

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND TIME

Edited by Sabina Schutter
and Dana Harring

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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CHILDREN, YOUTH AND TIME

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SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES OF CHILDREN
AND YOUTH VOLUME 30

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND TIME

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FOREWORD

DANA HARRING AND SABINA SCHUTTER

Time in childhood and youth is discussed in two contradictory ways. On the one hand, childhood and youth is portrayed, even romanticized as a time of play, of innocence, of exploration, a time of learning, a time of trial and error (Baader, 2004; Dudek, 2002; Stecher, 2003). On the other hand, time in childhood and youth is restricted by tight societal and generational structures, that is, chains of care, institutional and family time tables, extracurricular activities (Wehr, 2009; Zeiher, 2005).

Additionally, temporality in childhood and youth is considered different to adults perception and disposability of time and temporality (Wehr, 2009). The everyday life of the younger generations is, to a large extent, shaped by adults, leading to an unequal distribution of active and passive disposition of time (Elias, 1984). Where, how, and with whom children and young adults spend their time is subject to a variety of interests and negotiation processes. Within these negotiations, children's and young adult's experiences are one factor among other, such as familial compatibility issues or societal structures and demands.

Third, when considering today's children and youth as a specific generation within a historic development, there is one central occurrence which affects the youngest generations heavily: COVID-19.

When we first thought about editing an issue on children, youth and their perception, and disposition of time, we did not imagine that by the time the issue would be published we would be living in "pandemic times," facing a global crisis which possibly shapes whole generations and their experiences. Thinking about growing up as a time of life influenced by new experiences, learning and development, growing up during a pandemic, where especially social contacts are restricted, the life of children and youth is very different. Also, growing up during the pandemic shows that the strict time requirements, that is, the age of required developments or transitions is also part of a social construction. The disruptions of education, social contacts, losing parents or relatives, and the constant fear of illness is a dominant experience for children now worldwide.

Therefore, it is not surprising that childhood and youth in times of the pandemic became a major topic in this issue.

Sachiko Nozawa and Midori Takahashi examine how home activity patterns of Japanese Preschool children and parental mental health have changed due to the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mariann Fekete and Ádám Nagy analyze how the two major global challenges, again COVID-19 and the climate change, affect the time perception of Hungarian students and whether those challenges hold responsible for the formation of a

generation of crisis. Miftachul Huda and Sultan Salem elaborate research on family time during the pandemic as perceived by public educators.

Regarding the criticism of the sociology of childhood about the perspective on childhood focused on children as becoming adults whereas the sociology of childhood focuses on childhood as a socially constructed category in its own right, the pandemic opens this perspective in a new way. The stress and disruptive experiences of children during the pandemic as well as the changing views of politics and pandemic management on children's lives shed a light on the changeability of perspectives on childhood.

These manifold claims on children's and youth's time can be regarded as a stressor and may lead to stress, exhaustion or as a last resort to pathological findings (e.g., burn out) (Schulte-Markwort, 2016). Furthermore, management of one's own time is regarded as both a challenging and necessary competence in today's society (Muri, 2004).

Andrea Kleeberg-Niepage and Johanna Degen shed light on children's and young people's spending and perception of "digital time," both generally and regarding the pandemic related lockdown in Germany. This contribution discusses young people's evaluations and perspectives addressing the possibly artificial adult differentiation of analogue and digital time or activities as well as adults' presumptions about young people's digital time and the strive for control resulting from these. Additionally, insights from the circumstances of the COVID-19 lockdown are included in gaining knowledge about what is actually important and rewarding when young people spend time digitally. This chapter aims at an intergenerational understanding of the significance of digital media in young people's lives questioning alarmist scenarios of a generation that is lost in the digital world.

Rita Braches-Chyrek analyses the ways in which unequal patterns of time develop effectiveness in childhood and adolescence. Central is the focus of the taken-for-granted experiences in the phase of growing up, the developing ways of life and value attitudes. In this context, questions arise about the extent to which children and adolescents help to shape the time patterns that are relevant to them and how an "equitable distribution" of "temporal resources" could be promoted.

Vivian Naa Ayelesa Acquaye presents findings on children's imagination of the "ideal" way to spend their time and relates it to their everyday life as mainly shaped by the (adult) society.

This volume of Sociological Studies of Children and Youth interrogates the question of children's and young adult's perception and disposition of time both in tight societal and generational contexts.

- How children and youth dispose of time in societal and generational structures?
- The role of time in different institutional and familial contexts (e.g. school, day care, etc.).
- Trajectories of children's and youth's time throughout the day or life course.

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