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Children's prosthetic citizenship as 'here-and-now', 'not-yet' and 'not-here'. the case of the mobile preschool

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ABSTRACT

Using the case of the mobile preschool we focus on how children's prosthetic citizenship is constructed in relation to notions of mobility and place in the accounts of Swedish mobile preschool professionals. Mobile preschools are preschools in buses that visit different places in and around the city on an everyday basis. Analysis of interviews and workshop discussions with mobile preschool professionals shows how three different conceptualisations of children's 'proper' citizenship operate in parallel in these accounts – children as 'not-yet-citizens', children as 'not-here-citizens' and children as 'here-and-now-citizens'. These different conceptualisations are constructed in relation to the everyday mobility of the mobile preschool and notions of places as more or less beneficial for children's proper future and Swedish citizenship, and reveal how mobility is not only a consequence of citizenship relations but also constitutive of them. This paper contributes to knowledge on how mobility and notions of place constitute ideas on citizenship, and how forms and geographies of mobility produce subjects as more or less citizen.

La ciudadanía protética de los niños como 'aquí y ahora', 'todavía no' y 'no aquí'. El caso del la preescolar móvil.

RESUMEN

Utilizando el caso de la preescolar móvil, nos centramos en cómo se construye la ciudadanía protética de los niños en relación con las nociones de movilidad y lugar según los comentarios de los profesionales de la preescolar móvil suecos. Los centros preescolares móviles son centros preescolares en autobuses que visitan diferentes lugares de la ciudad y sus alrededores todos los días. El análisis de entrevistas y discusiones de talleres con profesionales de preescolar móviles muestra cómo tres conceptualizaciones diferentes de la ciudadanía 'adecuada' de los niños operan en paralelo en estos relatos: los niños como 'todavía no ciudadanos', los niños como 'ciudadanos que no están aquí' y los niños como 'ciudadanos del

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aquí y ahora'. Estas diferentes conceptualizaciones se construyen en relación con la movilidad cotidiana de la preescolar móvil y las nociones de lugares como más o menos beneficiosos para el futuro adecuado de los niños y la ciudadanía sueca, y revelan cómo la movilidad no es solo una consecuencia de las relaciones ciudadanas, sino también constitutiva de ellas. Este artículo contribuye al conocimiento de cómo la movilidad y las nociones de lugar constituyen ideas sobre ciudadanía, y cómo las formas y geografías de la movilidad producen sujetos como más o menos ciudadanos.

La citoyenneté prothétique des enfants en termes d'« ici-maintenant », de « pas-encore » et de « pas-ici ». Le cas des haltes-garderies itinérantes.

RÉSUMÉ

En utilisant l'exemple des haltes-garderies itinérantes, nous nous intéressons à la manière dont la citoyenneté prothétique des enfants est construite par rapport aux notions de mobilité et de lieu dans les récits d'employés de haltes-garderies itinérantes en Suède. Celles-ci sont des centres préscolaires structurés dans des autobus qui visitent tous les jours des lieux divers dans la ville et sa périphérie. Une analyse d'entretiens et de débats d'atelier avec des employés de haltes-garderies montre comment trois conceptualisations de la « vraie » citoyenneté de l'enfant fonctionnent parallèlement à ces récits: l'enfant « pas-encore citoyen », l'enfant « pas-ici citoyen » et l'enfant « ici-maintenant citoyen ». Ces différentes conceptualisations sont construites par rapport à la mobilité quotidienne de la halte-garderie itinérante et à l'idée de lieu comme étant plus ou moins bénéfique à l'avenir des enfants et à leur nationalité suédoise, et révèle la manière dont la mobilité est non seulement une conséquence des rapports de citoyenneté, mais leur est aussi intrinsèque. Cet article contribue aux connaissances concernant la manière dont la mobilité et les notions de lieux constituent des concepts concernant la citoyenneté, et comment les formes et les géographies de la mobilité produisent des individus qui sont plus ou moins citoyens.

Introduction

(...) And we try to see to that they become participants or citizens in their city or in their neighbourhood, in society. This is the starting point in what we do, and they are small children, so that means we go visit and encounter things. And that is what I've seen as the purpose of it all – that they get to visit different places in society that they would probably never encounter otherwise. (...) (respondent BN)

The significance of mobility in understanding and analysing society has been underlined for some time now (Sheller & Urry, 2006). This paper addresses how mobility constitutes ideas on citizenship and how forms of mobility produce subjects as 'more' or 'less' citizen (Spinney et al., 2015). Using the case of the mobile preschool (preschools in buses that visit different places in and around the city on an everyday basis), we argue that children's citizenship is constructed in relation to notions of mobility and place in the

