of virtual images of his father and his surroundings embodied by a 'tent'. At the same time, Horace's presence was extended towards Afghanistan and his father through the mediation of pictures, presents, parcel boxes, the Internet, the Royal Mail and Afghanistan's post and the British Army administration. This resonates with Urry's (2007) argument that:

"Weak ties based on intermittent corporeal travel connect people to the outside world, providing a bridge other than densely-knit 'clumps' of close friends and family. These extensive weak ties generate social networks that are sustained through intermittent meetings and communications. Such networks are increasingly spread across the globe and therefore depend upon multiple mobilities for their reproduction" (Urry, 2007: 48).

The action of armies in war generates a form of separation in which some people (soldiers) move away, while others (their relatives) stay. This situation has been differently dealt with along history, but is now increasingly relying on the new communication technologies that allow physically distant people to reproduce their relationships. In doing so, new partnerships have emerged, for example between the US army and Skype ("Skype; Skype and USO to keep military families connected this holiday season," 2009), which is probably radically changing the experience of being away in the army – or having a father or other relative who is.

Communication through Skype and other virtual technologies has been subject of research interest from different perspectives, some of them related to children or families, for example: emotional geographies of children and families (Longhurst, 2013; Valentine, 2006), virtual communication in divorce and separation (Wolman & Pomerance, 2012), research on virtual communication for virtual and telecommunication technologies companies (Ballagas et al., 2009; Inkpen, Taylor, Junuzovic, Tang, & Venolia, 2013; Raffle et al., 2010) and language development (Roseberry, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2014). In general, these approaches acknowledge that:

> "The Internet expands the opportunities for daily meaningful contact between family members locked in different time-space routines at work, school, travelling, and so on. In this sense online exchanges and daily Internet use are adding a new dimension, rearticulating practices of everyday life and lived spaces" (Valentine, 2006:370).

Within this context, relationships are performed in heterogeneous spatialities, so that:

> "the dwelling places of bodies are no longer just rooms in homes where mothers, and children's flesh and emotions rub up against each other on a daily basis but screens across which voices and, even more importantly, images are shared" (Longhurst, 2013: 666).

While Longhurst (2013) observed how mothers in New Zeeland were increasingly using Skype in the "performative work of mothering" (Longhurst, 2013: 665) in relation to their 'adult children', in Wishwell Skype appeared as a key tool in 'grand-parenting' practices with young children. That was the case, for example, of Suzanne's grandparents living three hours away in England, with whom she had frequent encounters through physical travel (as discussed in Chapter 9) complemented by everyday virtual communication:

> "she comes in (after nursery), she might walk around and say hello, and then she goes straight in the high chair and we usually put Skype on and she speaks to her grandparents… and I think every night (…) my parents, who she sees all the time anyway, but my mom has always been like

so important for her to see (…) know who we are, so we usually do Skype, and it also makes dinner more fun, because… (Suzanne) has dinner with her grandparents every night. So I have a cup of tea and she's eating her dinner, and I mean sometimes (…) last an hour, she would be just sitting there, eating, and if she's not with her grandparents, then sometimes we'd put the TV on" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

Suzanne's maternal grandparents participated of her everyday routine through this means. Although they were not able to directly help on the care of Suzanne, she was in their company while her mother made dinner in the kitchen. However, their relationship was not sustained exclusively through virtual means, but also through intermittent physical travel performed by both parts in both directions. This meant that when Suzanne started Skyping with her grandparents she was already familiar with them from previous physical visits or, the other way round, when she saw her grandparents directly, she was already familiar with them through Skype. Suzanne's account illustrates how the 'weak ties' of family relationships at a distance were produced and reproduced through many forms of mobilities. Suzanne's communication with her maternal grandparents on a daily basis on Skype generated an unexpected expression of inequality, differentiating her relationships with different grandparents. Her parental grandparents, who lived between France and Portugal, had a more difficult and long travel separating them from Suzanne. Therefore, the frequency of their mutual visits was much lower. In addition to that, they had very limited access to Skype for different reasons:

"it's such a shame because they're really technophobes, they don't really understand Internet, they don't really understand how computers work, and they've never used computers before, so we don't (Skype with them) unfortunately. But Samuel's brother has Skype, and we talk to him and his family, but very rarely, it would be sort of once a month, and we keep saying to Samuel's parents that they should go over to his brother's house so that we can see them on Skype, but is just timing, trying to get the timing right and also they're in Portugal a lot, and they don't have the Internet in Portugal, and Samuel was saying of getting his parents like some kind of IPad or tablet or something, but they'd have to pay for the Internet in both countries to be able to get it to work, and they just, his mom might be able to cope with all the technology, but, it's just (…) such a shame 'cause we don't have the same contact (than with the other grandparents), you know, it's over the phone and you can't see them… though we've been trying to work out what we could do, but, it's not really working" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

Their limited access to Skype, in conjunction with the infrequent physical contact between them, impacted Suzanne's relationship with her parental grandparents not only virtually but also when they had the chance to be physically together, as Louise recounted:

"when Samuel's parents came over in May and Suzanne was quite sort of keeping a distance from them, and Samuel's mom was constantly wanting to look after her and feeding her and whatever and she (Suzanne) didn't want to" (Interview with Louise, July 2013).

Resonating with this situation, Longhurst refers to Graham (1998)'s assertion that: "Interactions in cyberspace affect interactions in 'real' space and vice versa" (Longhurst, 2013: 667), so that "It is not surprising then that people develop and maintain relational and emotional links through technological interfaces such as the Internet and cell phones (...) People conduct their personal, familial and emotional lives in a myriad of ways in a variety of different spaces. Bodies and spaces - cyber and 'real' - are entangled" (Longhurst, 2013: 667). The assertion, however, reproduces a binary logic in which the 'real' is paramount of co-presence, while the virtual or cyberspace is, implicitly, an unreal or surreal space of interaction. Longhurst's and my own accounts demonstrate that relationships performed through virtual mobilities have as much real status as interactions performed through co-presence. At the same time, both spaces are mutually affected so that inequalities in one realm (i.e. virtual interaction) can result in inequalities in another realm (I.e. co-present interaction). In the case presented here, it would be possible to further explore the production of these unequal emotional relationships between Suzanne and her grandparents, for example in relation to the material and cultural conditions that resulted in one couple of grandparents being able to access Skype on a daily basis and another couple of grandparents unable and/or unwilling to do so.

I observed a similar situation in the case of Isva and his grandmothers in India. While both grandmothers were separated from their grandson by the same distance, their family networks meant they had a differentiated access to communication with Isva and his parents through Skype:

"Usually I'm talking to my mom on Skype, most of the days we will speak on Skype. And to my mother in law in the phone, because she doesn't know how to, she needs some help. In my mom's case she also don't know, but my sister is there, she will help her. In my mother in law's case nobody is there to help her (…) so sometimes when my sister in law is at home (…) she would come in Skype and we would chat in Skype. So once in a week only we would chat in Skype, most of the days we would chat in telephone. And my mother we are talking in Skype" (Interview with Abha, August 2013).

These stories are illustrative of something that echoes the influential notion of 'zone of proximal development' developed by Vygotsky (1978) in relation to children's developmental processes. This is defined as the:

"distance between actual developmental level determined by independent problem solving, and the

level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, in Corsaro, 2011: 17).

'Problem solving' in collaboration with others (adults or peers) is supposed to allow children to participate in activities that otherwise they would be excluded from (Corsaro, 2011). In the same way, here we see how adults, in this case the elderly, need the collaboration of other more capable (usually younger) peers in order to access new technologies of communication. If that collaboration is not possible or available, these people are excluded from certain activities, interactions and movements. Their exclusion, however, has an impact on others – their children and grandchildren, for example – who are also prevented from communicating with them.

As previously discussed in Chapter 9 in relation to the physical travel in form of family visits, maintaining relationships with relatives was crucial for young children and their parents, particularly mothers. For this reason, the role of Skype or other means of virtual and communicative mobilities appeared to be enmeshed in intimate everyday practices related to young children. Isva and Abha's ongoing communication with their relatives in India was a continuation of the very close relationships they had before moving to the UK, as expressed by Abha's account of Isva's nutrition: nutritional advice from both grandmothers had been followed by Abha since Isva was born. When they moved to the UK (Isva being ten months old) she brought the cereals that he was having in India (made of ingredients grown in India like plantain) all the way with them, as she knew it would not be easy to find them here. That way she was able to continue to follow the grandmothers' advice at a distance. Living in the UK, that advice continued to be given on a daily or weekly basis through Skype and the telephone.

This account, although I have decided to include it in this section about virtual, communicative and imaginative travel, is an illustration of the many forms of mobilities that compose varied phenomena. Feeding a boy from India in the UK entailed the movement of food together with the migratory movement of people: especial cereals travelled all the way from India to England in Isva's suitcase. Their physical travel brought with them particular culinary and child rearing practices and traditions. These were sustained not only through the means of memory and availability of ingredients but also through the virtual and communicative travel of grandmothers' nutritional advice transmitted in the form of recipes and instructions. These joint movements were key in maintaining a certain way of doing things, such as feeding and raising a child, so that the very constituent elements of what Isva was eating and out of which his body was growing were the product of manifold forms of movement – a movement that would certainly continue once the food went inside his mouth (see for example 'Edible Matter' in Bennett, 2010).

The emergence of Skype seemed to have displaced telephony as a preferred means of communication among families with young children in Wishwell. This observation coincides with studies in other contexts

according to which phone conversations present too many challenges for young children – in terms, for example, of cognitive, language and motor development – which positions video conferencing as more suitable for children to interact with distant people (Ballagas et al., 2009). In this regard, I also observed that although some parents still enjoyed phone conversations more than Skype, once the children had experienced Skype videoconferencing, hearing the voice of a relative on the phone was not enough anymore. The main difference between Skype and the telephone seems to be on the 'transmission of a real-time visual image' through videoconference thanks to which something of the materiality of bodies is conveyed (Longhurst, 2013), hence making it sensible to refer to Skyping as a form of travel or mobility:

> "It is about hearing, and seeing the lived flesh of the 'real' person or people on the screen. It is about being able to observe the expressions, comportment, clothing, movements, and surrounds of others on screen" (Longhurst, 2013: 665).

Through the mediation of the Internet, Skype and digital devices, the person 'on the other side' of the screen (who may be in another room of the house, another location in the same town, in the middle of war in the other side of the world or even in space) is transported and translated into bits that recreate a digital image of that person and her or his movements and sounds (in a more or less fluid manner, depending on the quality of the Internet connection and possible technical problems). The difference between seeing a set of pictures of that person – that may as well convey something from the materiality of her body – and videoconferencing is precisely movement: while the pictures are a still recreation of the person's expressions and features, the video allows the person's mobile expressions, gestures and features to be appreciated. The Skype videoconferencing affords, for instance, a grandparent to see the way in which her or his grandchild toddles about the house in 'real' time.

