The participation agenda and research with children: Culture, gender and place.
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My plan

> Public health argument about place (settings), power (gender and culture) and participation
> Present 4 theories of childhood to show how each one changes how we think and act about children
> Show why we should involve children
> Introduce climate change
> Cross cultural research and childhood studies
> Reflect on the state of childhood studies
Protest movements
stolen lands, stolen generations,
stolen waters!
People’s Health Movement
Ottawa Charter (WHO 1986): prerequisites for health

> Peace
> Shelter
> Education
> Food
> Income
> Sustainable ecosystem
> Social justice and equity
Ottawa Charter (WHO 1986): Settings

> Health is created and lived by people within the settings of their everyday life; where they learn, work, play and love. Health is created by caring for oneself and others, by being able to take decisions and have control over one's life circumstances, and by ensuring that the society one lives in creates conditions that allow the attainment of health by all its members

(http://www.ldb.org/iuhpe/ottawa.htm accessed 14 March 2011)
New public health and ecological public health

> Community development, early intervention and protest movements such as Women’s health and environment movements

> Role of WHO—especially Alma Ata Health for All (1978) and Ottawa Charter (1986)

> Importance of participation in a primary health care approach to health promotion:
  - power and control over life
  - improves health promotion
  - restores trust in the state
  - cheaper than fixing big problems

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Four theories of childhood

1. Economic child
2. Developing child
3. Citizen child
4. Global child

Determinants-economic child

> Individual behaviours of children and families
> Rational decisions influenced by rewards of the market
> Decisions to minimise risk for a better future
Economism

>Tesh (1988) connects science with the dominant ideology of individualism

> An individualistic ideology focuses inquiry on the individual and resource allocations are based on individual efficacy, not on impact on the public or larger collective.

> Individualism explains health choices as individual choices in isolation from the collectives within which individuals exist.
Premier’s be active Challenge

> “...part of the government’s efforts to set South Australia’s children on the path to an active and healthy life.” Announcing the program, the Minister for Education & Children's Services said:

> “...We want children to turn off the television and computer games and turn to physical activity...

> “The healthy habits we teach children today can help to reduce their risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and other obesity-related health conditions in the future...”

Technology toys

>“The ME2 is a handheld device …with one onboard game.

>. …you may need to purchase “in world” items to help solve puzzles. And here’s the amazing part of this entire product offering. To purchase items in this virtual word, you don’t use a credit card or real dollars. Your own activity level in the physical world earns points and therefore purchasing power online.

> it also acts as a pedometer…. When the ME2 is connected to a computer, these points are then uploaded to an online account, and then become the currency to purchase items in the online world.

>http://www.360kid.com/blog/?cat=21
Determinants-developing child

> Good quality interaction between adults and children
> Institutions that protect, educate and nurture
> Social conditions for good development
Stage theory

> Frameworks in child psychology often characterise childhood as a journey from conception to adulthood via a series of developmental stages.

> “…adulthood is regarded as the goal and end-point of individual development or perhaps even the very meaning of a person’s childhood.”
Not yetism

Developmentalism leads to a futuristic orientation and barriers to taking the here and now of children seriously
Determinants-citizen child

- Political, economic and social decisions and non-decisions about rights
- Distribution and redistribution of resources and power
- Children’s increasing control over the here and now of their lives-citizens in the making
A new global agenda

Our children have dramatically different life chances depending on where they were born. In Japan or Sweden they can expect to live more than 80 years; in Brazil, 72 years; India, 63 years; and in one of several African countries, fewer than 50 years. And within countries, the differences in life chances are dramatic and are seen worldwide. The poorest of the poor have high levels of illness and premature mortality. But poor health is not confined to those worst off. In countries at all levels of income, health and illness follow a social gradient: the lower the socioeconomic position, the worse the health.
Determinants-global child

- Rights
- Gross inequities
- Moral judgements
Why involve children in research?

- Improves policy and practice
- Moral compass for our society
- Rights and global agenda
- Climate change and the future of the planet
- We now have theoretical and practical guides: social studies or new sociology of childhood
- Accountability and keeping children safe
- We find out new and different things
Why? Social justice and the global agenda

A world where social justice is taken seriously
Social Justice

Empowerment
• Material
• Psychosocial
• Political

Creating conditions for people to lead flourishing lives
Values and a new global agenda

It does not have to be this way and it is not right that it should be like this. Where systematic differences in health are judged to be avoidable by reasonable action they are, quite simply, unfair. It is this that we label health inequity. Putting right these inequities – the huge and remediable differences in health between and within countries – is a matter of social justice. Reducing health inequities is, for the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (hereafter, the Commission), an ethical imperative. Social injustice is killing people on a grand scale.

