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# **Child-Friendly Cities in a Globalizing World: Different Approaches and a Typology of Children's Roles**

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## **Abstract**

*The Child-Friendly City (CFC) label means different things to different people, influenced by their professional interests. We distinguish several approaches to CFCs and sketch their emergence within the context of profit-oriented urban markets shaped by processes of globalization. Against this background, we propose a typology of children acting as consumers, users, entrepreneurs and producers, and situate the papers in this special issue of Children, Youth and Environments within it. The conclusion briefly discusses observations arising from these papers and CFC work more generally.*

**Keywords:** child-friendly cities, globalization

In a 2012 survey of CYE readers (N=667), 43 percent indicated child-friendly cities (CFCs) as a topic they would like to see covered in a future issue. This widespread interest in CFCs reflects increasing attention to the place of children in cities among local government officials and professionals in various fields. Why are we seeing this trend? What explains the emergence of the CFC label in the first place? Are not *all* cities supposed to be “friendly to children”? And what does this special designation mean anyway?

These questions motivated the decision to devote a special issue of *Children, Youth and Environments* to the CFC theme. Ample documentation of specific, typically local CFC projects and initiatives exists, some of it detailed in the papers that follow. However, this issue provides an opportunity to step back, ask critical questions, and reflect on the larger context framing CFCs. This brief introduction is intended to encourage and stimulate such critical reflection.

Cursory inspection of the literature reveals multiple conceptualizations of CFCs. Some of them are concerned with children’s needs, others with their rights. Some are oriented to the social environment, others to the physical environment. Some are focused on neighborhoods, others on cities as a whole. No single and universally accepted definition of CFCs exists.

In the wake of the U.N. General Assembly’s adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989 and its subsequent ratification by nearly all nations, a rights-based approach to creating child-friendly cities gained ascendancy, stimulated by a UNICEF-led initiative that suggested a framework of nine building blocks (see Table 1). Rights-based approaches shift the policy focus away from problems and deficits and instead treat children and youth as capable participants and partners in decision-making. In this perspective, found most often in the context of urban planning and design, children’s rights extend to both their access to urban resources that affect their life chances (rights *in* the city) and to opportunities for meaningful participation in urban development (rights *to* the city). To this end, for example, every municipality in Norway must by law appoint someone to represent children in urban planning decisions and planners can actively involve children through interactive digitized maps (CRIN 2008, 19). This approach is consistent with the view that governments are responsible for creating processes and structures through which children can develop their capabilities and fulfill their needs in concert with and consideration of others (Chawla and Van Vliet—in press).

**Table 1. Building blocks for child-friendly cities and implementation of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child in a local governance setting**

<b>Children's participation:</b> promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them; listening to their views and taking them into consideration in decision-making processes.	<b>A Children's Rights Unit or coordinating mechanism:</b> developing permanent structures in local government to ensure priority consideration of children's perspective.	<b>A regular State of the City's Children Report:</b> ensuring sufficient monitoring and data collection on the state of children and their rights.
<b>A child-friendly legal framework:</b> ensuring legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures which consistently promote and protect the rights of all children.	<b>Child impact assessment and evaluation:</b> ensuring that there is a systematic process to assess the impact of law, policy and practice on children—in advance, during and after implementation.	<b>Making children's rights known:</b> Ensuring awareness of children's rights among adults and children.
<b>A city-wide Children's Rights Strategy:</b> developing a detailed, comprehensive strategy or agenda for building a Child Friendly City, based on the Convention.	<b>A children's budget:</b> ensuring adequate resource commitment and budget analysis for children.	<b>Independent advocacy for children:</b> supporting non-governmental organizations and developing independent human rights institutions—children's ombudspersons or commissioners for children—to promote children's rights.

**Source:** UNICEF (2004a).

### The Impact of Market-Driven Globalization on Child-Friendliness

Despite the presence of the UN's rights-driven CFC framework, a range of paradigms regarding what makes places child-friendly have given rise to correspondingly different approaches toward CFCs. These approaches tend to be associated with distinct professional anchorings. To illustrate this point, one only needs to conduct a quick web search. One finds, for example, the travel industry promoting select cities as the best places to vacation for families with children,<sup>1</sup> the tourist industry advertising must-see sites for children, the hospitality industry promoting best places for families with children to stay and eat, and the real estate industry identifying and capitalizing on market niches for parents seeking the "best cities to raise kids" (e.g., Van Riper 2014).