But there is something else about Skype. While it might be possible to send recorded videos to relatives showing a child's crawling or toddling movements, Skype was used in a way that allowed the minutiae of everyday and ordinary moments to be shared, as in the case of Suzanne having dinner with her grandparents. It was not the image of a milestone in Suzanne's life that her grandparents were looking at. It was *just* a bit of Suzanne's everydayness. In a similar way, Skype allowed Horace to see the very place where his father was living in Afghanistan. It was not a dramatic scene of war or an impressive landscape of that faraway country, but the materiality of the tent that was in the background of his dad's moving image.

Adding to the earlier discussion on the travel of objects from the point of view of emotion and affect, the role of Skype and telephony in children's everyday lives created a particular affective relation with the objects that mediated virtual and communicative communication. This was expressed, for example, by Deva hearing his grandmother on his mother's mobile phone on speaker: "He spoke to his Nanni on the

phone today. He started kissing the phone when he heard his Nanni's voice" (Deva's diary by Heet, July 2013). This resonates with the idea that emotions are directed towards objects (Ahmed, 2004) and with observations of the computer as an object of affect (Cassidy, 2001; Lim & Soon, 2008; Longhurst, 2013). The artefacts that afford virtual travel form part of compositions of mobility tha cant also involve communicative travel. For example in the account of how Horace's relationship with his father in Afghanistan was performed through parcels, drawings, pictures, emails, tablets, and so on. These objects and means of mobilities were not disassociated from each other, but combined as in the image of Horace's parcel being opened by his father on the screen of the IPad. Is not surprising then that artefacts like telephones, tablets and computers were the object of affection on the part of children, in the same way that a parcel from a grandmother in South Africa, a present bought on Amazon by an uncle in Australia or a birthday card could be.

All of these ways of keeping relationships at a distance through intermittent physical, virtual and communicative travel performed by people and objects generated diverse possible forms of imagining the places that children were getting in touch with: India, Finland, Australia, Afghanistan, Austria, and so on. They were names, pieces of images, stories and the origin of certain objects, all of which created geographical notions in young children's imaginations that remain a challenge in terms of how to grasp them.

Structuring these chapters according to a categorisation of mobilities does not seem coherent with the idea that these forms of movement are interdependent and interconnected in the ways they are performed. For example, Horace's father travelling to Afghanistan is an example of corporeal travel of people, although the way in which they stayed in touch during that period of physical separation was through virtual and communicative travel. As most of the stories that I have recounted, this account could be approached from different angles and be contained in different sections of this work: I could have also chosen to tell it in relation to the mobility of objects, emphasising the movement of Horace's parcel. I have chosen to tell it here, from the angle of virtual and communicative mobilities not because I think this it is a more relevant angle, but because I need to tell it from some of them, and any angle I choose the result would be the same: the account illustrates the interdependency of different forms of mobilities, evidencing the impossibility of arbitrarily separating these phenomena as if they were not associated. This dilemma highlights these interdependencies and the need for understanding diverse forms of mobilities as parts of compositions of interdependent practices and experiences that shaped young children's everyday lives in and around Wishwell. For this reason, the next chapter will discuss the main discourses and representation of mobilities and childhood that were identified in the constellations of children's everyday lives in Wishwell across the manifold forms of movement that have been discussed now.

Chapter 12: Development, safety and proximity: discourse and meaning in young children's mobilities

Tim Cresswell has argued that there are three entangled aspects of mobility: the 'fact' of movement ("getting from A to B"); the experienced and embodied practices of mobility; and the discourses, representations and meanings of mobility (Cresswell, 2006, 2010a, 2010b). The latter are:

> "(…) ideas about mobility that are conveyed through a diverse array of representational strategies ranging from film to law, medicine to photography, literature to philosophy. These representations of mobility capture and make sense of it through the production of meanings that are frequently ideological. Mobility means this. Mobility means that. Thus the brute fact of getting from A to B becomes synonymous with freedom, with transgression, with creativity, with life itself" (Cresswell, 2006: 3).

Cresswell is interested in tracing the processes through which different accounts and scales of human mobilities become interrelated: from the movement of blood cells inside the human body to the traffic of airplanes in aerospace (Cresswell, 2006). He argues that:

> "What connects mobility at the scale of the body to mobility at other scales is meaning (…) Movement is rarely just movement; it carries with it the burden of meaning and it is this meaning that jumps scales. It is this issue of meaning that remains absent from accounts of mobility in general, and because it remains absent, important connections are not made" (Cresswell, 2006: 7).

As discussed in Chapter 2, Cresswell argues that the ways in which these three aspects of mobility are interrelated vary across history, forming shifting 'constellations of mobility', defined as "historically and geographically specific formations of movements, narratives of mobility and mobile practices" (Cresswell, 2010b: 17). In a similar sense, and based on Prout (2005a)'s notion of childhood as hybrid assemblages, I suggested in Chapter 3 the idea of constellations of childhood. These involve discourses, practices and experiences of being a child that shape the ways in which children are positioned in particular societies and cultures. Hence, children's mobilities are composed through the encounter between specific constellations of mobility (Cresswell, 2006) and constellations of childhood. The manifold ways in which young children overcome or not distance – in relation to people, objects, places, activities or information located in front of them, in the room next door, around the corner of their house, in a different place of town, India or elsewhere in the world – and the ways in which other agents overcome or not distance in relation to children, are shaped by the particular discourses, representations, practices and experiences of both mobilities and childhood of the cultural collectives and geographical contexts children are part of.

Therefore, these overlapping constellations shape children's positions and movements within and between the collectives they are part of, in relation to more or less near and far phenomena.

Bearing this in mind, and looking at the mobilities that formed part of young children in Wishwell as recounted so far, I identify three points in which Wishwell's constellation of childhood and Wishwell's constellation of mobilities were articulated and through which children's mobile experiences were shaped and their mobilities signified by others. These were: developmental thinking, safety matters, and proximity. These were ideas, discourses, feelings or knowledge that permeated children's mobilities through manifold 'social technologies' (Turmel, 2008) such as mobility artefacts, leaflets, manuals and magazines, as well as through conversations, health assessments and adult-child interactions. In this chapter, I will discuss how these three discourses articulated the constellations of childhood and constellations of mobilities shaping and signifying young children's mobilities in Wishwell.

1. 'Finding out about moving': Developmental thinking in young children's mobilities

The notion of human and particularly child development basically posits that the biological processes of growth and maturation occur in linear and progressive ways through stages and milestones in the life cycle that can be observed, recorded, measured and standardised (Turmel, 2008). In this context, children's growth is seen as a movement from total dependence – in relation to (adult) carers - to complete independence in adulthood (Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009). Development refers to physical, emotional, cognitive and social aspects that have been mainly the domain of psychology and medicine. The idea of child development and developmental psychology, developed after Charles Darwin's evolutionist theory and Jean Piaget's studies on children's cognitive processes (Prout, 2005a; Turmel, 2008) spread across different cultural settings in the industrialized countries during the twentieth century, becoming one of the dominant frames from which childhood was theorised and approached (James et al., 1998; Prout, 2005a; Turmel, 2008). As explained by André Turmel (2008):

> "the knowledge and artefacts systematized in developmental thinking mould into a cognitive form that inform the ideas and practices concerning childhood; such a form is therefore understood as the culturally legitimized way of thinking and acting towards children" (Turmel, 2008: 262-3).

Standards of development were created through the experimental observation of hundreds of thousands individual children (Prout, 2005). Based on statistical recording and measurement of these children, instruments of visual representation and inscription were built, translating individual children into images and information that gave raise to the universal child (Turmel, 2008). Through the action of artefacts such as charts and diagrams of child growth, a notion of normality was created against which, in turn, real

individual children were observed and assessed, this time not only by the 'experts' studying the child, but also by parents, child welfare services, law and medical specialists (Prout, 2005, Turmel, 2008). This 'social technology' (Turmel, 2008) was concerned with the establishment of 'normal' patterns of physical and cognitive maturation. This determined certain 'milestones' related to age or phases of development that children should progressively reach in order to accomplish a normal development:

"During the second half of the twentieth century a vast amount of data on many of the key physical, behavioural and emotional patterns of growth were established, at least for children growing up in the industrialized countries. Normal development and growth, the product of hundreds of thousands of individual measurements, was used as the template against which the abnormal could be identified" (Prout, 2005: 48).

This template included the control of weight, height, perception of stimuli through the different senses, speech and language, behaviour and fine and gross motor skills. The latter, as I will discuss now, translated into the observation and interpretation of children's bodily movements, therefore articulating this predominantly developmental constellation of childhood with a constellation of (developmental) mobilities.

General developmental thinking was evidenced among Wishwell's constellation of childhood in several ways: it was present, for example, through the action of the Sure Start programme, which's targets were already defined in terms of child development (Clarke, 2006; Glass, 1999; NESS & Anning, 2007; Parton, 2006; Tunstill, Allnock, Akhurst, Garbers, & NEES, 2005); it was made explicit through the language employed by WCC staff and volunteers when planning activities, in health checks and when evaluating activities; it was a theme in locally distributed toddlers magazines, and a main issue in the 'red book' or personal child health record (Royal-College-of-Paediatrics-&-Child-Health, 2009) given to parents of newborn babies. Developmental thinking, in the ways that it emerged in Wishwell, appeared to be related to children's mobilities in at least three ways:

First, the observation of actual bodily movements of real children contributed - in an indefinite and continuous past (Prout, 2005) - to the definition of developmental stages and standards in terms of bodily movement – i.e. motor skills assessments and standards according to age. Whilst the normalisation of children's physical growth through the measurement and control of weight and size led to the creation of artefacts such as charts and diagrams (Turmel, 2008), the normalisation of movement was translated into guidelines based on locomotion milestones as indicators of 'normal' development sequences and schedules. In turn, the standards created through these means shaped the assessment and significance of children's bodily movements. I observed this, for example, in the Solihull Approach's guidelines for parents. Here, age-based stages were associated to mobile skills as indicators of children's wellbeing and normal development. This was also represented in the personal child health record or 'red book'. This

record-keeping diary was distributed to all new parents in the country and included, among other things, a section with visual and textual material for keeping a record of the baby's 'firsts'. This was not an open section in which parents could decide which milestones to record, but it rather established which milestones parents had to watch for in their children. The baby's 'firsts' referred to events classified as: bodily movement (gross motor skills), movement of hands (fine motor skills), words (language) and people (social communication). In the 'finding out about moving' section, space was given for recording the age at which the baby for the first time: lift head clear of ground; rolls over; sits with support; sits alone; crawls; bottom shuffles; stands holding on; stands alone; walks holding on; walks alone; and first outdoor walk (Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health, 2009: 39). In addition to this, some sections allowed parents and health personnel to record milestones such as: grabs and holds things using whole hand; drops things in purpose; reaches out for things; opens cupboards; moves eyes to watch you; cries when you leave the room; and holds up arms to be lifted (Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health, 2009: 40-2). All of these referred to young children's corporeal movements that I have explored here. The milestones prescribed by the 'red book' were indeed the milestones that the parents I met looked for in their children when comparing them with other children and mothers' experiences, or when observing their children's newly accomplished movements or accesses and commented: "it's as if she isn't a baby anymore!" as expressed by Gabrielle in relation to Jasmine.