accounts of mobile preschool professionals. The quote above illustrates the link between the mobility of the preschool, places to go to and children's citizenship. In this paper, we will show how in mobile preschool professionals' accounts of the benefits of mobile preschools, three different conceptualisations of children's citizenship operate in parallel – children as 'not-yet-citizens', children as 'not-here-citizens' and children as 'here-and-now citizens'. These conceptualisations draw upon the everyday mobility of the mobile preschool and reveal how mobility is not only a consequence of citizenship relations but also constitutive of them (Cresswell, 2009). Approaching citizenship from a mobile ontology foregrounds the processual, the performative and the everyday (Spinney et al., 2015). Cresswell (2009) discusses the relational understanding of citizenship and its connection to mobility and place in terms of *prosthetic citizenship*. According to Cresswell, the 'citizen' is defined by the right to mobility, and mobility is produced by 'an assemblage of people and things, of technologies and regulations, of stories and sites' (2009 p. 271). Hence, mobility and place are a fundamental part of the processes through which citizenship is constructed, that is, how 'changing geographies of mobility, the local geographies of place and the splintering of public space in the city' produce new ideas, experiences and practices of citizenship (Ibid, p. 270). As an example, increasing privatisation and surveillance of urban public spaces constrain the mobility of certain groups in public spaces and sphere (Harvey, 2003). Children – particularly young children – are, due to age and childhood position, seen as belonging in enclosed, protected, (semi)-private spaces. Notions of who belongs in public space and who does not play an important role here, and there is a taken-for-granted geographical imagination of children as belonging in these safe spaces, and as out of place in risky public spaces due to their vulnerability (Valentine, 2017). Mobile preschools produce new everyday geographies of mobilities by taking children outside the preschool premises by bus, making visible notions of young children's mobilities and belonging. In this paper, we will show how the new geography of preschool mobility construct mobile preschool professionals' ideas of young children's citizenship, not only in relation to enclosed semi-private spaces but to a wider variety of spaces.

The mobile preschool concept

Since 2007 a new type of preschool has appeared in the Swedish school landscape. Mobile preschools use buses on a daily basis to take children and teachers to different places around the city to engage in educational activities and play. It is part of the Swedish early childhood education and care (ECEC) system based on an 'educare' model that offers both day-care and education. Mobile preschools were introduced in Sweden by Solveig Sunnebo, owner of Helianthus AB, a private company in the Swedish early childhood sector. Helianthus preschools are located mainly in multi-ethnic, lower-income suburbs around Stockholm, and Sunnebo had long considered how to introduce children living in these suburbs to places outside them.¹ Her ideas about the pedagogical benefits of expanding children's local horizons resulted in a new preschool concept – remodelled buses. Mobile preschools are used both to resolve space shortages and issues with aging and inadequate buildings, but also for pedagogical reasons, such as the opportunity to discover 'new learning environments'. For mobile preschool enthusiasts such as Sunnebo or teachers who work in municipal mobile preschools, the pedagogical

benefits are the main concern. In Sweden, there are about 55 buses (Gustafson et al., 2020), often organized as divisions connected to a stationary preschool. The remodelled buses are equipped with a toilet and a kitchenette, as well as storage space for food and equipment and accommodate around 20 children and three teachers (two of whom also function as bus drivers). The children participate from 9 am to 3 pm and, depending on their parents' working schedules, and attend the stationary preschool before and after bus hours. The children usually live in the neighbourhoods where the buses have their home base. As an effect of residential segregation (Malmberg & Andersson, 2021), mobile preschool children fall into two categories: native Swedes who live in middle/high income neighbourhoods and children of foreign backgrounds who live in lower-income neighbourhoods. The Swedish preschool curriculum stipulates that children should have opportunities to participate in and learn about their surrounding environment and wider society (LpFö18, 2018). As we will show, mobile preschool professionals discuss the benefits of the mobile preschool practice in terms of providing a means for young children to gain access to spaces outside the semi-private spaces of the preschool. Through their accounts, we can grasp how the mobile preschool is seen as benefiting young children's learning and participation in societal spaces, and also reveal how the preschool is constructed as a tool to shape children's citizenship. In the following sections, children's citizenship is discussed in relation to the role of early childhood education in preparing children for future 'responsible' citizenship. Children's citizenship is also discussed in terms of the (lack of) opportunities for children to engage in urban citizenship practices outside the (semi-)private spaces of the home and childhood institutions.

Children and citizenship

There is no single definition of citizenship, and the concept of children's citizenship is likewise discussed in many ways and from different perspectives. The literature on children's citizenship shows that children commonly are viewed as future citizens, or 'not-yet-citizens' (Qvortrup, 2005). Formal definitions of citizenship focus on the status of the citizen connected to individual human and political rights (Marshall, 1950). Due to their status as minors, children cannot have full citizenship status with political rights, such as the right to vote. Rather, they are semi-citizens with human rights, as well as some social and civil rights, such as the right to play or the right to education (Cohen, 2005). This is the case not only in the formal political sphere but also in other arenas of their everyday lives (James, 2011). Hence, even in terms of children's informal citizenship and their social and civil rights, children are often viewed as not-yet-citizens and as not yet capable of knowing what is best for them. The not-yet of children's citizenship is connected to ideas of children as 'becomings', linking adults and adulthood to competency and children and childhood to incompetency (Uprichard, 2008). This is the case in most domains of children's everyday life. For example, in education institutions, the focus is usually more on how to shape children into 'proper' future citizens than on children's own views or experiences of their social, civil and political rights and belonging. As such, childhood education institutions are and have been important spaces to mould children into proper citizens. The literature on children's citizenship has highlighted how one important reason for the institutionalization of childhood has been to shape children into the right kind of citizens through engaging children in 'meaningful' activities, rules and routines in specific

adult-supervised spaces (Gagen, 2000; Mills, 2013). Institutions such as schools, supervised playgrounds and organized leisure activities have been, and still are, playing an important role in keeping children off the streets and away from 'bad' influences. The dichotomy of children and public space, and the question how to address unsupervised, 'unruly' children in it, has deep historical roots (S. E. Cahill, 1990). The following sections discuss the role of childhood education institutions in shaping children's citizenship.