Why? Policy and practice

> Young people have a fundamental role to play in the formulation of policy on health and environment, in related decision-making processes, and in the building of a healthier and more sustainable world. We are already making real and positive change in our local communities, countries and internationally (World Health Organization 2004 p3).

> Grown-ups never understand anything for themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900 - 1944), "The Little Prince", 1943
Why? Moral compass eg UNICEF 2008

The causes of and solutions to child deaths are well known. Simple, reliable and affordable interventions with the potential to save the lives of millions of children are readily available. The challenge is to ensure that these remedies—provided through a continuum of maternal, newborn and child health care—reach the millions of children and families who, so far, have been passed by
Why? Children’s rights agenda

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and contemporary understandings of childhood encompass a clearer rights-based appreciation that children are not merely adult possessions but also citizens-in-the-making with concomitant rights and responsibilities.
What are ‘human rights’?

Human rights are the minimum standards that people require to live in freedom and dignity.

*Every person* has these rights simply by virtue of being human.

Human rights particularly protect those who are less privileged, more vulnerable, marginalised, exploited.

Others (‘duty-bearers’) have the responsibility to fulfil these rights.

Health workers are amongst the duty-bearers.
Children’s rights agenda

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All children have the right to what follows, no matter what their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, or where they were born or who they were born to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>You have the special right to grow up and to develop physically and spiritually in a healthy and normal way, free and with dignity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>You have a right to a name and to be a member of a country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>You have a right to special care and protection and good food, housing and medical services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>You have the right to special care if handicapped in any way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>You have the right to love and understanding, preferably from parents and family, but from the government where these cannot help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>You have the right to go to school for free, to play, and to have an equal chance to develop yourself and to learn to be responsible and useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Your parents have special responsibilities for your education and guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>You have the right always to be among the first to get help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>You have the right to be protected against cruel acts or exploitation, e.g. you shall not be obliged to do work which hinders your development both physically and mentally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>You should not work before a minimum age and never when that would hinder your health, and your moral and physical development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>You should be taught peace, understanding, tolerance and friendship among all people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/plainchild.asp
Emerging sociology of childhood

> Move beyond psychologically based models of childhood as socialization
> Sees childhood as, to some extent, socially constructed according to historical period and cultural context (eg victims, risks, futures)
> Children shape structures (micro) and social relationships and worthy of study in their own right
> Move from studying what children will become to the here and now of their lives as children
> Acknowledge agency, see children as social actors

Why? Keep adults accountable and children safe

> SA Government response to the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry Report


SA Mullighan Enquiry into abuse of children in state care 2008
Nothing prepared me for the foul undercurrent of society revealed in the evidence to the Inquiry; not my life in the community or my work in the law as a practitioner and a judge. I had no understanding of the widespread prevalence of the sexual abuse of children in South Australia and its frequent devastating and often lifelong consequences for many of them … I was not prepared for the horror of the sexual cruelty and exploitation of little children and vulnerable young people in State care by people in positions of trust and responsibility.
Some witnesses previously had not been able to say what had happened to them. An elderly woman, who had been in State care as a child, said…‘Who is ever there for frightened little girls in cupboards? Now you are there because you give me a voice and I wanted to say that … According to one witness: ‘You get told so many times not to say anything and someone suddenly says, “I want to hear what you have to say”’. Some…witnesses had always wanted to tell…‘I never forgot nothing because I knew one day, through all I went through, that one day I would get a voice out there, out in the world, because virtually, when I got brought up in the homes and taken away at six, it was virtually, I didn’t know, the world was shut out to me’
Why? Find out new and different things eg
Play, sport and physical activity

– 204 children (90 boys/114 girls)
– Aged between 4-12yrs
– 6 schools, low socio-economic areas

“We have to live in the future” In Schiller, W. (ed) Research at the edge:
concepts and challenges: Special Issue, Early Child Development and Care.
174 4 369-388 London: Taylor & Francis
Children’s meanings

> **Sport:** distinctive and powerful
> **Play:** distinctive and powerful
> **Physical activity:** multiple meanings with little impact—an adult word
> **Exercise:** work, purpose, lack of fun
> **Fitness:** little impact, associated with vague understandings of health
I walk my neighbors' dogs.
I walk to school every day.
I choose my cat around the back yard.
I climb trees.