The definition of mobility milestones as indicators of young children's developmental normality, health and wellbeing resulted, therefore, in the bodily movements of children being observed through the lens of developmental thinking. This was especially evident in the periodic health checks in which parents and children were observed in their motor skills in the setting of the children's centre or the home. The discourse of development applied to children's movements was not restricted to the space and time of the health checks; it permeated mothers' conversations when gathered around the babies zone (for example comparing their babies mobile achievements); their bodily interactions with their children (leaving babies on the floor so that they were encouraged to lift their heads, roll over and so on; or holding them on their lap if they were not considered to be ready to perform these movements; taking their hands encouraging them to stand up, walk and so on); and it was the object of some of children's mobilities (for example, to a sensory-development group as the one attended by Deva and Heet), supporting the idea that:

> "Charts and graphs appear to be an essential, indeed unavoidable, actor redefining the whole set of childhood relationships. The standards of weight were received by mothers as a norm: a constraining behaviour to be implemented. From now on, the child's relations with parents and with experts alike were mediated with such technologies" (Turmel, 2008: 142).

In this way, "the brute fact" (Cresswell, 2006) of crawling from the babies zone to the toddlers room at seven months, rolling over but not crawling at eight months, 'not moving at all' at thirteen months or

standing and walking for the first time at nine months old, became synonymous of healthy or 'normal development, laziness, late or early development, and so on – hence signifying children's bodily 'movements' and therefore transforming them into 'mobility' (Cresswell, 2006). This also meant that developmental categories were partly defined by mobility milestones. This was the case of the (forced) passage from baby to toddler with Deva's first steps, or the *extended* (in relation to the 'norm') baby status of a child who was not crawling or walking at thirteen months old.

It is important to highlight here that these constellations of childhood and mobilities were culturally and geographically specific, as evidenced by the cultural relativism of developmental thinking and development as a frame for conceptualising childhood. As Alma Gottlieb points out:

> "Nearly every Western-educated parent knows the important milestones to watch for in a young child's development, smiling, rolling over, cutting the first tooth, crawling, sitting independently, uttering the first word, walking – these exciting firsts are regularly memorialized in the typical middle-class Western parent's baby diary. Such a parent may regularly compare her own baby's development with the charts featured in any number of parenting or pediatric guides to assess whether her child is on target for normal development or is exhibiting worrisome delays that call for an appointment with a medical specialist. The charts displaying these developmental averages are based on extensive research, so they must refer to universally valid norms and timetables… or do they?" (Gottlieb, 2004: 220).

The supposedly universal and biological milestones of child development are, as anthropological comparison reveals and critical approaches to child development argue, as much cultural as biological features in human growth (Gottlieb, 2004; Lancy, 1996; Turmel, 2008). Even when the milestones sometimes coincide across different cultures, the reasons behind these emphases can be widely diverse (Gottlieb, 2004). This opens up the question of what were the reasons for parents in Wishwell to celebrate or look forward for their children to go through these milestones in their mobility. At this point, developmental thinking as part of the constellation of childhood overlaps with a particular and dominant aspect of the constellation of mobility: autonomy and independence, both highly valued features of human movement in Western cultures (Cresswell, 2006; Manderscheid, 2014). Relationships, within this frame, are seen through the lens of the dichotomic pair dependence/independence (Christensen, Hockey, & James, 1999; Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009), which also permeates the notion of development, so that children's growth and increasing mobility are understood as a movement from dependence towards independence (Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009). This sets the frame for the positive value of milestones indicating the 'progressive' movement of young children towards independency – and also explains the emphasis that children's independent mobility has received in the study of children's mobility.

The second way in which development appeared as linked to young children's mobilities in Wishwell was through developmental standards such as physical, cognitive and social development that shaped the understanding and practice of diverse forms of mobilities. One example of this is how notions of physical development and age-based stages were entangled in the design, production, acquisition and use of mobility artefacts according to children's age and size. On the one side, the design of these artefacts was based on physical developmental standards. On the other side, children and parents guided the acquisition and use of mobile artefacts - such as child car seats - on these developmental standards, whilst adapting their use to the reality of their own and their children's bodies. For example in the case of Suzanne, whose body was smaller than what the standards on which the baby carrier's guidance was based, her parents were able to carry her on this artefact for a longer period than other people. However, as Suzanne's family discovered as well, the baby carrier guidance considered the *artefact's* capacity for carrying a baby up to certain weight, but not the variable capacities of the adult bodies that would carry the babies [13].

Another example, this time in relation to forms of mobility other than physical, was the interpretation of newer forms of mobility such as tele and virtual communication. On the one hand, the way children interacted through these means was assessed in developmental terms – for example, highlighting the 'challenges' and benefits of telephone and Skype communication in relation to children's cognitive and social development (Ballagas et al., 2009). In this sense, parents would judge whether their children were ready or not for engaging in these forms of mobilities according to notions of emotional, motor, cognitive and social development, conveyed through expressions such as "she's too small for that yet". On the other hand, although this was not observed in fieldwork, the literature shows that these technologies are being assessed in terms of their affordances for children's development, particularly in relation to language and social communication (Ballagas et al., 2009; Inkpen et al., 2013; Roseberry et al., 2014).

The third form in which developmental thinking appeared as an articulation between childhood and mobilities constellations was in the sense that developmental ideas and standards were mobilised through heterogeneous circulating entities or 'immutable mobiles' (Latour, 1993, 1999a, 2005) in visual form (Turmel, 2008), such as leaflets, manuals and magazines. André Turmel (2008) asks: "how such an idea (developmental thinking) emerged and was implemented" (Turmel, 2008: 249). The mobility of these various objects carrying information in the form of guidelines, charts, images and so on is one of the answers regarding implementation and circulation. As seen in relation to leaflets and magazines in Chapter 10, parents oriented their attitudes, practices and understandings in relation to children based on

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[13] In this regard, a recurrent problem of the artefacts of joint mobility that relied on adults' strength was that whilst their shape and materiality was designed for carrying children within certain range of size and weight, they had not necessarily considered adults' development in terms of how much weight an adult of certain physical characteristics could carry on her or his shoulders. Therefore, in many occasions the manufacturer's specified size and age use range turned out to be too optimistic.

the manifold sources of information available to them. Among these, material forms were key in creating more or less local and global knowledge and parenting culture. Alan Prout (2005a) refers to this mode of operation when he asserts that:

> "Such psychological discourses of the child became part of a more general public consciousness. By the mid-twentieth century popularizing texts (…) reflected the latest psychological thinking about what children need for their proper upbringing. Through these the language of child psychology entered everyday talk and practice. Terms like 'potty training', 'stage of development', 'bonding' and so on became the everyday stuff of childcare" (Prout, 2005: 51).

Once these social technologies reached beyond the realm of 'experts', they can be seen as becoming boundary objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989) that translated the diversity and complexity of children into the standardised image of the universal child. As demonstrated by Turmel (2008) it was around these objects – charts, diagrams, guidelines – that a discourse of the child and child development could be shared by different groups related to or interested on children such as medical and psychological experts, social workers, educators, politicians, parents and so on.

As Kraftl and Horton (2008) argue in relation to sleep expert advice, diverse geographical scales coincide in the circulation of knowledge through these social technologies and its effects on children's everyday/night lives. This resonates with Cresswell's (2006) idea that it is "meaning that jumps scales" (Cresswell, 2006: 7), in this case the meaning attached to young children's mobile practices. The jumping of scales is observed though the circulation of, for example, dominating ideologies and agendas, translated into text on printed material, distributed at a national scale through the physical travel of objects, and its concrete impacts on children's experiences of mobility at the scale of the body and local settings in Wishwell. This is one more illustration of how "developmental psychology reverberates far beyond theory" (Burman, 1994: 5). Within the realm of children's mobilities, and in the particular context of Wishwell, there were two dimensions in relation to which development was evidently pervading children's lives: safety and proximity regulations.   These dimensions constituted as well examples of the circulation and implementation of ideas in relation to children's movements through the mobility of immutable mobiles in visual forms.

2. 'Be aware!' Safety matters in young children's mobilities

Another point of articulation between childhood and mobilities that emerged as key in young children's mobilities in Wishwell was safety. One of the forms in which this was expressed was the extension of traffic safety regulations to the particularities of travelling with children. It was also observed in other

themes such as stranger-danger and in-home safety. Safety matters related to the negotiation of risks associated to the movement of children, either within a closed and private space like home, on closed or open public spaces like shops or the road, or on/inside transport means during transportation. Risks referred to the possibility of children experiencing physical or psychological harm as the result of accidents or physical or psychological aggression caused by others, consequently destabilising children's wellbeing or 'normal development'. Among the risks perceived by parents in Wishwell were domestic accidents that might result from children's access to inappropriate items or spaces within the house (for example, Lillian accessing the glasses' cabinet or Tabby and Mark being able to open the entrance door and leaving the domestic space towards the road); children's vulnerability as non-visible and unpredictable pedestrians (even within the boundaries of the house driveway, as graphically warned by a poster in WCC, but mainly in the road, as expressed by the Highway Code (Department-for-Transport-and-Driving-Standards-Agency, 2007)); car accidents; and children getting lost and/or being abducted by strangers. These were culturally and geographically specific perceptions of risk, as evidenced when compared to the range of mobility risks perceived by children or parents elsewhere (Drianda & Kinoshita, 2011; Pain, 2006; Porter et al., 2010).

Safety permeated parental practices and children's experiences in relation to mobilities so that parenting styles and practices as well as mobilities were signified from this perspective. Within a constellation of childhood in which parents were the main (or only) accountable agents for children's safety (Hillman, 2006; McLaren & Parusel, 2012), parental practices and styles were judged in relation to their safeguarding role as good, bad, negligent and so on. As discussed by McLaren and Parusel (2012) in relation to parental traffic safeguarding:

> "parental worries about traffic are socially constructed by many sources of knowledge (such as public information about traffic safety), mobility environment, personal history, and understandings of what a good parent should be like" (McLaren & Parusel, 2012: 214).

At the same time, children's (and parents') movements were signified as safe, risky, dangerous or in/appropriate. In this sense, safety was considered in relation to developmental stages – i.e. 'age-appropriateness'. An example of this was the regulation of the artefacts of mobility used by children of different ages. In this regard, safety was pursued through the creation of hybrid assemblages between, for instance, the child's changing ('developing') body, the materiality and design of cars, 'size- appropriate' child car seats, and adults' bodies and knowledge – the latter having a key role in assembling these elements together in an appropriate way. The action of the car seat was to transform the child's body into an adult-like assemblage that fit the car's adult-oriented safety features and design. That was the case of the booster seat that: "lifts the child so that an adult seat belt can be used and positioned correctly" (Seat-Selecta, 2012).