Raising good citizens

Young children's pathway to proper future citizenship is usually first and foremost regarded as the responsibility of parents. However, ECEC institutions are important actors in the civilizing processes surrounding children's citizenship (Gilliam and Gulløv, 2014). Historically, they have been regarded as a complement to the family as part of a broader socio-political project that can offset socio-economic differences (Vandenbroeck & Lazzari, 2014). Since the turn of the twentieth century, Sweden's ECEC have been conceptualized as a means to offset parents' inability to provide children with the necessary social, economic and psychological support and to instil societal norms and values (Sandin, 2011). As an early example, in her 1935 book *City Children* politician Alva Myrdal (1935) expressed concern about the negative impact of an industrializing Sweden on families, as work and home became increasingly separated. Myrdal advocated 'large children's rooms' where trained teachers would care for and educate children, regardless of background, and socialize them into responsible citizens. Perhaps as a result of Myrdal's and others' work, in the 1950s, the Swedish state started to assume responsibility for young children's future citizenship (Lindgren & Söderlind, 2019). In the 1970s, general preschool for all children was established as a way both to provide parents with childcare and to instil modern views about children and parenting, such as notions of gender equality (Lindgren, 2006). This compensatory approach is also visible in conceptualizations regarding the mission of contemporary early childhood education. According to Sandin (2011), parents today receive advice about the UN convention on the rights of the child, about practices that are in children's best interests and ideas about the competent child. Hence, different time periods have targeted different specific parental problems that need to be addressed. In this paper, we will show how mobile preschool professionals latch onto discourses of compensatory pedagogies by addressing children's family and residential backgrounds and future citizenship.

Besides assisting parents in raising children into morally desirable adult citizens, childhood education institutions also engage in citizenship education. Within Swedish ECEC today, all preschool activities are viewed as founded on the notion of democracy and guided by principles such as equity, freedom and solidarity as they shape democratic citizens (Axelsson et al., 2015). Alongside this citizenship role, since the mid-1990s Swedish educational policy and school curricula have increasingly emphasized an entrepreneurial discourse (Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2017), even at the preschool level (Axelsson et al., 2015). This development is linked to broader neoliberal trends that understand education as a private rather than common good. Dahlstedt and Fejes (2017) hold that one aim of contemporary schools is to mould future citizens that possess self-responsibility, flexibility and the ability to solve problems in a changing and uncertain future. Children are expected to develop entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, responsibility, self-

confidence and self-starting (Leffler, 2006). In the accounts of the mobile preschool professionals; notions of space and mobility are linked to specific citizenship skills that children are supposed to attain which relate to the entrepreneurial discourse.

We now move on to another form of citizenship: urban citizenship. Since mobile preschools take children outside the preschool premises, children have the opportunity to participate in a variety of urban spaces.

Children's 'here-and-now' citizenship

In exploring children's citizenship, researchers have criticized the idea that children are viewed only as not-yet-citizens and argue that children's participation in the everyday spaces of social life means they should be viewed as full citizens already (Matthews, 2003). Urban citizenship is an informal kind of citizenship that entails gaining access to public spaces, which underscores the importance of viewing citizenship not only as a status but also as practice. In the literature on public space, access to public spaces and the ability to participate in them 'here and now' are central to urban citizenship, a position often framed as the 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1996). Access to public space and the opportunity to (re)shape such spaces in their own interests are important for people's sense of societal inclusion (Harvey, 2003). For young children, engaging in urban citizenship means being able to create interdependent relations with the local social and material world that surrounds them (Ekman Ladru & Gustafson, 2020; Kernan, 2010). Their sense of citizenship and social belonging differs depending on the spaces they are able to access and participate in. However, different social groups vary in their ability to exercise rights to urban public spaces. Children's access to public space has changed considerably since the 1950s due to a complex set of factors, including the growing dominance of the automobile, the increasingly privatized, controlled and commercialized nature of public space, as well as parental constructions of risk (Valentine, 2017). Childhood institutionalization has led children to live their daily lives shuttling between social islands – home, (pre) school, clubs and activities – a trend termed *insularisation* (Zeicher, 2003). In Sweden, increased segregation has further divided cities, resulting in few encounters between children of different backgrounds, with consequences for children's spatial identities and belonging (Bunar & Ambrose, 2016). As we will show, mobile preschools are seen to overcome these barriers and to increase children's access to public spaces.

Children's prosthetic citizenship

In this paper, we analyse how mobile preschool professionals construct young children's citizenship in terms of specific spaces and mobilities. The concept of *prosthetic citizenship* is helpful in understanding these professionals' construction of children's citizenship. (Cresswell, 2009, p. 271) argues that instead of thinking of the citizen in a liberal democratic manner – that is, in terms of the 'able-bodied individual who is unconnected to the world around him' – citizens' capacities are intimately connected to the surrounding world:

'prosthetic citizenship insists on the fact that bodies are parts of assemblages that connect them to things such as infrastructures, laws and regulations, notions of place and mobility and the geographical landscape about them'.