Playing football on the oval.
## Definitions & meaning

**Sport**

- Team & individual, games, play
- High engagement, affect of purpose, competition, organisation—can be fun
- School, indoor & outdoor facilities, equipment, travel

**Play**

- Group & individual games, sport, activities, socialising
- Immediate engagement, energising, fun, freedom, spontaneity, physicality
- School, home. Friends houses, parks, improvise equipment
Play and fun
The three “Fs” of play are fun, friends and fairness

Year 6 Girl: "Chasey"
Rules & adult roles

**Sport**
- Adult-led, pre-planned rules, hierarchical, power-over
- Adults need to organise, transport, provide equipment & facilities, model

**Play**
- Child-centred, spontaneous, avoid boredom, adjust rules, power-with
- Adults encourage, schools foster decision making, need time, space & some equipment
Barriers

**Sport**
- Injuries, cost, distance, travel, bullying, put-downs, humiliation, gender issues

**Play**
- Popularity reduces with age, (move to “hanging out”) arguments and excess time negotiating not playing
There are lots of ways to have fun

Children need to be active every day

Activity is essential for every child's well being

Physical activity plays a major role in disease prevention

Adults have a positive role helping children be active

PLAY AGAIN?
Research informed the campaign

> TV is not the enemy
> children want to be heard
> play and fun important
> inactive kids reject formal sport
> adults need to help
> activity-health links won’t motivate kids

**Strategies of the ad people:**
> motivate inactive children
> target parents and carers - the enablers
Why: Cross sectional research on children and mobility tells us about settings and place

Cross sectional study 2005

> Funded by Australian Research Council to provide an interpretively detailed and theoretically developed account of Australian children’s cultural and social geographies of places and spaces in relation to play and physical activity.

> 586 children aged 3-15 in focus groups in 2 metropolitan, 1 rural and 2 remote schools in South Australia

> Mixed qualitative methods of focus groups, drawing and mapping, photovoice and feedback/further discussions with school communities

Safety and boundaries for 8 & 9 year old city and country children …

Focus groups: where could children go?

**City**
- Friend’s house by one path only
- Ride bike in quiet streets
- Local shops
- One block to little playground

**Country**
- Farm children: almost anywhere
- Town children: many places
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outside front gate</td>
<td>Across bitumen roads, and near electric fences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only where mum can see me</td>
<td>Long grass with snakes, water with sharks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To local shops-no path</td>
<td>Dangerous bridges, dangerous water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outback Australia Travel Guide
## Focus groups: rules for children’s movements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metro</th>
<th>Rural/remote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents and teachers</td>
<td>Parents and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban design: eg cul-de-sac vs grid and traffic density</td>
<td>Emerging sense of children taking decisions to avoid danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural and built features</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Country

This is my favourite photo because it is an action photo and I like action photos.

What I like doing best is motorbike riding because I can help my dad chase sheep and help him with his work.

This photo makes me feel good because some paper can not do this on their bike.

My favourite place to do activities is on the farm because there is so much space to do things and lots of them are fun!
This is my favourite photo because you can play on the bike and go heaps fast.

My favourite place to do activities is my back yard because I slide on the slippery dirt, play on the swings and in the trampoline house.

What I like doing best is playing in my front yard because I can run around a lot.
This is my favourite photo because I like riding my bike.

My favourite place to do activities is in the paddock because I get to go on the tractor with grandpa and dad.

What I like doing best is riding on my bike because I like going to help dad with the sheep.

This photo makes me feel playing because I am on the trampoline.
This is my favourite photo because

**My favourite place to do activities is**

because

This photo makes me feel

because

What I like doing best is

because
This is my favourite photo because

This is my back yard

I always play in it

This photo makes me feel happy and fit,

because it is my bike and I ride it every day

My favourite place to do activities is

The park near my house

because it is big and has lots of activities like swings.

What I like doing best is

playing Sports here

because it is so big
Why? Longitudinal research on children and mobility tells us about gender and power.
Metropolitan Longitudinal study 3 years

> Conducted from a school in a disadvantaged outer northern suburb of Adelaide, the capital of South Australia

> Drew on cross sectional data about safety fears for 8-10 year olds, especially girls

> Explored how 4 year olds moved from kindergarten to school

Longitudinal sample

> The 2005 cross sectional study had 63 children and by 2006 25% had left
> To follow safety started with 3 boys and 3 girls aged 8/9 and 1 10 year old boy and 3 girls (oversample for gender difference)
> For transition from kindy started in 2005 with the only 1 boy and 2 girls who planned to go to the school in site
> From 13 in 2006 3 or 25% dropped out: one 4 year old girl, one ten year old boy and one 8 year old girl
Initial focus group and photovoice findings

> Focus groups in 2006/7: fears of safety increased with age and stronger for girls

> Weak engagement with digital cameras and this was not the best method to explore unsafe places (duh!!)

> 2008 organised separate, child-planned, bus trips for boys and girls
So we added mobile methods

> Two mobile methods are ‘guided’ walks and car/mini bus journey interactions.

> Mobile research encounters offer exploration of sensitive topics, as contexts through which intimacies can be interwoven within narratives of the mundane ordinariness of the everyday (Ross et al 2009).