These were, however, fragile assemblages any of which's parts could fail in the safeguarding of children's mobilities: parents' negligence (incorrect use of artefacts because of ignorance or not using the legally required artefacts); children's resistance to safety measures (escaping restraints or deactivating safety measures); design or manufacture flaws in the production of artefacts (as recorded by manifold news, consumers complaints and manufacturers recall of products), among others (RoadSafetyGB, undated). The interdependent parts of this assemblage exemplify the point made by Vergunst (2011) that, although technology is usually understood as an object separated from the body, "Without an understanding of skilful technique, technology as artefact can only remain distanced from bodily engagement" (Vergunst, 2011: 206).

The existing literature on parental traffic safeguarding raises questions about how "parents' landscapes of risk" (McLaren & Parusel, 2012) are created through public and expert discourses or locally contextualised experiences, creating material and imaginary risks (McLaren & Parusel, 2012; Pain, 2006); or how safeguarding responsibilities are geographically and socially distributed, for example between parents and local authorities, traffic experts and the police (McLaren & Parusel, 2012). In this respect, the observation of young children's mobilities in Wishwell suggests that parents and carers seemed to be the exclusive agents in which children's direct safeguarding responsibilities relied. The estate's safeguarding role was mediated by legal regulations, regulatory texts and propaganda oriented towards the creation of more 'educated' and 'responsible' parents and carers –thus reinforcing the notion of parents as safeguarding agents. The material through which this information was circulated contributed to spreading 'risk landscapes' (McLaren and Parusel 2012) that were not necessarily coherent with the local experiences of risk in Wishwell. For example, the suggested use or reins when walking on the road with young children (Department-for-Transport-and-Driving-Standards-Agency, 2007) did not seem coherent with the actual events of young children involved in pedestrian casualties in the area. However, beyond parents'

perspectives and willingness to abide or avoid these risk landscapes and safety measures, sometimes these constituted legal regulations rather than options.

In other realms of movement such as the house environment or occasional habitats such as the swimming pool, safety was also an issue permeating and signifying mobile practices. As discussed in chapters 9 and 10, there were artefacts that mediated safety such as doors, keys or special equipment such as the SwimFin. Children's actions and the quality and usefulness of these artefacts were assessed and signified according to their affordances for accomplishing or compromising safety. Again, safety discourses were spread through diverse sources, among which printed material had a predominant role. In the 'red book' previously mentioned graphic and textual in-doors safety information was provided for different age-stages between cero and three years old. For each stage, an imaginary child's speech gave the advice:

> "(between 0-12 months) You must stop me getting hurt, as I cannot stop myself (…); (between 1-2 years) I like copy you (this is how I learn) but I need your help to keep me safe, as I cannot see dangers (…); (at 3 years) I can walk, climb, run very fast so I fall over a lot. But if you cannot see/hear me, come and find me. I could be anywhere" (Royal-College-of-Paediatrics-&-Child-Health, 2009: 16-18).

In the same graphic information, rhetoric question for parents were made, for example: "Are keys of both front and back doors kept out of sight and reach of children?" (Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health, 2009: 18). This echoes Robert's habit of keeping the keys hidden once Tabby and Mark learned how to use them. Still in the 'red book', advice was given about holding hands with young children when walking on the road, "or make sure they are on reins or in a buggy/pushchair" (Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health, 2009: 19). Coherent with this advice was the use of safety artefacts that I have described in previous chapters, and practices such as holding hands and adults walking on the side of the road.

In the context of a constellation of mobilities in which car traffic was the dominant form of physical mobility and where lethal risks were part of the cost of everyday travel, and within a constellation of childhood in which children are deemed as vulnerable beings dependent on adults, safety emerged as the hinge that dialectically allowed children to be mobile while restricting them from being so. This safeguarding principle clashed with the ideal of independence encouraged by developmental thinking and by culturally specific ideas of mobility. The result was the negotiation of proximity – closeness and separateness – between children and adults as a key aspect of young children's (safe and developmentally appropriate) mobilities, as I will discuss now.

3. 'Hold hands with your child': proximity and separateness in young children's mobilities

In a recent paper titled *'Together and apart: affective ambiences and negotiation in families' everyday life and mobility',* Jensen, Sheller and Wind (2015) argue that:

> "Each mode of travel – whether walking, biking, driving or flying – can be included among the active corporeal engagements of human bodies with the sensed world, suggesting many different kinds of affordances between varied bodies, vehicles, and 'movement-space' " (Jensen et al., 2015: 365).

Each mode of travel, therefore, can be seen as affording the production of "affective experience or emotional management of both the body-in-motion and the family-in-motion" (Jensen et al., 2012: 370), producing feelings that – as discussed in relation to the notion of affect – are not located within the person or the mode of transport, but are the result of "circulations of affects between different persons (including especially family members), different vehicles and infrastructures, and historically situated mobility cultures and geographies of mobility" (Jensen et al., 2015: 370). This leads to wonder which kinds of affect circulated between children, adults and the heterogeneous elements that formed part of their mobilities compositions in Wishwell.

In *Childhood and Human Value: development, separation and separability*, Nick Lee (2005) discusses the notions of separation and possession among the main issues concerning children's value in Western society. While separation is associated to independency, a possessive feeling towards children deems them dependent (Lee, 2005) and ideally close to adults. At the same time, modern and particularly developmental thinking have aimed at producing social order through separation in the form of distinct categories (N. Lee, 2005). This is observable, for example, in the segregational effect that developmental classification and categories have – even expressed in a spatial dimension - between children and adults, and between different (developmental) categories of children – babies, toddlers, children, and so on. In this context, Lee argues:

> "our status and identity as adults involve acting, on occasion, as if we were no-one else's possession, as if we were reliant on no other, independent in our decisions and thus entirely responsible for ourselves. Since everyone depends on someone for something, since there is no actual and complete separation, to be an 'adult', to pass as responsible and independent, is to participate in a strategic confusion of separability and separateness (…) A fixation on separation or independence as a desirable condition tends to reduce the subtlety of our thoughts and feelings about possession and separability, love and rights with significant consequences for children's cultural position" (Lee, 2005: 22).

As it is now widely suggested by a growing body of literature, mobility practices always involve some form of interdependent relationships between people, modes of transport, infrastructures, natural rhythms and so on (Doherthy, Patton, & Shield, 2015; Jensen et al., 2015; Kullman, 2010; Kullman & Palludan, 2011; Manderscheid, 2014; Mikkelsen & Christensen, 2009; Nansen et al., 2014). Therefore, as Lee suggests, interdependency is not an exclusive feature of *children's* relationships and mobilities, but of relationships in general. Young children's mobilities in Wishwell, because of the specific elements that composed childhood and mobilities constellations, were especially conceived as joint practices that necessarily involved children, adults and mobility artefacts. The resulting assemblages entailed different degrees and forms of proximity and separation. At the same time, mobilities were sometimes strategically used for generating proximity or separation between children and adults. Both situations were permeated by notions of child development and safety issues, as I will show now.

Continuing with the analysis of the 'red book' (which, as previously argued, was an artefact that in its circulation, effect and meaning-making 'jumped scales'), according to its guidelines leaving a baby aged between cero and 12 months 'unattended' for a few minutes was a reason of concern. A small degree of separation was acceptable for children between one and two years within the house, provided that safety measures were already in place (i.e. having taught children to come down the stairs safely and keeping the floor cleared of 'obstacles'). By three years old, as long as children were seen or heard and safety measures - such as having keys, household chemicals and fire sources out of the reach of children - were in place, their 'independent' roam around the house was seen as positive for their development. Therefore, in the 'red book' separation was regulated according to safety and developmental age-based stages.

While on the move, proximity was also regulated according to developmental stages and safety measures through habits such as holding hands on the road or artefacts such as leashes, sling, carriers, prams and car seats. They all conveyed different degrees of proximity-separation from parents or carers and different forms of regulating separation. In this sense, the decision about using a pram or a baby carrier, for example, implied distinct degrees of proximity on the move, different positions and compositions of mobility in relation to the surrounding material space for both parent and child. Relying on the fragility of 'holding hands' or deciding to 'enrol' (Latour, 1999b) a rein into the collective was also a key decision in terms of how proximity and separation were negotiated. The implications of each possibility were not straightforward: while the use of a child's leash might seem at first glance the most restrictive of the mobile parenting 'methods', its materiality allowed certain distance between child and adult while keeping a material connection to each other – a distance that the hands, carrier or pram did not afford. The rein literally extended adults' arms and agencies for controlling while allowing children's corporeal mobility. At the same time, however, it operated under the developmental premise of young children's unreliability in the context of public spaces' risky nature.

In a different sense, proximity and separation were strategically regulated through mobilities, in a way that echoed Jensen et al. (2012)'s observation that:

> "families coordinate being together or being apart while they move. Togetherness itself is constructed through cultures of mobility in which affect circulates through the rhythms and patterns of coming and going, choosing routes, modes, and travel companions to negotiate the human condition of being in motion" (Jensen et al., 2015: 370).

Partly influenced by developmental understandings of the ethics of mother-child proximity and separation, and partly motivated by personal gender-based needs, some of the mothers I met used mobilities as a way of creating separation in relation to their children when their everyday routines did not 'naturally' made space for it. For example, Jennifer decided to take on a job at the local school that demanded her to be away from home one hour every weekday evening. She said that, beyond the financial benefits of it, she made that decision so that her two sons got used to be *without* her and *with* their father – so that, in a year time, it would be easier for them to be away from her when school started. And because the two children were twins and were used to be with each other all the time, Jennifer and her husband Peter had also decided to have, from time to time, separated activities on the weekends, most of which involved some sort of day trip: Jennifer would spend the day with one of the children, and Peter with the other. Next time they would swap. For the children to be apart from their mother and from each other was seen by Jennifer as an emotional developmental necessity in terms of the children's maturation process.

In a similar way, Louise recounted with joy how the recently acquired *papoose* enabled her to have some time on her own on Saturday mornings: while Samuel took Charles, the dog, and Suzanne for a walk – with the papoose allowing them to have a longer walk than with other or any mobility artefact - Louise was able to stay at home, have a shower, get dressed and make breakfast with the calm that only being alone could afford. Whilst the papoose allowed a close interaction on the move between Suzanne and her father, it also afforded temporary and positively valued separation from her mother. The interplay between proximity and separation observed among young children and parents in Wishwell resembles Christensen, James and Jenks (2000)'s argument that:

> "children's accounts of their own and other family members' movements in and out of both the 'house' and the 'family' in the course of their everyday lives (…) challenge the suggestion that the movement and fragmentation which characterise contemporary family life is destructive for children as is publicly represented. On the contrary (…) it is part and parcel of children's everyday lives and formative of their social learning" (Christensen, James, & Jenks, 2000).