Notions of place and mobility are central to the idea of the citizen, and geographical imaginations of place and mobility are powerful in the construction of the citizen. Imaginations that locate and fixate certain identities to certain places and/or (im)mobilities play a central role in the 'making up' of the citizen (Cresswell, 2009, p. 270). Hence, the spaces that people gain access to, and imaginations of who belongs in which spaces, are central in the construction of citizenship. Cresswell (2009) discusses how the figure of the 'citizen' has emerged in relation to the idea of the nation-state and its spaces. He argues that also other (urban) geographies produce citizenship, affecting unhoused people, migrants, women etcetera in terms of belonging.

Children's citizenship is often discussed in temporal terms (children as future citizens) and not spatial terms (e.g., the geographies of children's citizenship). One important task of childhood education institutions is to shape children into responsible future citizens. Conceptualising children's citizenship as prosthetic helps us see how children's citizenship-in-the-making is not only constructed in terms of time (children as becoming citizens), but also in terms of place and mobility, including how places and (im)mobilities are imagined. We discuss how mobile preschool professionals construct children's citizenship specifically in terms of their notions of place and mobility. As we will show, mobile preschools' everyday mobility and the opportunity to travel by bus and foot in and between a variety of spaces (social, cultural, nature etc.) in and around the city brings about ideas and practices of moulding children's citizenship by connecting (certain) children to (certain) spaces. Mobile preschool professionals construct children as citizens-in-the-making not only in terms of their trajectory towards adulthood and full citizenship (not-yet-citizens) but also in terms of their location within places of residence and the need to take children to proper 'spaces of citizenship' (Cresswell, 2013): what we term as not-here-citizens. Hence, the starting point for citizenship-constructing processes is not only children's age and childhood position but also their identities, their origins and their current places of residence, along with the ways these places are imagined. At the same time, mobile preschool professionals acknowledge children's right to the city and their here-and-now citizenship.

Because the mobile preschool offers access to a large bus, the case also highlights the role of not only the materiality of places but also of mobile materiality in shaping human practices (Latour, 2005) and in 'making up the citizen' (Cresswell, 2013, p. 18). As Cresswell (2009) underscores, people move with the help of prosthetic devices such as cars, passports, parents, or wheelchairs. Access to certain devices affects how people can move across national borders or within cities, and hence how they can exercise their citizenship. As we will show, mobile preschool professionals view the mobile preschool (a bus-teacher-children assemblage), through its capacity to move between spaces around the city, as a (socio-material) tool – a prosthetic device – for moving and linking children to spaces in order to practice a here-and-now citizenship. In addition, the mobile preschool is viewed as a tool to link children to certain spaces that they believe to facilitate children's future citizenship and specifically 'Swedish' citizenship. Following Cresswell's (2006) point to not focus just on movement itself or on mobility practices but also on the meaning of

mobility (or mobile materiality), we show how the mobile socio-materiality of the bus-teachers-children assemblage is constructed as a useful device for facilitating children's citizenship. Mobile preschools are viewed as the prosthetic devices that move and connect children to specific spaces of citizenship in order to facilitate their pathway in becoming 'proper' citizens in Swedish, adult society. This paper therefore adds to debates on citizenship, mobility and materiality (Cresswell, 2009; Spinney et al., 2015).

Methodology

The analyses are based on interviews and workshops, conducted within a larger ethnographic project on children's informal citizenship.² Fourteen individual interviews with civil servants and heads of preschools were conducted in March 2016, and workshops with civil servants responsible for managing mobile preschools, heads of mobile preschools and mobile preschool teachers (70 participants total) were organized in October 2017 as part of a national conference. The interviews and workshop discussions were recorded and transcribed. Respondents discussed both the possibilities and challenges of the mobile preschool practice, even though often they were very enthusiastic about the benefits of the practice in general and their own mobile preschool in particular. In analysing the material, we found that some of the discussions reflected an understanding of the benefits of mobile preschools in terms of citizenship as we show below.

Mobilising children's citizenship

The accounts of the mobile preschool professionals portrayed the mobile preschool as particularly well-equipped to provide opportunities for children to participate in and learn about their local environment and broader society (LpFö18). They mentioned the fact that mobile preschools enabled children to participate in spaces outside the institutionalized confines of the preschool premises. This was seen as a way to increase children's participation in society, and by extension children's citizenship. According to the professionals, being able to expand young children's local horizons by taking them to places outside their local neighbourhoods was the major benefit of mobile preschools. However, while mobile preschool professionals' accounts focused on the importance of giving children access to a variety of spaces outside the preschool – giving them a right to public space – they were less concerned about opportunities for children to create interdependent relations to these spaces and a sense of citizenship and social belonging, and more concerned about teaching children specific urban citizenship skills.