Boys’ bus tour

> Showed small patches of vacant land that were used as informal meeting places close to home – many could go to meet friends
> One particular open space between the back of houses and a main road they called a creek (looked like a drain to me!)
> Family places for BBQ and outdoor activity
> Finding informal areas in human made aesthetically designed wetlands
“creek” popular on bus tour
“Kai” 8-9-10

A small piece of vacant land used as an informal park close to his home so he could meet friends and play improvised sport unaccompanied by adults.
“Tyler” 8-9-10

A small piece of vacant land used as an informal park close to his home so he could meet friends and play improvised sport unaccompanied by adults.
“Tyler” family
Girls’ bus tour

> Showed formal meeting places that required planning and parental help to attend in order to meet friends
> Also used the *creek* described by boys
> More likely to discuss family problems when passing their homes
> Also enjoyed informal areas in human made aesthetically designed wetlands
“Emily” 10-11-12
“Kate” 10-11-12
Conclusions from metropolitan longitudinal study

> Long term engagement improves data quality by allowing time and space to derive new methods – leading to new and complementary findings
> Promising results from mobile methods
> Gender differences in safety and moving around for play, sport and leisure: although the social studies of childhood argues that childhood is socially constructed there is little attention to gender
> Illuminates the childhood risk discourse
My plan

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Deaths from climate change

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Next steps: Multi country study and parental perspectives and negotiations

> Cultural and policy differences suggest multi-country studies
> Two studies funded between Melbourne, Adelaide, France and Scotland and open to discussions with Canada and Germany (VicHealth and Flinders University)
> Use mobile methods to study negotiations about mobility between parents and 10-12 year olds
> Talk to parents about cultural constructions of a good parent
> Inform research by new mobilities paradigm and gendered constructions of mobility
> Explore data storage and analysis technologies to analyse mobile and visual data effectively
Reflections on mobility, risk and gender

> Moral panic and childhood risk
> Australian experiences
> Swedish and German forests
> Bedouins in the Negev Desert
> French observations
Childhood risk discourses

> once innocent spaces of childhood such as streets, parks and other public places have become redefined as areas where children are in potential danger from other children or from some of the adults usually defined as their protectors. … While the empirical evidence to demonstrate the frequency of the public and private risks confronting children falls far short of the moral panic surrounding notions and of risk and safety, the upshot has been to locate contemporary childhood in increasingly risky environments

This is my favourite photo because I always play in it.

This photo makes me feel happy and fit because it is my bike and I ride it every day.

My favourite place to do activities is the park near my house because it is big and has lots of activities like swings.

What I like doing best is playing sports here because it is so big.
This is my favourite photo because I LIKE IT

My favourite place to do activities is THE RIVER just
because ACROSS FROM MY HOUSE
I LOVE SWIMMING AND I CAN SWIM THERE

This photo makes me feel EMBARRASSED
because BECAUSE I'M ON A LITTLE GIRL'S BIKE

What I like doing best is CLIMBING TREES
because I LIKE CLIMBING UP THE BRANCHES AND IT'S FUN GOING UP HIGH
Metro

Country
International children’s day Dusseldorf 2007
International children’s day Dusseldorf 2007
The forest in Germany 2007

> Germany and Sweden have kindergartens in the forest
> No bad weather, just bad clothes
> Domains of learning, living, adventure, playing, nature
Learning from Bedouin proverbs and the desert in Segev Shalom School November 2010
Rennes 2011: urban design, role of the state and food culture
Where next?

> For the social studies of childhood?

And

> For mobility research?
Some questions for the social studies of childhood

> Where does truth or truths lie? Especially in studies that only involve children, and not adults and social institutions.

> Have we downplayed how geography and the power attached to how place socially constructs childhood? Do we forget gender as a powerful social construction.
Some questions for the social studies of childhood that involve our mobility research

> What are the best study designs: do we just study children’s matters – cross sectional-versus longitudinal designs - relative merits of conducting research in adult-controlled institutions such as schools, as opposed to ethnographic studies in children's worlds?

> Can we make cultural and political constructions of childhood, parenthood and risk more visible by conducting comparative qualitative studies?
Remember the basis of the social studies of childhood

> The way in which society treats children, provides for their childhood and the extent to which it listens to children are core social values. ... Children's lives take place in and across a wide variety of networks, organisations and institutions. The extent and character of their involvement in them is therefore crucial for a better understanding of both children and these social contexts. .. ESRC Children 5-16 Programme ‘Introduction’, http://www.hull.ac.uk/children5to16programme/intro.htm (accessed 18/12/03)

> BUT...there are practical and moral/ethical dilemmas for researchers who use child-centred methods where children’s rights are not highly regarded. These are not just methods, they come with theory and values and there are big problems in implementation in contexts with opposing values.
And finally

> Thank you and I welcome questions and comments

> Our team also welcomes discussions about partnerships, linking projects and general discussions about research—please contact me colin.macdougall@flinders.edu.au