The CFC literature does not usually dwell on the travel, tourism, hospitality, and real estate industries. It is telling, however, that the rhetoric of CFCs has been adopted in these sectors. Diverse as they are, they have two important characteristics in common. The first shared element is a view of children and their families as a marketing target. These sectors comprise economic stakeholders that

<sup>1</sup> E.g., <http://www.budgettravel.com/feature/10-most-family-friendly-cities-in-europe,31928/> accessed Aug. 20, 2015.

see children first and foremost as consumers and an avenue to profit. Numbers back them up. In the U.S., annual spending by teens has been estimated between 75 billion dollars<sup>2</sup> and 1.88 trillion.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, it pays to be "child friendly." Today's teens constitute a profitable market and, for a price, experts readily offer themselves up for advice on how best to tap into it.<sup>3</sup> The second element that these sectors have in common is their orientation to selling a consumable *product*. Through a simple business exchange, suppliers deliver a service or commodity, while families and children pay and consume. Insofar as there is any participation by children, for example through focus groups, it is to make markets work more efficiently and profitably.

The broad agglomerate of commercially motivated approaches toward child-friendliness, just described, share the same larger context: market-based societies. Of course, markets have been at the center of cities, literally, throughout urban history (Weber 1921). However, what has changed in the recent period is the increased mobility of capital on a societal scale and with a speed and geographic scope previously unseen, expressing itself in new patterns of investment and disinvestment that deeply impact the living conditions of urban populations, including children. In societies based on market systems, in various degrees and ways, cities are shaped by forces that operate at global and national levels.

For profit-seeking stakeholders, these dynamics create opportunities for financial gain, including opportunities marketed as child friendly. There are two possible outcomes for children. Families who are unable to translate their needs into an effective market demand (i.e., one that generates profit) will fall by the wayside and live without or with diminished access to schools, medical care, play spaces and other resources conducive to a healthy and happy life. Instead, they will be relegated to communities that are often characterized by concentrated poverty, substandard housing, and greater exposure to crime and pollution. For children, worse than growing up in poverty, is growing up under inequality, and worse than growing up under inequality is growing up under deepening inequality. The negative effects of inequality on health and well-being have been well documented for *both* low- and high-income families.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, children (with parents) who have adequate disposable income can and do articulate effective market demands, but, in so doing, are limited to roles as individual consumers of ready-made products and services. They tend to enact these roles in settings designated and programmed specifically for children, segregated from older age groups.

In the public domain, still other perspectives on CFCs can be found among academics and local government officials. Often these perspectives rely heavily on

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.piperjaffray.com/3col.aspx?id=3441> accessed Aug. 20, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.thekidexperts.com/17.html> accessed Aug. 20, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> For excellent data, see <https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/resources/the-spirit-level> Relevant to this point is also the thoughtful review of Robert Putnam's 2015 book, "*Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*," by Michael Eisenberg, included in this issue.

assessments by experts to determine what children's needs are and whether they are being met by prevailing conditions. If they are not, contingent on available resources, programs are then created or facilities built to better meet those needs. In this scenario, children are passive beneficiaries of efforts by providers and administrators, often encountered in the area of human services and among designers of schools and playgrounds.

In the fields of planning and design, with stronger histories of participatory and rights-based approaches, children's roles in strategies for creating child-friendly environments more typically involve them as users and producers acting in collaboration with adults (e.g., Percy-Smith and Thomas 2009; Tisdall, Gadd and Butler 2014). Table 2, below, presents a simplified typology capturing these differences.<sup>ii</sup>

**Table 2. Child-friendly city domains and approaches: A simplified typology of children's roles<sup>iii</sup>**

		CFC Domains	
		Private	Public
CFC Approaches	Product	1. Children as Consumers	2. Children as Users
	Process	3. Children as Entrepreneurs	4. Children as Co-Producers

Children acting as *consumers*. In the private domain, CFC interest is oriented chiefly to creating tangible and virtual commodities and services. This "pay-to-play" approach treats children as consumers with purchasing power to access fast food outlets, retail shopping, movie theaters, web-based games, amusement parks, video arcades, and like settings.