Mobilities are, in the end, about negotiating proximity and separation in relation to different people, places, objects, landscapes and so on. Young children's mobilities were partly aimed at negotiating closeness and separation (or overcoming distance) in relation to all these things. Separation was regulated in the practices and experiences of mobility, through the joint mobility practices with parents and carers and through the artefacts that afforded them. The negotiation of proximity was in the heart of how child-adult joint mobilities were organised, experienced and signified, relating to the wider discussion about children's in/dependent or interdependent mobilities. As discussed along this chapter, however, the negotiation of proximity was not the only hinge holding together the practices, experiences and discourses of childhood and mobilities. Proximity was also shaped and signified by issues of child development and safety matters, all of which gave form to notions of value - right and wrong (Cresswell, 2006) adult-child mobilities – and culturally relevant meanings to young children's corporeal, virtual, communicative, imaginative and materially-extended mobilities.

Cocooning, Skyping, and all things in between

In this concluding section I will bring together reflections that refer to three interdependent aspects of the work that I have presented throughout the previous chapters. First, what does the empirical evidence of the study say about young children's everyday lives, mobilities and childhood in general? Second, what are the overall conclusions emerging from this research in terms of its contributions to the fields of childhood and mobilities studies? And third, what questions arise from these conclusions, pointing towards possible future lines of enquiry? These three aspects touch on empirical, theoretical and methodological issues that I will now discuss.

1. From cocooning to Skyping, there is always movement

This ethnographic study looked at the mobile practices of children between nought and four-years-old in a small English town that I have called Wishwell. In doing so, I based my observations on the categories of mobilities posited by Sheller and Urry (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007), namely: the corporeal travel of people, the physical travel of objects, and communicative, virtual and imaginative travel. The mobilities perspective argues that all these forms of movement are interdependently performed. I have also based my approach on Cresswell's (2006) idea that all scales of movement, from "the first kicks of a newborn baby" to the international travel of people or flows of money and goods, are interconnected through the meanings attached to movement within particular constellations of mobility. I have added to this idea the notion of constellations of childhood, based on Prout's (2005) notion of childhood as heterogeneous assemblages. In this sense, I have argued that the encounter between particular constellations of mobility and constellations of childhood shape the practices, experiences, representations and meanings of children's mobilities in particular times and places, thus shaping the ways in which children are positioned and connected (or not) to different entities and phenomena in the world. All of these ideas have been developed within an understanding of "space" as made out of interactions and connections, and of "places" as "constellations of temporary coherence" (Massey, 1995, 1998, 2005). This framework is also coherent with Ansell's (2009) notion of children as "nodes of material connections to places near and far".

Researching mobilities in young children's everyday lives from this perspective meant that the notion of mobility was stretched in two directions in relation to traditional understandings of children's mobility as the everyday trips performed by children. First, in terms of physical or corporeal mobility, I stretched the scale of observation towards the smaller-scale bodily movements performed by babies and children lying down on baby gyms, crawling within babies' zones, crawling, toddling or walking across the children's centre, and therefore moving within place or between children's places. This tunes my understanding of place to the constellations of spatial elements that were relevant for a child in one particular moment. Second, I

stretched the notion of mobility beyond the physical travel performed by children themselves, towards the observation of communicative, virtual and imaginative travels, also considering the movements performed by objects and other people in relation to young children. In this way geographical scale was also stretched beyond children's immediate spaces of perception. In between these two poles were manifold mobilities and spatialities that were part of young children's everyday lives, from bus trips between home and a playgroup to Skyping with grandparents in another city or travelling to visit family in another country.

Through thick ethnographic description (Geertz, 1973) of young children's everyday lives and movements in Wishwell I showed that, in terms of physical co-presence, their everyday lives were mainly based within Wishwell and nearby locations. The same was the case for their main carers, most of the time mothers but also fathers and grandparents in some cases. However, even for children who spent most of their time at home or in local playgroups and locations, their lives were highly mobile. On the one hand, the movement within these locations proved to be meaningful and extremely relevant for children and their carers, to the point of carrying out complicated mobile practices with a great physical and sometimes financial cost in order to gain access to certain destinations, people and activities. In this sense, unexpected places such as pet shops and car parks appeared as relevant spatialities in young children's everyday lives. On the other hand, children's spatialities were extended through a vast array of means, even if not all of them performed as wide-scale movements themselves. I refer here to young children's connections to more or less far away places and people through a variety of means: sending and receiving parcels; Skype video-conferencing; information leaflets, books and magazines that shaped their mobile experiences in one way or another; goods that travelled with children and stayed with them; interaction with institutions and policies through staff in the children's centre and health visits; toys and artefacts they came in touch with at the various places they inhabited; mobility artefacts and the design, functionality and mobility history behind them; the corporeal travels of parents and grandparents to work, worshiping, escaping past wars; fighting present wars; family visiting, and so on. In this regard, places that usually remain unobserved in the study of children's mobility and even places from which children are physically absent and unaware of (Ansell, 2009) emerged as relevant sites from where young children's lives were partly shaped or, the other way round, places that are partially shaped by children's needs, activities, and existences.

From babies' corporeal movements within a baby gym in a playgroup, or children's Skype chats with people in another city or country, to children's consumption of food brought all the way from India to the UK, many forms of mobility were part of young children's everyday lives in Wishwell. All of them involved intermittent movement and rest or pauses. However, even in babies' sleep there were breathing and accommodating corporeal movements; mobility issues such as re-arranging routines or plans around sleeping patterns; and spatiality matters and ideas of childhood such as how much a baby should sleep, with whom and where. Within the home or the children's centre young children's movements were varied and meaningful, demonstrating that staying at home or within town while other people in the family moved

further away was not necessarily a form of immobility. Therefore, rather than reproducing a dichotomic understanding of 'im/mobilities' (Cresswell, 2012; Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006; Sheller & Urry, 2006; Skelton, 2013; Urry, 2007), the data emerging from this study suggest a continuum of movement, rest and stillness in which the status of action depends on relative scales of observation. It is necessary then to adopt flexible scales of observation that allow the diverse scales of mobilities in young children's lives to be visible and their relevance grasped.

From this perspective, a focus on the small-scale bodily movements of young children highlights not only that there is always movement but also that young children's bodily movements, positioning and rhythms – for example lying down on a blanket and looking up the ceiling, rolling, crawling, bending down and looking at the room upside down, walking at certain speed, deciding to stop to see a flower and so on – are particular features that differentiate young children's mobilities and spatialities from those of older children and adults in the studied cultural and geographic context. Their specific mobilities, rhythms and positions entail an array of perspectives that are particular to their experiences of being a young child. For the researcher, this implied shifting perspectives constantly at a physical level: between the researcher's own corporeality and that of the young children being observed or with whom I was interacting; and between the researcher's positions and those of other adults. Bending down and approaching the sight height of babies did not mean that I 'became' the other – a baby or a toddler - but acknowledged the importance of the body, its movements and positions, for approaching to the perspectives of those others. This corporeality was also key regarding the different rhythms that characterised the movements of different people. Joining parents and toddlers on a walk, for example, meant that I had to decide whose rhythm I would follow, the children or the parents'. This was a delicate matter, as rhythm constituted a point of tension between young children and adults moving interdependently. In fact, many of the artefacts of joint mobility seemed to aim at creating an accelerated shared rhythm - more proximate to adults' than to children's pace.

Young children's mobilities in Wishwell constituted interdependent practices in which adults and children were most of the time involved. Paying attention to the diverse forms of mobilities in young children's lives revealed the key role of technologies in these interdependent practices. This was explicit in the case of new virtual and telecommunication technologies such as mobile phones, computers, tablets, the software and apps that added affordances to these artefacts. In this sense, young children had intimate and affective relationships with and through these technologies. This observation challenges Ansell's (2009) assumption that "Children (very young children in particular) may (…) encounter distant places and people less intimately than adults" (Ansell, 2009: 201).

The role of technologies was also observed in relation to less 'exotic' technologies – as suggested by Prout (2005a) – that were part of joint practices of corporeal mobilities. Cocoons, slings, baby carriers of different kids, pushchairs, car seats and reins mediated children-adults relationships on the move, shaping

the ways in which they experienced physical mobility and interacted with each other. Most of the time, children and parents' interactions while going somewhere were not exclusively organic relationships between two human bodies. There were, in between them, all these artefacts that created hybrid assemblages between adults and children's bodies, materiality, design, developmental standards of children's bodily growth, safety regulations and parenting styles or cultures. This supports the notion of mobilities as assemblages or compositions (Nansen et al. 2014) and the argument that research would better understand children's lives by focusing not on children or adults, or the technological artefacts that mediate their relationships, but on the interactions between all of these agents, as suggested by Turmel (2008) and Brown and Middleton (2005) in other realms. These observations also highlight the relevance of technology design for children's experiences and interactions on the move, as argued by Zeedyk (2008) in relation to pushchairs.

2. From seasons to parking spaces: the shaping of young children's mobilities

Manifold aspects emerged as shaping young children's mobilities. Some of them affected mobile practices directly, encouraging or hindering certain movements and spatialities. Others had a more indirect impact sketching the possibilities of movement or determining the organisation of everyday life. Some of them had an impact on physical travel, some others on virtual communication or both. The main aspects that I identified shaping young children's mobilities in Wishwell were: residential location, parents' work location and labour conditions, social networks, family motility (mainly in terms of access to transport means), seasons and weather.

Residential location predefined some of the resources that were available for young children to move, particularly in terms of public transport provision and the distance in relation to manifold destinies. However, this aspect was relative to the location of other relevant aspects such as parents' work, family and friends' residential locations; early years educative provision and so on. It constituted an aspect that parents many times contemplated even before children were born, bearing in mind the potential existence of children in their lives in a near future. In this regard, children performed some kind of agency in families' decisions about residential location even before being conceived, when existing only as a potential. In this context, and as discussed in Chapter 7, the town of Wishwell appeared as configured through shifting and manifold connections to other localities. The shifting constellations of Wishwell partially shaped constellations of childhood and young children's mobilities.

Parents' work defined to a certain extent children's residential locations. This was in some cases the reason why children lived in the area of the country and of the world where they did: Wishwell. Work also determined daily routines and whether children went to nursery or 'stayed at home' with one of their

parents, grandparents or childminders. Labour conditions at parents' work had an impact on children's everyday routines, as expressed by the example of Suzanne's father having to leave earlier in the mornings so that he could find parking space at work, therefore not being able to take Suzanne to nursery. At the same time, children had an impact on their parents' labour schemes or decisions, such as quitting or changing jobs or re-negotiating work hours and locations, as in the case of Heet deciding not to travel anymore once Deva was born.

Families' social networks - in terms of friends and family members scattered across the town, country or world – shaped young children's maps of interactions and mobilities. Having family or close friends nearby usually meant children had a wider social network with whom they interacted through physical co-presence on a more or less frequent basis. Having family or friends spread across a wider geographical scale involved physical travel on a bigger scale, complemented most of the time with other means of mobilities and communication, such as parcels and virtual communication technologies.