Teaching and attaining citizenship skills

In discussing the benefits of taking children by bus to places outside their neighbourhoods, mobile preschool professionals stressed the possibility of teaching and attaining citizenship skills. Participating in public space and training the children in citizenship skills is similar to what Biesta (2012) called 'public pedagogy as pedagogy for the public' (Biesta, 2012, p. 691), where the world is seen as a place to instruct citizens in how to behave in order to be good citizens. Mobile preschools provide the opportunity to participate in public spaces within the context of formal preschool education, creating an opportunity

to engage in more formal citizenship education for young children in these spaces. Mobile preschool professionals highlighted how children get ample opportunities to learn both in and about society when they can participate in public spaces, which they emphasised as an important benefit of this form of preschool. We could describe this perspective as framing the mobile preschool as a socio-material tool for the shaping of children's citizenship. By changing the everyday mobilities of children and actively taking them to the right places, the mobile preschool was seen as beneficial both for children's here-and-now citizenship and for their future citizenship. Learning to interact with places and people was thought of as a natural consequence of visiting many different places and meeting people there. It was regarded particularly beneficial for children to be able to discover and learn in and about the 'real' world – and about 'reality' in the world beyond the preschool premises. Mobile preschool professionals portrayed the preschool space – specifically designed for and tailored to young children – as lacking reality. They described traveling to real-world spaces outside the preschool as beneficial for young children:

It's an important practice, [there's] not all these adaptations. We adapt so very much, and this is killing all the fantasy. And you can't do that when you are out in the forest, when you go [by bus.]. Or when you are in the city centre – that's also real. It isn't adapted for children in that way. (respondent K)

While preschool spaces are designed for children's activities, age, body size and physical capacities, respondents described them as *too* adjusted and *too* safe, constructing the outside and beyond as more interesting. Interestingly, the 'child-friendliness' of spaces is usually viewed as a prerequisite for children's participation in these spaces and therefore for their evolving sense of citizenship and belonging (Nimmo, 2008). Respondents, however, viewed spaces that were made (too) safe and accessible for young children as stunting their growth to becoming proper citizens. They therefore focused more on a kind of citizenship that involves the capacity to overcome difficulties rather than a sense of participation and belonging, indicating the shift towards a more entrepreneurial discourse of citizenship (Axelsson et al., 2015). Respondents often mentioned natural spaces, such as the forest, as examples of the real world. In line with what others have shown (Harju et al., 2020; Taylor, 2011), they constructed nature as the ideal space for young children's learning and imagination. In the context of the mobile preschool, the benefit of natural spaces was not only connected to the absence of ready-made toys but also to the physical demands that walking and playing in the forest placed on children's bodies, building endurance and presenting physical challenges they had to overcome independently. Being outdoors turned children into persistent, independent, healthy individuals, according to the professionals. They also highlighted improvements in children's walking abilities as one example of this:

More endurance ... the first group, one had and they just said 'Oh, it's so hard to walk'. But then a couple of months later, it was like ... they walked for miles. (workshop discussions)

Hence, respondents found that taking children to natural real-world spaces where children were able to engage in intense and challenging mobilities built certain citizenship skills. They also viewed fostering independence as beneficial for the coming

transition to school, where children would be expected to manage more things by themselves. Independence was also linked to the children taking responsibility for carrying their own belongings:

We worked a lot with taking responsibility for your things. We had backpacks with ice skates and things like that, and carrying it with you to the bus, getting on the bus and then carrying it to the ice rink. (workshop discussions)

Hence, the benefits of traveling to real-world places also encouraged the development and fostering of independence and responsibility.

While they often mentioned natural spaces in relation to real-world spaces, the professionals described other spaces outside the traditional preschool building – referred to as ‘society’ – as well. In order to participate in these societal spaces, children needed to learn to conduct themselves safely. Participating in urban spaces was viewed as a way to teach children how to behave in certain places, such as places with heavy traffic. Research on children’s geographies has long recognized that children attain urban skills and learn to be ‘street smart’ (e.g., C. Cahill, 2000). This involves learning to negotiate many different situations and relations. Respondents highlighted participation in real-world spaces predominantly as a way to teach children to comply with safety rules for specific places rather than to increase their ‘street smartness’. Children needed to learn to recognize the risks associated with the places they visited – including the risks involved traveling by bus – and to comply with adult rules. Visiting a variety of places has the benefit of training the children to behave according to the specific rules of conduct associated with those places – an important citizenship skill. Hence, rather than enabling children to participate in public spaces on their own terms – and practicing here-and-now citizenship, participants portrayed the mobile preschool as teaching children to adapt to adult settings and rules, shaping them into future citizens. Again, they viewed the mobile preschool as a tool that put children in contact with the right places, people and learning situations needed to accomplish this transformation.

Study participants viewed visits to real-world places such as museums or police stations – where strict safety rules are communicated by authoritative adults – as a good way to train children to comply with existing safety rules:

We were visiting a fire station and a police station and emergency services, and there they get the rules of behaviour, what they are allowed to do and what not: for example, for security reasons. (workshop discussions)

Thus, leaving the preschool premises to participate in real-world places was seen as teaching children to comply with adult rules. This implies an understanding of young children’s citizenship as emerging from gradual contact with and adjustment to the adult world, where there are specific rules and behavioural codes. The mobile preschool was viewed as a socio-material tool that could introduce children to this world in order to shape them into proper adults.

We have the whole curriculum that says that we need to integrate children into society. And we try to see to that they become participants or citizens in their city or in their neighbourhood, in society. This is the starting point in what we do, and they are small children, so that means we go visit and encounter things. And that is what I’ve seen as the purpose of it all –

that they get to visit different places in society that they would probably never encounter otherwise. In addition, they get to meet people with different job roles and learn to handle this. (respondent B)

Respondents portrayed access to a large, fully equipped bus as a unique opportunity to educate children in specific adult places these children otherwise would not visit or learn about. They viewed this as a way to work towards the incorporation of children into the broader society, a key theme in the Swedish preschool curriculum. The mobile preschool refines children's social skills in terms of curiosity, openness and communication skills through ample meetings with adults in public spaces. The social skills that children practiced through the mobile preschool were the type of skills that were associated with their future citizenship.