Children acting as *users*. CFC efforts in the public domain can also be oriented to the delivery of CFC products, but in this case their purpose is to provide use value. Examples are traditional playgrounds and institutional facilities such as schools and child care centers. In these situations children can be seen as users of the environment.

Children acting as *entrepreneurs*. Process-oriented examples in the private sector are few and far between given the sector's interest in instant results and lack of interest in children's meaningful participation. However, supporting children's development as entrepreneurs is a growing business. Impresarios and educators offer programs and advice to parents and children aspiring to join the next elite of "40 millionaires under 20."<sup>iv</sup> The paths towards entrepreneurial wealth among youth are predicated on recognizing and taking advantage of "child-friendly" opportunities in urban markets enabled by global capital flows.

Children acting as *co-producers*. Of greatest interest in relation to the current theme issue, in the fourth situation in our typology, children participate in local planning and decision making, making their influence felt not as individual consumers, users, or entrepreneurs, but as citizens who make their voices heard through processes that include investigation, deliberation, imagination, presentation, and collaboration. Children thus participate in producing the city and shaping the urban environment. Implicitly or explicitly, the approaches taken are based on children's rights and the guiding principles contained in the CRC.<sup>5</sup> These approaches are further strengthened by facts of precedence. Documented examples of successful participation by children demonstrate and instill confidence in their capabilities, which is conducive to opening up more space for their involvement in local planning. Most of the papers in this issue of CYE contribute to this documentation.

### **Globalization and the Emergence of Child-Friendly Cities**

At the outset of this introduction, we asked broader questions about CFCs: What does the CFC label mean? What prompted the CFC trend? Returning to these questions now, we can see the influences of advanced urbanization and globalization on the emergence of the CFC tag and its application in various contexts. Under advanced urbanization, heightened patterns of segregation and specialization have impacted children in at least two important ways not before experienced. First, these trends increasingly have excluded children from life spheres inhabited by adults (Schildt and Siegfried 2005) and, second, from equal access to life chances for those marginalized by poverty or discrimination.<sup>6</sup> Globalization has intensified these conditions. More and more, the growing withdrawal of state authority from traditional policy domains in many countries and the worldwide spread of market-based approaches have pitted cities against each other for economic advantages on a global stage. This struggle for competitive advantage, reduced regulations and increased capital mobility enable corporations to extract concessions from cities that magnify exclusionary effects.

Other developments have interacted with these trends. For example, in the aftermath of the Cold War, the international community began to reconceptualize security more in terms of people, and less of states. Forefronting people engendered a slow and contested process to articulate and implement new normative policy frameworks around human rights. The World Summit for Children in 1990 was the first of a series of global conferences driven by a growing awareness of a single world that shares common problems requiring non-confrontational, cooperative approaches. It adopted a Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action for implementing the Declaration (UN Habitat 2008).

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<sup>5</sup> The guiding principles of the Convention include non-discrimination; adherence to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to participate. These principles represent the underlying requirements for the realization of any and all rights.

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/about-inequality>

Globalization thus not only manifested itself in expanded urban markets, made possible by greater capital mobility, but also in the spread of values prioritizing human rights and participatory governance, the freer exchange of community experiences, the sharing of social knowledge, and the formation of worldwide activist networks, including the CFC movement. Expanded markets have been conducive to child-friendly developments with children as consumers and entrepreneurs, while approaches highlighting human rights and participation have supported the creation of CFCs with children as users and (co)producers.

The convergence of these globalization trends with the everyday living conditions experienced by large numbers of children became fertile ground for the formulation of a new vision for urban children and their families. This vision was first advanced in a statement for transforming cities, coming out of the "International Meeting of Mayors, Urban Planners and Policy Makers: Today's Children, Tomorrow's Cities," held in 1992 (Blanc et al. 1994). This statement unambiguously placed children on the urban agenda. Further work leading up to the City Summit, held in 1996 in Istanbul (UNICEF 1997), led to the launch of the Child Friendly Cities Initiative with its secretariat at UNICEF's Innocenti Research Center in Florence, Italy.

The nine building blocks and toolkit, produced under this initiative, emphasize legal, procedural, and organizational aspects of CFCs (see Table 1). Notably absent from this framework is the attention given to aspects of place in the initial document defining CFCs, which explicitly recognized that housing and community are critically important to children (UNICEF 1997). The papers in this issue of CYE can be seen against this broader background, including acknowledgement that "place matters."