Access to public transport was key for families with young children, particularly when access to private means was limited by parents' skills, economic resources or family organization. Family motility (Kaufmann & Widmer, 2006) emerged then as a very relevant aspect that shaped the kinds of mobile experiences that young children had and the places they could reach through physical or virtual means. In this sense, not only the immediate family's motility was relevant, but also the extended family's access to physical or virtual travel was key in defining certain modes, intensities and frequencies of interactions with children. This was very explicit, for example, in Suzanne's differentiated relationships with both pairs of grandparents, having more or less physical distance between them, and also differentiated access to means of mobility and communication.

Among their physical travel practices the seasons and the weather appeared as very relevant factors. Young children's spatialities varied with seasonal changes, defining the relevance that different places and mobility technologies had in different times of the year. The weather had a more unpredictable impact upon everyday plans, affecting not only children's spatialities and mobilities, but also their carers' and, as a consequence, the researchers'. This suggests that more explicit attention should be paid to these aspects in future research on children's mobilities, not taking for granted the effect of seasons and weather on children's lives, but examining the way that people tackle these natural variations and how this is culturally mediated through technologies and routines.

The shifting compositions of young children's mobilities, related to various aspects described above, were not organised into linear and progressive changes, but through unexpected, cyclic and temporary variations. Therefore, 'From cocooning to Skyping' should not be understood as a series of stages of movement that children progressively reach, but as a wide array of forms of mobility that constitute

compositions of mobilities in young children's everyday lives, sometimes coexisting, conflicting, complementing or substituting each other in unpredicted ways.

3. Walking soon and facing backwards: development, safety and affect

As illustrated in Chapter 9 and discussed in Chapter 12 in relation to the discourses that shaped the meaning of young children's mobilities in Wishwell, development and safety were among the most notorious. These discourses predominated over other possible sources of meaning and representation such as affect and proximity. Development was translated into markers of developmental stages, many of which were constituted by specific mobile skills such as sitting, crawling and walking. These were among the developmental cornerstones that staff measuring children's development or parents were supposed to look for. These mobile skills were seen as accomplishments in children's developmental paths, praising their earliness and worrying about their lateness in relation to standardised measurements. Their positions within a standardised mobile-developmental path defined their identification as babies or toddlers over other aspects such as their affective relationships with adults, other children and spatial elements.

The definition of certain developmental markers related to movement meant that other forms of movement and interaction were overlooked, for example children's participation on virtual communication. These were not conceptualised yet in relation to children's developmental paths, therefore they were not systematically signified. Their meanings were ambiguous for parents and carers, who seemed to describe the ways in which children engaged with them but without assigning it a clear value.

Legal regulations and mobility artefacts that shaped young children's mobile experiences embodied physical safety in Wishwell. Although regulations such as the use of rear-facing baby car seats were relatively new and still on the process of becoming compulsory, they already had an unquestionable character. For example, an artefact such as the rear-facing baby car seat physically separated babies from other passengers – children or adults – and put them in a differentiated position in relation to the movement of the car and the car-space. Parents and babies not being able to see each other while in the car, and the emotional distress that this implied sometimes for both parties, were aspects that could not counterbalance the relevance of preventing physical damage in case of collision. In this regard, regulations and design involved in young children's car safety did not seem to integrate the physical and affective interdependence that I observed between children and parents in other forms of mobility or other realms of everyday life.

Although emotions and emotional wellbeing are not themes on which I have focused in this study, they appear as relevant issues in this regard. Emergent literature such as Zeedyk (2008) suggests the strong

impact that the design and positioning of artefacts such as pushchairs can have on children-adults' affective interactions on the move. Extrapolating this concern to design and positioning of babies car seats suggests that the interplay between safety and affective interactions may be a relevant and connecting theme for transport studies and studies on children's health, if emotional wellbeing is considered as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The lack of previous research on this age group and on interdependent mobile practices between young children and adults makes it impossible to compare these observations with young children's mobile experiences in other times and places. However, the data suggests that at the time of this study young children were one of the most targeted groups in terms of traffic safety regulations and within the mobility artefacts market. This constitutes a recent phenomenon which's impacts need to be explored.

4. Criticising the solitary-adult mobile subject: cocooning, Skyping, and the mobilities perspective

The mobilities paradigm has been criticised for focusing on predominantly independent or 'solitary' (Manderscheid, 2014) adult subjects (Skelton, 2013). Even research with a focus on families' mobilities (Jensen et al., 2015; Kaufmann & Widmer, 2006) tends to emphasise adult perspectives and positions within these interdependent practices. This study has looked from the perspective of mobilities at young children's everyday lives, contributing in this sense to a more inclusive and holistic picture of mobile practices and experiences. It has, at the same time, presented a possible way of doing this that does not isolate children as independent or solitary mobile subjects, but understands them as interdependent beings whose mobilities are performed in collaborative compositions in which adults, other children and materiality appear as interrelated.

'From cocooning to Skyping' contributes to an understanding of mobilities as permeating all moments of life. In this sense, one of my main conclusions is that – as evident as it can seem, but as ignored as it has been - mobilities *do* matter to babies, toddlers and young children. They are not a-mobile, pre-mobile or immobile beings but perform and participate in forms of mobilities as varied and meaningful as those of adults and older children but they do so in specific, sometimes different but interrelated ways. Their mobilities define who they are at certain moments of life, actually determining to some degree in which moment of life they are. This echoes Baker et al. (2009) when they claim that age and mobility are mutually produced through the experiential planes of people's everyday lives.

In acknowledging young children as mobile beings, this study highlights the necessity to extend the scales of movement usually considered within mobilities studies. It also requires tuning our understandings of place to how different people, in this case young children, perceive their spatialities. Staying at home can

constitute a form of immobility seen from the perspective of commuting practices. However, seen from the perspective of children's places (Fog & Gullov, 2003), there are many places within home between which its inhabitants move. In the same way, lying down on a baby gym can be seen as a form of immobility if seen from the perspective of movement between rooms of the house. However, if focused on the bodily movements of the person who is lying down there, important movements appear in the form of limb discovery and coordination, sight shift, interaction with objects and people nearby and so on. This expansion of scales means that it is necessary to further develop the categories of mobilities, so that bodily movements on this small scale can be considered too. As I argued in Chapter 2, within Massey's (1995) notion of place mobility can be understood as the practices through which connections are established, maintained or activated. Therefore, mobility is not necessarily travel or displacement between places, but shifting positions and perspectives, configuring different constellations with other elements in space. Hence, the scale of movement in terms of spatial range is not a scale of significance: the intensity of the experience of being mobile is not necessarily associated with the extension of movement.

5. Even before the school journey begins: cocooning, Skyping and the study of children's mobility

In relation to the study of children's mobility, this study aimed at overcoming the dualistic understanding of in/dependence that characterises on of the main debates in this field: children's independent mobility. In doing so, I followed approaches to children's mobility as the ones developed by Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009), Kullman (2010), Kullman and Palludan (2011), Malone and Rudner (2011), Strandell (2014) and Nansen et al. (2014). From these I took the notions of interdependent and relational mobilities, collaboration, compositions, transitional spaces and objects, through which children and adults' mobile practices and experiences were approached. These appeared as very insightful concepts in the observation as well as in the analysis of mobilities in young children's everyday lives in Wishwell. These concepts allowed an understanding of mobilities as composed by manifold agents whose joint actions resulted in young children's connections to more or less near and far people, things, places and activities – from the toy on the corner of the baby gym to a grandparent in another country or a national scale policy.

The study showed, however, that young children's physical mobility is related to other forms of movement and that it is necessary to consider these movements interdependently in order to understand how children are differently positioned in relation to the world they live in, and to understand the varied scales in which their lives are affectively connected. In this sense, I maintain my initial critique of an exclusive focus on children's physical travel. I also sustain my view that it is necessary not only for the mobilities perspective but also for the study of children's mobility to take into account the experiences of young children, even before the school journey begins. On the one side, their tightly interdependent mobile practices performed in collaboration with adults, other children, animals and artefacts of mobility are key

for a better understanding of how interdependent mobilities are composed, organised and carried out. On the other side, young children's mobility has been mainly approached from the perspective of developmental studies with a focus on motor skills, diagnosis and intervention on problematic issues (Chambers & Sugden, 2006). The study of children's mobility, children's geographies and even social studies of childhood have ignored this group, focusing mainly on school-aged children. The present study makes this empirical gap explicit and shows one possible way in which this group can be approached from the perspective of their mobilities. The complexities of this phenomenon lead me to suggest that its understanding would benefit from interdisciplinary endeavours that could tackle the manifold aspects involved in young children's mobile compositions from an approach of 'totality' (Turmel, 2008).

6. Help, aid and collaboration: Cocooning, Skyping and the notion of agency

The theoretical frame of this study followed an understanding of agency as relational or distributed across heterogeneous agents organised in hybrid and shifting assemblages (Ansell, 2009; Bennett, 2005, 2010; Kullman, 2010; Latour, 2005; Prout, 2005a; Turmel, 2008). This approach led me to focus on the interdependent practices of children-adults mobilities and to unfold some of the possible compositions in this regard. Agency appeared here in relation to young children expressed through diverse forms. One of them was asking for help from other children or adults, including the researcher, in order to open a door, reach an object, build or draw something and so on. This resonated with Vygotsky's notion of 'zone of proximal development' (1978): collaboration was then acknowledged as a need by children, who were aware that on their own they were not able to accomplish a goal but they might be if somebody else 'helped' them. The same was observed in adults, who in many occasions explicitly expressed the need for help in order to open doors (while pushing a buggy for example), carry things and children, going on the bus with a pram, folding a pushchair, or when accessing virtual communication technologies, which in some cases was impossible without help. Sometimes the reason for mobility was precisely the coming together of agents for helping each other, as in the case of grandparents travelling to help after a baby was born.

Relational agency also appeared in the form of objects as aids. In this sense, children and adults were not necessarily aware of the role that certain artefacts had in allowing them to do or access something. However, many objects appeared as extending spatial and mobile capacities of children and adults alike. Lillian's stool and any of the mentioned pushchairs and carriers exemplify this. While the stool afforded Lillian to access spaces of her house that her body on its own did not reach, pushchairs and carriers expanded adults' physical capacities for carrying young children and therefore afforded wider spatial ranges of joint mobility for both children and adults.

Other objects acted as obstacles for children and aids for adults in the mediated control of children's movements. This was illustrated by doors, locks and keys, or by mobility artefacts such as reins and safety belts. In this sense, divergent agencies overlapped, conflicted and challenged each other.

7. Becoming part of the constellation: on the methodological stand, contributions, challenges and critical matters of this study

In Part I and II I critically addressed what I called the 'Charlie Brown syndrome' characterising childhood studies in general and the study of children's mobility in particular. I meant by this an empirical and methodological focus on what children do 'on their own' as if their lives were lived isolated from those of adults. The study of mobilities in young children's everyday lives in Wishwell supported this critique, evidencing the interdependent character of the interactions I was looking at. This had methodological implications in terms of my role as a researcher and my relationships with participants.