So, they become very social, the children, very open towards other people, and they dare to ask questions and make contact. A good training ground for good citizens. (respondent B)

The quote above frame children's communication skills as an important asset for an uncertain future. Respondents' stories associate these skills both with entrepreneurial skills and with learning about and handling people.

In this section we have shown how mobile preschool professionals connect the benefits of mobile preschools to the citizenship skills that children attain in real-world places which they imagine as beneficial for children: nature spaces and spaces understood to be part of the adult world. By enabling participation in spaces outside the traditional tailored-for-children preschool, the mobile preschool trains children in endurance, independence, curiosity, communication and taking responsibility for their own safety and personal belongings. In these stories, children's citizenship concerns their proper future citizenship rather than here-and-now urban citizenship, focusing particularly on citizenship skills that are transferred to children in adult spaces, which prepare them for the future. Mobile preschools are viewed as the socio-material tools that cleverly link children to specific spaces of citizenship (Cresswell, 2013) where they can participate here-and-now, but above all can be shaped into citizens with the personal and social skills that prepare them for the future. These findings are a clear example of how ideas of citizenship, mobility, places and materiality are interlinked. In the next section, we discuss how respondents viewed the concept as beneficial for the integration of migrant children and their parents into Swedish society.

Integration into Swedish society

[T]hen they moved this bus after pressure from us and from managers, that we needed it in our neighbourhood. I work in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood where about 96 percent of the children are from other cultures. Right now, I have 4 Swedish children that have Swedish as a first language, out of 99 ... We argued that we wanted to have the bus here, because we thought that it's precisely our children that need this bus and this opportunity. We've never regretted that. (respondent B)

This quote illustrates the idea that mobile preschools can aid in integration by taking migrant children to other parts of the city and its surroundings – places where they can meet other people and see and do other things they usually don't see and do in their

neighbourhoods. This must be understood in relation to the socioeconomic and ethnic segregation of Swedish cities. Mobile preschools are located in a variety of neighbourhoods, but quite often in those with the lowest incomes and a large percentage of migrant families, including new arrivals. Media discourse refers to these neighbourhoods on the outskirts of cities as 'deprived suburbs' or 'migrant suburbs' (Backvall, 2019). Helping integrate migrant children into Swedish society by literally transporting children to parts of the city conceptualized as Swedish was a driving force in launching the first mobile preschool, and this has continued to be a motivation in establishing preschool buses in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. In discussing the benefits of mobile preschools, respondents viewed them as a means to introduce migrant children to Swedish society by showing them places outside their multi-ethnic 'non-Swedish' neighbourhoods.

Our bus is one hundred percent about integration. Places to meet people other than those living in this neighbourhood. To see society. Being out in nature, since we have mostly Somali children in this neighbourhood. They are seldom out in nature, or the parents hardly ever go out in nature. So, we have a big task for our children here. (workshop discussions)

As the quote illustrates, visiting natural areas is viewed as important to the integration of migrants into Swedish society. Multi-ethnic neighbourhoods are imagined to be separated from mainstream Swedish society. Mobile preschools therefore serve to integrate migrant children into Swedish society by showing and teaching them about 'Swedish' neighbourhoods, and enabling migrant children to 'see Swedish society'. Taking migrant children outside their neighbourhoods is thought to compensate for what is missing in their own neighbourhoods and in their family situations.

You can see how much the children get to experience. Just to get out, outside this neighbourhood, which our children do not do. That is what I wanted, because that is what I felt was my dream: to get the children out of [name of neighbourhood] . . . and show them other parts of [name of city]. What is outside? They don't know. The parents say 'there is the chance for our children to see other parts of the city, because we don't have that chance'. Go to the beach, for example. Many children did not even know what a beach looked like. (respondent R)

The respondents showed a great deal of enthusiasm and a genuine commitment to working toward the integration of migrant children and their parents living in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. This demonstrated their conviction to actually doing something to counter the fragmentation of daily life that is the consequence of residential segregation in Swedish cities. In the light of the negative discourse and polarized debate on migration and integration in contemporary Sweden and elsewhere, we find this rather hopeful. However, the discourse on the integrative benefits of mobile preschools is problematic, in that migrant children, their families and neighbourhoods are constructed as lacking in terms of integration. Multi-ethnic neighbourhoods are viewed as lacking the cultural and nature experiences that Swedish neighbourhoods offer children. In addition, children's families are described as 'immobile', as never leaving the neighbourhood:

We have so many children that are not going anywhere other than Ica Maxi [a supermarket chain] and McDonalds. They don't have the chance. . . . The family might not even have a car. So, this, to be able to drive around in our surroundings . . . These are experiences that these children otherwise never would have gotten. They would not even have gone to a lake. (respondent W)

Respondents' constructed these families as immobile in a local sense, since their international migration experiences were not considered. Commercial spaces and fast-food restaurants such as Ica Maxi and McDonalds are then framed as the wrong sorts of places. As the quote above illustrates, mobile preschools can compensate for migrant children's lack of proper spatial experiences. Families are also portrayed as unable to give their children the right experiences or take them to the right places, such as the lake and other natural places outside the neighbourhood and the city.