### **The Papers in This Issue**

This special issue brings together eight research papers and three field reports focusing in various ways on CFC issues. About half of the papers were initially presented in three workshops on CFCs, organized by the editors of this special issue, at the fourth Children, Youth and Family conference held in January 2015 in San Diego, California. These papers, as well as the additional contributions resulting from a call for papers, went through a process of double-blind peer review and revision. The ensuing combined set of papers includes contributions from India, Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand, Mexico and the US.

Taking the typology presented in Table 2 as a starting point, it immediately becomes clear that over one-half of the articles (three research papers and three field reports) can be conceptualized as the fourth type of approach. Consistent with views developed in the field of child and youth studies, this approach treats children as capable actors with their own views and co-producers of the environment. For example, the article by Wridt, Atmakur-Javdekar and Hart focuses on children's rights in India. It reports on two case studies and the different ways in which participatory planning can be used to improve living conditions for children and youth in poor urban settlements. Their methodology helps empower community facilitators to include young people who are so often excluded. In their paper on Dublin, Ireland, Ellis, Monaghan and McDonald reflect on the significance for CFC planning of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs, a book



influential among urban planners. Their research reveals that using Jacobs' discourse can be an effective method for facilitating children's meaningful participation in urban planning processes.

Many cities worldwide have declared themselves to be a CFC. They often claim the CFC label despite having little or no participation by children in developing their urban policies. In their article on the province of Quebec, Canada, Blanchet Cohen and Torres describe how CFC status must be earned by successfully completing an accreditation process. They ask whether accreditation leads to better conditions for children's participation and conclude that it is useful as a means to support child participation, but participation does not automatically follow accreditation.

Complementing these three research papers, all three field reports focus in different ways on obtaining and implementing children's views in urban policy making. They offer lessons from practice on how to gather youth voices, how to integrate their visions in urban policies, and how to influence local stakeholders to make children a higher priority on the urban agenda.

Four articles focus on children as users, thus conforming to a second type of approach identified in Table 2.<sup>7</sup> Kylin and Bodelius report on a study from Sweden on the effectiveness of guidelines for planning and designing children's outdoor environments. They consider the question: Should quantitative or qualitative criteria be used to assess how well outdoor environments meet children's needs? They conclude that both types of measures are needed to safeguard children's rights to the outdoors. In their paper on Oslo, Løndal, Norbeck and Thorén ask how children use the relatively small outdoor environment of a kindergarten with only artificial play equipment. While the literature shows that loose natural elements facilitate children's physical activities, this paper reveals that with the help of engaged staff members, children can also enjoy a man-made environment and take advantage of the affordances it offers. Freeman, Van Heezik, Hand and Stein focus their paper on children's nature connections in urban New Zealand. The authors are curious about the factual basis of concerns that children are losing contact with nature due to urbanization. To what extent do city children still have opportunities to access nature and connect with it, and how do the children define "nature"? The authors conclude that there is little evidence that growing up in urban environments caused the children they studied to become "nature deprived," although independent access to biodiverse nature may today be more limited than it used to be for previous generations. The paper about children's use of public space in Mexico City, by Gülgönen and Corona, paints a bleak picture of children's everyday lives in the neighborhoods studied in this mega city. Children report having little knowledge of their environment and being severely constrained in their use of the outdoors. This is ironic against the backdrop of Mexico City officially claiming CFC status. The authors show that the poor quality of the outdoor environment and a serious lack of safety greatly limit children's outdoor activities. This study also

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<sup>7</sup> The grouping of these papers is not categorical or mutually exclusive. Children can participate in urban processes by making their voices heard through research that is not extractive, but respects their own experiences as users of the urban environment.

makes clear that CFC accreditation must specify clear standards and criteria that must be met before cities should be allowed to call themselves "child friendly."

Finally, the paper on disabled children in Toronto, Ontario concerns itself with children as users of the urban and school environment, finding that schools and related spaces (playgrounds, classrooms, washrooms) are neither fully accessible, nor inclusive.<sup>8</sup> The work reported in this paper relied on a mixed-methods approach that recognized the children as experts capable of contributing insights to help improve accessibility.