Because I did not aim at focusing exclusively on children, nor parents nor materiality but on their interactions, my role as a researcher was not directed exclusively towards any of these agents. I did not find my role problematic in terms of gaining 'membership' to children's world (Mandell, 1988) because I was not seeing their worlds as isolated from those of adults. Therefore, as a researcher I did not strive at becoming 'the other' (the child) but rather to be part of their constellations and compositions of mobilities. Gaining access into these constellations involved continuous and multiple efforts to meet people (adults and children); build trust between us; maintain these relationships; identify and follow the threads that I encountered as much as it was possible to follow within practical and financial constraints; make connections between elements - in the sense pointed out by John Rajchman (2000); negotiate encounters; mutual understanding of language, cultures of communication and cultures of movement.

Furthermore, being part of these constellations I aimed at seeing them from the angles of several of its stars. This meant shifting positions and perspectives. As discussed above, sometimes a change of perspective was physically accomplished through bending down, sitting on the floor next to a baby in one moment and on a chair next to a grandmother the next, holding a leaflet, reading it and attending the activity being advertised on it, photographing a poster, standing and chatting with a mother and then listening to the instructions given by a member of the children's centre staff. It was this constant shift of perspectives that allowed me to move ethnographically between the two directions in which I stretched my observations of mobilities: the smaller and wider scales. Paying attention to the smaller scales of movement implied for me to physically change my positions according to the observed assemblages, so that I could become part of them – handing a toy that a baby was looking at; helping pushing a heavy pushchair; carrying a bag or holding hands with a child.

Moving towards the wider scales of mobilities entailed diverse forms of movement: from looking up something on the Internet – an address, information about an activity, a group, a place, a name, images and so on – to making new contacts with people through email, phone or in person, visiting places and people, talking or reading about them or searching for literature on a topic. In this regard, one of the main challenges of this research approach was to choose which threads to follow and to which degree. This was especially difficult because of the wide array of forms of mobilities being considered by one single researcher. This constituted an exploratory approach that did not aim at narrowing its subject of study but at opening its possibilities. My experience suggests, however, that an approach of this kind would be better accomplished by a research team, ideally combining the knowledge and skills of diverse disciplines. Alternatively, the study of a specific aspect of the ones opened up here would allow an individual researcher to better follow its manifold threads. For example, a focus on the artefacts of joint mobilities would allow multi-cultural and historical perspectives, following the movement of design, functionalities and innovation across different constellations of childhood and mobilities.

The ethnographic practices through which I became – in different forms and to different degrees - part of the constellations or assemblages of young children's everyday lives raise ethical considerations that do not translate into straightforward conclusions, guidelines or warnings but are, rather, reflexive matters to consider and ponder. Here, I would like to bring a scene from fieldwork that did not have a place in the previous chapters, precisely because of its imponderability. However, I do not want to leave it out of my account exactly because of the 'wonder' (MacLure, 2013) it caused. One day, while at St. Mary's playgroup:

> "Gabrielle asked me to hold Jasmine on my arms while she helped Lillian (…) Jasmine put her head over my chest – I was concerned about my butterfly pin hurting her face – while looking at the children around (…). I touched her hands and her hands were very cold. I tried to warm them up by putting my hand (which was warm) over hers" (Fieldnotes, January 2014).

Can I describe and conceptualise this kind of bond as part of research relationships? Is it necessary? A baby's cold hands, being wrapped by the researcher's warm hand… There are, in this scene, affective aspects to the relationship between researcher and participants that escape the research relationships defined by purposeful tools and techniques. These aspects, however, should not be overlooked because of their imponderability. The sensuous dimension of warmth and cold, the researcher's ideas of health and wellbeing, and the will to care for another (human) being trespass binary distinctions between an inside and outside of research, between researcher and friend, carer, mother, adult and child; between the natural sense of warmth and a cultural will to prevent cold – in the same way that warmth trespasses the boundaries of the individual body.

Becoming part of these assemblages afforded insights into young children's lives that I am sharing through this work. It also allowed some mothers to take one of their children to the toilet while knowing the other child was being cared by me. It resulted in a couple of hands being warmed up by mine. I provided some company, chats and an occasional playmate. However, my engagement in these assemblages was temporary and this presented potential ethical issues related to geographies of responsibilities (Massey, 1994): what were the temporal and spatial boundaries to my engagement and responsibility as part of these assemblages? Who or what was responsible for determining these boundaries? I tended to think it was my responsibility, and I thought it was not necessary to mark a sharp end or to cut the networks (Strathern, 1996) created through research practices and expanded fields (Crang & Cook, 2007). However, unexpected outcomes and reactions proved me wrong when a participant abruptly put an end to our relationship just after fieldwork had officially ended. These events made me question my approach to research relationships in ways that I did not consider before, and in relation to which I do not have a final conclusion, so far. It made me aware, overall, of the affective component of research relationships and of the necessity to pay closer attention to it along the whole process of research. Geographies of responsibilities extend to other aspects observed in this study that I will discuss in the next section.

8. From here to where?

The present study opens numerous questions for further research and reflection on the topic of mobilities in young children's everyday lives but also in relation to the wider fields of mobilities, children's geographies and childhood studies, and in relation to the notions of place, assemblages and relational agencies.

On an empirical dimension, this research raises questions about the experience of being a child within a context in which several artefacts mediate interactions with others. Following Zeedyk (2008), for example, what is life on a car seat, a baby carrier or a papoose like? What are the perspectives that children have from these manifold transport means? In this sense, this study calls for a more detailed and dynamic consideration of possible means of transport that do not restrict themselves to the scales and means of movement that characterise physical travel for 'solitary' adults and older children. The compositions of young children's mobilities show a more extensive array of elements. In this context, what are the affective implications of these diverse modes of moving together and apart (Jensen et al., 2015)?

The relationships between physical travel, virtual communication and affective family relationships have been partly explored in this study. However, more than getting to conclusive points in this regard, there are questions and points of departure that can be suggested for further enquiry, such as: how are socioeconomic inequalities expressed through differentiated access to physical travel and use of virtual

communication in the performance of family bonds? How do children perceive space through the combined means of virtual communication and physical travel (for example, their grandparents' houses geographies)? How is 'play' between children and other people being reconfigured from activities based on propinquity to interactions based on virtual co-presence?

From a theoretical point of view, this research posits questions about scales of movement, mobilities and immobilities: can immobility be reconceptualised as movement relative to the scale of observation instead of absolute lack or pause of movement? Are there other forms of mobilities, apart from the ones suggested here, that are not covered under the categories suggested so far within the mobilities paradigm? What other points of ensemble are there between constellations of mobility and constellations of childhood, apart from developmental, safety and proximity discourses?

Methodologically, this study points in some possible directions to further pursuit research on childhood from a geographical perspective. This research departed from a children's centre. This is, a place *for* children (Fog & Gullov, 2003) where I expected to find them. However, the paths I followed took me to unexpected places that I did not directly observed, such as work places and car parks. The research revealed these places to be highly significant in shaping children's everyday mobilities and lives. If the idea that children are connected to places and people that they are unaware of and absent from (Ansell, 2009) is taken seriously (and this study suggest that it should be), future research could take an alternative approach and start from these places where children are not physically present – a factory car park, for example - and from those locations explore the ways in which they affect children's lives. If affect between children's lives and these far away places is mutual, it should be possible to research children's lives departing from anywhere, even the places children are absent from: why are there any children in these locations? Are the people in these places connected to children in any way? How?

Linked to this point is the issue of geographies of responsibility (Bennett, 2010; Massey, 2004) that accompanies a notion of distributive agency. Doreen Massey (2004) and Jane Bennett (2010) express concern about how the distribution of agentic power across hybrid assemblages implies the problem of diffuse responsibility (also discussed in Brown & Middleton, 2005). I acknowledge this problem in relation to young children. However, I would also argue that this understanding of agency might allow a more expanded but precise identification of the agents affecting children's lives. In this sense, a perspective of mobilities and a notion of relational agency might trace the connections between places such as the companies where parents work, local authorities where traffic measures are decided, factories where mobile artefacts are designed and so on, to particular aspects of young children's lives. This would make their responsibilities in relation to children explicit rather than diffuse, contributing in this way to distribute the responsibilities that today seem to fall almost exclusively on families (McLaren & Parusel, 2012).

Afterword

The image of a three-year-old Syrian boy drowned in the coasts of Turkey, widely reported as I drafted my conclusions, has made undeniable the fact that the situations that force people to move affect very young children as well. It also highlights the fact that in Western culture children are differently valued than adults – as evidenced by the impact that this image had in the media.

At different levels, the images of young children suffering the consequences of war and forced migration are having an impact on public opinion that images of adults in the same circumstances do not have. Paradoxically, it seems to be the notion of children as the most vulnerable among humans that generates such a powerful impact (as also observed by Brown & Middleton, 2005), positioning young children as agents capable of making people cry while watching the news, organise public demonstrations and pressuring governments to at least revise migration and refugee policies. It is the same representation of vulnerability and value of young children that makes families want to travel to be together, to visit each other for a child's birth, birthday or baptism, or what makes elder people struggle with computers in order to see their grandchildren on the screen. Even not-yet conceived children can have an impact on residential mobilities and international migration, on the decision-making processes about the neighbourhood, town, country or environment in which adults want children to be born and to be children.

As dis/connected as Syrian and Wishwell's young children can be in the present, there are shared understandings of childhood and mobilities shaping the perception, representation and discourses around the images of young children walking across continental and national boundaries, sleeping on the road, on train corridors, being attacked by the police or lying dead on a beach… and how people understood, represented and gave meaning to young children's mobilities in Wishwell.