Children's experiences and identities are constructed as immobile and as firmly connected to the places they live in. The children are positioned *within* their multi-ethnic neighbourhoods and at the same time *outside* Swedish society. They are also, together with their parents, referred to as 'them', with the consequence that neither the children, their parents nor the neighbourhoods they live in are understood as being a true part of Swedish society. Rather, they are something 'other'. At the same time, however, the mobile preschool is understood to be responsible for the children, who are referred to as 'our' children and as 'on their way to becoming Swedish'. As discussed above, respondents had a genuine commitment to the children's well-being and to working toward their integration into Swedish society. This integration has to work both ways to be successful:

Now it is well-known, the bus, and I must say that we have been very well received everywhere in society. Incredible open arms. And that is what I like so much, that our children get to see other things, get to see Swedish society, but Swedish society also gets to see our children and meet our children. That is just as important. (respondent B)

As discussed earlier, there is a long history to the idea that ECEC institutions can serve to compensate for lack in children's families and environments. This idea is enacted in mobile preschools, which are constructed as particularly suitable to compensate for migrant children's living situations. The integration of new citizens into society has been one role of Swedish ECEC since the 1970s (Lunneblad, 2006), and research has shown how preschools work to compensate for migrant children's missing out on certain experiences. Lunneblad (2013) found that preschool teachers talked about the need to compensate for a lack of experiences, customs and routines connected to the Swedish culture among newly arrived families. One risk that researchers (e.g., Åkerblom & Harju, 2019) have identified is that focusing on compensation may result in viewing migrant children only in terms of their lacks or deficits compared to what is felt to be normal and complete, which usually reflects the values and experiences of the middle-class ethnically Swedish majority. The discourse on integration in the mobile preschool context constructs migrant children as stuck in their neighbourhoods and their parents as unable to show them other places. Migrant families are constructed as immobile, located and fixed in places that are constructed as lacking Swedishness, and these imaginations are powerful in the construction of these children's citizenship. We therefore argue that children are not only understood as not-yet-citizens, but also as not-here-citizens, since the only way for these children (and their parents) to become proper Swedish citizens is to leave their multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. The mobile preschool is portrayed as the solution to this problem, since it can be used as a tool to compensate for children's lack of Swedishness in

their family background and living environments. As the quote below illustrates, respondents believe that living in a 'segregated' neighbourhood poses various risks for these children, such as learning to be afraid of the outside world.

And there I felt that we had a big responsibility to see that these children got the opportunity to broaden their horizons instead of constantly being in a segregated environment, where people did not embrace the surrounding world but were afraid of it. Because it's like that; if you don't know what is outside, you tend to be afraid of it. (respondent S)

Respondents believe that compensatory approaches and integrative experiences benefited not only the children but also their parents as a side effect. Through their children, parents would be able to discover amenities outside their neighbourhoods, such as sports facilities and museums. This would give parents new opportunities to take part in Swedish society:

The bus is really outstanding when you want to do something in a neighbourhood like this. Because you can't get these children, these small children, out in society any other way. Without this, you are in this neighbourhood, and you meet the people you always meet, and who speak the same language as you. We take them to other places and they get to see other things, and they come home and tell their parents where they've been. The parents come and ask, 'Where have you been?' If there's anything when it comes to early interventions for integration, then the bus is definitely an incredibly great tool for that. (respondent B)

A world of opportunities can be found outside the multi-ethnic neighbourhoods, and children and their families can discover it, but only with help from the outside. Respondents' discourse about mobile preschools portrayed them as a means to mobilise these children (Murray & Cortés-Morales, 2019). As the quote below illustrates, they viewed broadening children's horizons and moving them outside the narrow world of their neighbourhoods as crucial for future Swedish citizenship:

Perhaps we have to broaden these views for these children, and particularly for my immigrant children. How would they be able to choose an occupation if the only occupations in their surroundings are pizza maker or taxi driver? . . . No – my children have to see the choices they have and that houses other than these square boxes exist. You can live in different ways and you can choose. You can choose, and I will give you a palette with options to choose from yourself. Oh well, you can apparently live in a camper as well, or you can live in the Old Town [in Stockholm] as well, and you can live anywhere. This world didn't exist for my children, and unfortunately it doesn't exist for many adult immigrants either. And they live such a narrow existence here. And we will try. We talk a lot about integration and so on, but they really need to tell them what is out there as well, and not be afraid, and go there themselves. (respondent S)

Inhabitants in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods are racialized as immigrants who live narrow lives as pizza makers and taxi drivers since they are afraid to leave the neighbourhood. The mobility of the mobile preschool seems to render these families and neighbourhoods even more local in the views of the respondents. The quote illustrates the idea that migrant children attending the mobile preschool can escape this destiny because they are brought to Swedish places and learn to make informed choices. There is an underlying view that individuals themselves are responsible for their own futures, and that it is all about making the right choices regarding the opportunities available outside the low-income, multi-ethnic, high-rise suburb. In order to become Swedish, children

have to leave the suburb behind, learn Swedish, choose the right job, settle down in the right place, in the right type of house. However, for migrant children to achieve this they need someone to take them outside the neighbourhood.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have focused on a new geography of preschool mobility and on how this new form of mobility constitutes ideas of children's citizenship. Using the case of the mobile preschool, we have shown how conceptualisations of children's citizenship are constructed in relation to the everyday mobility of the mobile preschool and have revealed how mobility – including mobile materiality (the actual bus) – is not only a consequence but also constitutive of citizenship relations. In mobile preschool professionals' accounts of the benefits of mobile preschools (a bus-teacher-children-assemblage), three different conceptualisations of children's citizenship operate in parallel – children as 'not-yet-citizens', children as 'not-here-citizens' and children as 'here-and-now-citizens'.