## Conclusion

Reflection on the papers in this special issue of CYE gives rise to seven observations. To begin with, they make one thing clear: the very *localized character of what it means to be(come) a CFC*. The development of global standards will not be very effective or appropriate. Children in India, for example, have different needs and priorities than children in Sweden. CFC approaches must be context-sensitive, taking account of local resources, culture, history, and physical infrastructure, among others. Put differently, there cannot be a uniform approach or a single, cookie-cutter expression of what constitutes a CFC. Accreditation of CFC status can be helpful (Malone 2010), but applicable standards and criteria should be locally rooted, and the process of progressing towards community-based goals, arrived at with children's participation, can be as important as the conditions prevailing at a single point in time.

Second, although CFCs and the approaches toward them take different forms in different places, they implicitly or explicitly share underlying principles derived from the CRC. Key among these principles is article 12 concerning the rights of children to express themselves on all matters affecting them. Therefore, *participatory approaches with children must be part of urban policies everywhere*. It is important that children's participation in local governance does not occur in a "participation playground," largely separate from the institutional processes through which municipal authorities make urban development decisions. Instead, cities must create age-appropriate opportunities for meaningful participation by children in mainstream decision making. In addition to their involvement in formal decision making, children must be enabled to participate in informal spheres as well, including in the social life of streets and other public spaces (Hart 2007).

A third observation, related to participation, concerns the relative *dearth of local monitoring, assessment and evaluation of CFC initiatives*. Greater effort and rigor in this regard will also strengthen the political case for CFC work. Such efforts must

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<sup>8</sup> Aware of debates about terminology the authors purposely use the term disabled children to emphasize that disability is not something children innately have, but arises out of problematic environmental interactions.

involve children, and there now exist excellent resources for a variety of participatory methods, freely available on the web.<sup>9</sup>

Fourth, *to be successful, CFC initiatives must involve partnerships*. All of the examples described in this special issue involve collaborations. Collaborations are most productive if they are not created ad hoc for a specific short-term project, but enduring, built on relationships of trust, institutionalized (Kingston et al. 2007) and involving stakeholders from the public sector, private sector and civil society working collaboratively (UNICEF 2004b; Van Vliet—2008).

Fifth, *CFCs must be intergenerational*. Many of the same factors that have led to the segregation of children into spaces and programs specifically designed and designated for them, have also contributed to the segregation of elders. Yet, there is ample research demonstrating the mutual benefits of intergenerational contact (e.g., Biggs and Carr 2015; Brown and Henkin 2014). Extant research mostly focuses on intergenerational programs with little attention given to intergenerational environments. However, many guidelines for the planning and design of elder-friendly communities are equally supportive of CFCs (e.g., AARP 2005; Blue Moon 2006; WHO 2007). Shared site facilities are a good example of cost-effective planning that benefits all age groups, among a broad array of pathways towards creating intergenerational environments (Thang and Kaplan 2013; Kaplan and Haider 2015). Child-friendly and elder-friendly planning are not a zero sum game but can be synergistic, producing positive outcomes for the greater good of all ages (van Vliet—2011).

Sixth, *CFCs must incorporate access to nature*. The initial platform for CFCs explicitly stated that “convenient and safe access to natural settings should be available to all children within their communities” (UNICEF 1997, 11) and article 29 of the CRC states that the education of the child shall be directed, inter alia, toward “respect for the natural environment.” Yet, few studies in the CFC literature bring attention to children’s access to and exploration of nature (the paper by Freeman et al. in this issue being one of them). A recent review of research carried out since the 1970s assembled compelling evidence of the importance of contact with nature for the health and well-being of children (Chawla in press). It argues persuasively that cities need to integrate trees and natural areas at multiple scales, from landscaping around homes, schools, and childcare centers, to linked systems of urban trails, greenways, parks, and “rough ground” for children’s creative play.

Seventh, *CFC studies cannot ignore market mechanisms*. While commentary on the negative impacts of global commerce on children is abundant, studies of children’s urban experiences in this context are few and far between. Insofar as research has given attention to market impacts on children’s environments, it has been oriented to the commodification and privatization of space, adverse effects on living conditions, and inequality. Rightly so, as these issues are of foremost importance.