Appendix 1. People and their relationships

Name	Relation to Wishwell	Relation to WCC	Relation to people	Relation to other people	Brief account of children's lives
Abha	Resident of Riverton;	Parent	Mother of Isva	India	
Barbra	Resident of Riverton-Wishwell	Parent; volunteer	Mother of Henry	Other places in England	
Bebe	Resident of Wishwell	Parent	Mother of Ragi and Saif	India; other places in England	
Charles	Resident of Wishwell	Any	Pet of Suzanne, Leonard, Louise and Samuel	France, Portugal	
Deva	Resident of Riverton;	Attendant	Son of Heet and Matt	India; other places in England	Deva was 7 months old when we met. His grandparents had come from Punjab to the UK, and the whole family was part of the Sikh community. When we met, his mother Heet was on maternity-leave and they attended several groups and activities every week. This changed when she went back to work and Deva started nursery. He had family in other nearby cities and in India.
Dorothy	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Daughter of Jeanette; sister of Jack	South Africa	Dorothy was three years old when we met. She lived in Wishwell with her parents and brother. Her mother was from South Africa, where she had been to once.
Finley	Resident of Wishwell	Ex-attendant	Son of Jennifer and Peter; brother of Jacob	Australia	Finley was three when we met. He lived in Wishwell with his parents and brother. He had family in other places of the UK and Australia.
Gabrielle	Resident of Wishwell	Parent	Mother of Lillian and Jasmine; wife of Tom	Other places in England; Channel Islands; continental Europe	

Guillermo	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Son of Laura and Luis	South America; other places in England	Guillermo was one year old when we met. His parents came from South America to work in the UK. They lived in Wishwell. He had family in South America and friends in Wishwell and surrounding areas.
Heet	Resident of Riverton;	Parent	Mother of Deva; wife of Matt	India; other places in England	
Henry	Resident of Riverton-Wishwell	Ex-attendant	Son of Barbra	Other places in England	Henry was four years old when we met. He lived in the border between Riverton and Wishwell with his mother and three sisters. He had family in other places of the UK.
Horace	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Son of Josephine and Julian	Other places in England; Austria, Mediterranean Sea	Horace was almost three years old when we met. His mother was Austrian and his father British. They lived in Wishwell, although his father was in the army ad therefore spent most of the time away – in the UK or in mission elsewhere.
Isva	Resident of Riverton;	Attendant	Son of Abha	India	Isva was almost two years old when we met. He was born in India and had come to the UK with his mother to join his father who was studying here. He lived in Riverton and kept a close virtual interaction with his family in India.
Jack	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Son of Jeanette; brother of Dorothy	South Africa	Jack was two when we met. He lived in Wishwell with his parents and sister. His mother had came to the UK from South Africa, where he had family but had not been there yet.
Jacob	Resident of Wishwell	Ex-attendant	Son of Jennifer and Peter; brother of Finley	Australia	Jacob was three when we met. He lived in Wishwell with his parents and brother. He had family in other places of the UK and Australia.
Jasmine	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Daughter of Gabrielle and Tom; sister of Lillian	Other places in England; Channel Islands; continental Europe	Jasmine was three months old when we met. She lived in Wishwell with her parents and sister. She had family in the Channel Islands and in other cities of the UK.
Jeanette	Resident of Wishwell	Parent	Mother of Dorothy and Jack	South Africa	
Jeevi	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Daughter of Tera; sister of Karu	India; other places in England	Jeevi was six months old when we met. She lived in Wishwell with her parents, grandparents and brother. Her grandparents where from Punjab and India. Her family was part of the Sikh community. She had family in Wishwell, nearby cities and India.

Jennifer	Resident of Wishwell	Volunteer	Mother of Finley and Jacob; wife of Peter	Australia	
Josephine	Resident of Wishwell	Any	Mother of Horace; wife of Julian	Other places in England; Austria, Mediterranean Sea	
Julian	Resident of Wishwell	Any	Father of Horace; husband of Josephine	Other places in England; Austria, Mediterranean Sea	
Juliette	Resident of Wishwell; work in Wishwell	Staff	Staff at WCC; staff at town council	Other places in England	
Karu	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Son of Tera; brother of Jeevi	India; other places in England	Karu was four years old when we met. He lived in Wishwell with his parents, grandparents and sister. His grandparents where from Punjab and India. His family was part of the Sikh community. He had family in Wishwell, nearby cities and India.
Laura	Resident of Wishwell	Parent	Mother of Guillermo; wife of Luis	South America; other places in England	
Leonard	Resident of Wishwell	Health control	Son of Louise and Samuel; brother of Suzanne	Other places in England; France, Portugal	Leonard was born during this research. He lived in Wishwell with his parents and sister. He had family in other cities of the UK, France and Portugal, where he had not been yet.
Lillian	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Daughter of Gabrielle and Tom; sister of Lillian	Other places in England; Channel Islands; continental Europe	Lillian was two years old when we met. She lived in Wishwell with her parents and sister. She had family in the Channel Islands and in other cities of the UK.
Louise	Resident of Wishwell	Parent	Mother of Suzanne and Leonard; wife of Samuel; owner of Charles	Other places in England; France, Portugal	
Luis	Resident of Wishwell	Any	Father of Guillermo; husband of Laura	South America; other places in England	

Mark	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Son of Robert and Vama; brother of Tabby	India; other places in England	Mark was three years old when we met. He lived in Wishwell with his parents and sister. His mother was from an Indian family while his father came from a White-British family. He had family in London and other cities in the UK.
Matt	Resident of Riverton;	Any	Father of Deva; husband of Heet	India; other places in England	
Naniji	Resident of Riverton;	Grandparent	Grandmother of Resham	India; other places in England	
Nathaniel	Resident of Wishwell	Any	Son of Paul; neighbour of Richard	Other places in England	
Paul	Resident of Wishwell	Any	Father of Nathaniel; neighbour of Richard	Other places in England	
Peter	Resident of Wishwell	Any	Father of Finley and Jacob; husband of Jennifer	Australia	
Ragi	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Son of Bebe; brother of Saif	India; other places in England	Ragi was two years old when we met. He lives in Wishwell with parents and brother. His family was from Indian origins, part of the Sikh community.
Resham	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Grandson of Naniji	India; other places in England	Resham was four years old when we met. He lived in Wishwell with his parents, but spent most days in Riverton with his grandmother. His family was from Indian origins, part of the Sikh community. He had family in Wishwell, Riverton and India.
Richard	Resident of Wishwell; work in Wishwell	Any	Wishwell town council	Other places in England	
Robert	Resident of Wishwell	Parent	Father of Mark and Tabby; husband of Vama	India; other places in England	
Sai	Work in Wishwell	Staff	Staff at WCC	Other places in England; India; Uganda; Canada	

Saif	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Son of Bebe; brother of Ragi	India; other places in England	Saif was two years old when we met. He lives in Wishwell with parents and brother. His family was from Indian origins, part of the Sikh community.
Samuel	Resident of Wishwell	Any	Father of Suzanne and Leonard; husband of Louise	Other places in England; France, Portugal	
Sarah	Work in Wishwell	Staff	Staff at WCC	Other places in England	
Soor	Resident of Wishwell; work in Wishwell	Staff	Staff at WCC	India; other places in England	
Suzanne	Resident of Wishwell	Ex-attendant	Daughter of Louise and Samuel; sister of Leonard	Other places in England; France, Portugal	Susanne was two when we met. She lived in Wishwell with her Scottish mum and French dad. Her brother was born some time later. She had family in other cities of the UK, France and Portugal. She had already been to France several times.
Tabby	Resident of Wishwell	Attendant	Daughter of Robert and Vama; sister of Mark	India; other places in England	Tabby was two years old when we met. She lived in Wishwell with her parents and brother. Her mother was from an Indian family while her father came from a White-British family. She had family in London and other cities in the UK.
Tera	Resident of Wishwell	Parent	Mother of Jeeva and Karu	India; other places in England	
Tom	Resident of Wishwell; work in Wishwell	Parent	Father of Jasmine and Lillian; husband of Gabrielle	Other places in England; Channel Islands; continental Europe	
Vama	Resident of Wishwell	Parent	Mother of Mark and Tabby; wife of Robert	India; other places in England	

Appendix 2. Parents interview guidelines

I Context and family life history
Origins and mobility: Where were you born? Where are your parents from? Where do they currently live if alive? Where have you lived before? (Same questions about partner if appropriate)

Where was your child born? Why did you move, if applies?

Arrival to Wishwell/current residence: When did you arrive to Wishwell/this location? Why?

Family/friends connections: Where do other members of your family live? Do you have close friends living in other localities? How do you communicate with each other? What kind of relation does your child have with them?

Occupations: What do you and your husband do? (and other members of the household if applicable); Where do/did you and/or your partner work?

Are the children in the house going to nursery or school? Where? Since when? When will they start going?

II Everyday life, routines and family orchestration
Can you describe your child's day? (and from here the family's day): People they stay with and where; People and places you visit almost every week (not necessarily with your child); from time to time; places within Wishwell; Leamington; other localities; Timings and schedules; differences between days of the week; between week days and weekends.

III Children's mobility and communication
Interaction with people and physical movement

People and places your child visits often (with or without you); How does your child get to these places? Does your child communicate with these persons when they do not see each other? Does your child use public transport sometimes? Train, bus…

Does your child receive/send letters; uses the phone to talk to somebody; Skype conversations; other ways of communication?

Media
Does your child watch TV? Which shows/movies? Which are her/his favourite cartoons? Does your child play in some ways that relate to these characters?

Does your child have access to the Internet? Through which means? (computer, IPad, mobile phone…) YouTube? Describe use.

IV Views about the town
Your general opinion about living here; Your opinion regarding safety; transport; neighbours; public spaces; services; beauty; access to nature; access to goods;

V Can I have a look at your child's toys, bedroom or play-space? Can I ask him/her to show me his/her toys, books and movies?
Pick some objects: where have they come from? Who gave them to you/your child? When? What do you/your child do/does with it?

Appendix 3. Diary Guidelines

Hello. First than all, thank you very much for agreeing to keep this diary about your child's everyday life. Here you will find some guidelines to take into account when filling it. These guidelines are questions that you can try to answer in the diary at the end of the day or making quick notes during the day. However, **you do not need to answer them all**, and there are other ways of doing it in addition to writing: you can also add tickets (bus tickets, admission tickets, etc), leaflets, drawings made by your child, by your self or somebody else, refer to pictures you have taken during the day, etc. If your child has spent the day with other people (grandparents, siblings, the other parent, friends, etc), you can ask them too about these issues, or even ask them to contribute to the diary if they want to. You can also use the diary to reflect about past events, general issues or concerns related to the questions you will find here. And, of course, you can create new questions that I have not thought about!

So, here are some questions for the end of the day:

PLACES AND TRIPS: Where did ………………………………. went today? By which transport means? Who did she/he go with? How were these trips for her/him? Did she/he have fun/get bored/sad/happy/angry?

PEOPLE: Which persons did she/he meet in these places? Did she/he meet someone new? Did your child talk by telephone or other media to somebody faraway?

MEDIA: Did your child listened to the radio, watch some shows, cartoons, videos or movies today? Using the TV, DVD, computer, digital tablet, mobile phone? Did she/he play some video games? In which moments of the day? Do you remember something she/he commented about it, or some games she/he did related to these shows or video games?

TOYS: Did your child get some new toy today? (Including magazines or snacks with little toys in it, books, games, etc); which toys did she/he play with? Which toys did she/he carry today in her/his bag or pockets? Who chose these toys?

Please write the date every time you write/add something to the diary if possible.

Appendix 4. Transcription conventions for interviews quotes

… Three points indicate an untimed pause in the speech;

(…) Three points between brackets indicate that part of the transcription has been omitted;

(words) Words between brackets indicate that the original names or words have been omitted, usually for anonymity reasons, and replaced by the generalised description of that place, person or thing inside the brackets.

For the purpose of readability, commas and full stops have been included in the transcripts of interviews. Based on the transcription conventions of PAC (Phonology of Contemporary English, in: http://w3.pac.univ-tlse2.fr/conventions.htm) these symbols should be read as follows:

, Commas indicate a brief pause in the speech, or a 'non-final', 'continuing' intonation contour marked by a shift in pitch or other cues;

. Full stops indicate a relatively long pause in the speech, or a 'final' intonation contour.

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