First, the mobile preschool concept is viewed as a tool that allows children to practice here-and-now citizenship. Respondents see mobile preschools as providing children with a greater right to the city, a here-and-now form of citizenship not available to children in stationary preschools. However, it is clear that this is not the kind of participation in city spaces where children could create interdependent relations with these spaces and a sense of citizenship and social belonging, but rather more about teaching children specific citizenship skills. Hence, when mobile preschool professionals talk about taking children out of the preschool building and their neighbourhoods to participate in public spaces, they take it as a given that this is done within the strictly regulated capsule of preschool rules, values and norms. Preschool practices are expected to be performed as such, just not within but also outside institutional walls and boundaries. Our results show the importance of scrutinising discourses on participation, citizenship and democracy in early education settings, as Millei (2008) notes.

A second conceptualisation of children's citizenship is a construction of children as not-yet citizens, reflecting ideas about the kind of citizen that children can be moulded into by attending a mobile preschool. Children are brought to meet the right adults in the right places, and professionals believe this enables a faster pathway to a more proper citizenship'. Mobile preschools are hence constructed as the prosthetic devices for teaching children proper citizenship, since it can take them to specific spaces of citizenship suitable for socialization into proper future adults. Through education in specific, carefully chosen places, the children are expected to learn skills associated with citizenship skills, such as endurance and independence, and complying with adult safety rules.

Third, the mobile preschool is portrayed as a prosthetic device for migrant children to acquire Swedish citizenship, and migrant children's citizenship as connected to their non-Swedish social and geographical positioning in Swedish society. In discussing the mobile preschool, respondents portrayed certain public spaces as representing Swedishness more than others and thereby more suitable for shaping children into Swedish citizens. This reflects a view of children not only as not-yet-citizens but also as not-here-citizens. The mobile preschool is viewed as a solution to this problem, since it serves as a tool to compensate for children's lack of proper spatial experiences and Swedishness in their

family backgrounds and environment. Respondents' accounts of the benefits of mobile preschools centred on the multiple opportunities it creates for children located outside Swedish society to learn citizenship skills in different places. As such, the participating professionals thought of mobile preschools as tools for integrating migrant children and their parents into Swedish society. The discourse on integration casts the children and their families and neighbourhoods as lacking and their families as immobile and stuck in the neighbourhoods. Compensatory approaches often lead to different views of the groups in need of compensation and how to handle them. This is an example of how everyday nationalism plays out in early childhood education institutions (Millei et al., 2019) and how different imaginations of the national and the local intersect in these civilising processes (Ansell, 2009). The case of the mobile preschool also shows how constructions of mobility play a part in everyday nationalism and how different conceptualisations of children's citizenship operate in parallel in everyday civilising processes in ECEC institutions.

We find the conceptualisation of children's citizenship as prosthetic to be helpful in revealing how children are viewed as more or less citizen not only in relation to their age and childhood positioning but also in relation to their different mobilities and places and the geographical imaginations attached to these mobilities and places. Children's citizenship is constructed out of forms of mobility and the imagining of places as suitable (or not) for children's evolving proper citizenship. New forms of mobility for children, such as mobile preschools, have been shown to help transform the spaces that are viewed as ideal for training children into proper citizens. Instead of emphasising the need for children to stay put in safe and sheltered spaces such as preschool buildings in order for this transformation to occur, this paper shows how new mobilities change the constructions of citizenship and its spaces. We have shown how the spaces that people (including children) gain access to, and the imaginations of who belongs in which spaces, are central to the construction of citizenship. This is important knowledge for the field of citizenship in early childhood education, that usually focuses only on civilising processes that occur within the walls of the preschool building.

In addition, research on constructions of children's citizenship in ECEC institutions contributes to a better understanding of how ideas of citizenship are (re)shaped to the field of social and cultural geography. Our results contribute to knowledge of how different spaces and (im)mobilities are laden with imaginations of the citizen and how this plays a part in ideas of what it takes to become a full and proper citizen. Conceptualisations – and hence constructions – of citizenship are strongly linked to geographical imaginations that connect specific societal groups to specific spaces. The forms of mobility we use to move are not neutral; rather, they are loaded with meanings that both we and others attribute to them. While ideas of citizenship are strongly linked to geographical imaginations that fix people and groups – such as children – as belonging or not belonging in certain spaces, this paper shows how new mobilities change which these spaces are. The places, mobilities, notions of place and so on that assemble the prosthetic citizen are continuously changing. Mobilising 'immobile' societal groups in and between spaces also brings about a movement in ideas on citizenship. These findings offer a better understanding of how different spaces are laden with imaginations of the citizen and reveal what it takes to be counted as a full citizen.

Notes

1. The information in this section is based on an interview the research group conducted with Sunnebo in March 2016.
2. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Regional Ethics Board (dnr. 2016/069). Participants gave their consent to be part of the study prior to the interviews and workshops.

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