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<sup>9</sup> See <http://childfriendlyplaces.org/resourcekit/about/?lang=en>, <http://childfriendlycities.org/research/final-toolkit-2011/> as well as Johnson, Hart, and Colwell (2014). Driskell (2002) also remains an excellent resource.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake not to consider opportunities for taking advantage of market mechanisms in aikido fashion, turning the momentum of adversary market forces to community benefit. Businesses are not going to support “popsicle neighborhoods” because they are good for children (Groskop 2015). But they have a financial incentive to do so if employees express a market demand for walkable communities. A recent study found that, between 2010 and 2015, nearly 500 companies in over 170 different industries in the U.S. relocated or expanded to downtown locations with higher walkability scores (Smart Growth America 2015). The 2015 National Community and Transportation Preference Survey also found that 79 percent of respondents indicated that being within walking distance of amenities such as parks and shops was an important factor in the decision of where to buy a home.<sup>10</sup> Further, since market dynamics are influenced by political power and since political power responds to electoral pressure, it can be helpful to form strategic alliances that support CFCs (e.g., see earlier point on intergenerational benefits).<sup>v</sup>

Finally, the reality is that some children are indeed acting as consumers (Cook 2000) and even entrepreneurs (Wells 2014). Studies of these class-specific engagements with new commercial opportunities can contribute to our understanding of inequalities among children (Karsten and Felder 2015). Critical examination of the antecedents and implications of associated market-driven products and services in cities can help guide their regulation in ways that will benefit all children.

## Endnotes

- i. See <http://www.martinlindstrom.com/books-by-martin-lindstrom/> including purchases children influence their parents to make, estimated by Martin Lindstrom, author of *BRANDchild*, which unabashedly markets “teen marketing.” Accessed Aug. 20, 2015. Alarming, a 2013 nationwide survey conducted for Capital One found teenagers, aged 11-17, seriously lacking in practical money management experience. (<http://press.capitalone.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=251626&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1858813>). The 2014 Teens and Personal Finance Survey by Junior Achievement and Allstate Insurance showed that 77 percent of teen boys and 63 percent of teen girls aged 16 to 18 are not keeping track of where their money goes on a regular basis. Source: <https://www.juniorachievement.org/documents/20009/20652/2014+Teens+Personal+Finance+Exec+Summary/f29bdee7-cb03-446c-81bc-334b659ce55d>
- ii. The typology is a deliberate simplification, intended to provoke more differentiated thinking about children’s roles in contemporary cities. As a result, the typology ignores non-profit situations and other blurred boundaries. For example, foundations and international development agencies have created social entrepreneur initiatives that connect engagement with community needs to their support for sustainable livelihoods among urban youth living in high-poverty areas (e.g., UN-Habitat’s Urban Youth Opportunities Fund, ILO’s Youth2Youth program, and UNICEF’s Sociopreneur initiative, all of which target older youth of whom only a small number benefit).

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<sup>10</sup> See National Association of Realtors, <http://www.realtor.org/reports/nar-2015-community-preference-survey>

- iii. Children's roles derive from their positions, formal and informal, in the social structures, cultural contexts and physical environments in which they are embedded (e.g., city, community, family). Discussion of these relationships is beyond the scope of this introduction, which, for brevity's sake, calls attention to how children's positions express themselves behaviorally.
- iv. See, e.g., <http://www.inc.com/john-boitnott/40-young-people-who-became-millionaires-before-they-were-20.html> or <http://www.businessinsider.com/25-kid-millionaires-all-share-these-7-attributes-2010-11?op=1>. A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* discusses various programs meant to cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit and skills of children as young as five (Wells 2014).
- v. As an example on a smaller scale, youth in several cities have conducted audits of local businesses to determine their "youth friendliness." Businesses found to have youth-friendly store and hiring policies would be given a decal they could display, providing them with a competitive advantage over businesses lacking this credential. See, e.g., <http://www.colorado.edu/cye/growing-boulder-kicks-youth-friendly-business-survey/boulder-county-teens-hunt-youth-friendly>, [http://www.aic.gov.au/media\\_library/conferences/urban/doherty.pdf](http://www.aic.gov.au/media_library/conferences/urban/doherty.pdf) and <http://youthfriendlybusiness.org/about/>

**Willem van Vliet**-- is interested in planning and design as tools for including the voices of underrepresented population groups in the creation of livable and sustainable communities. From 2004 to 2014, he served as director of the Children, Youth and Environments Center at University of Colorado.

**Lia Karsten** is associate professor in Urban Geographies at the University of Amsterdam. Her research interests include three interrelated topics: children's geographies, changing family life and in/exclusion in public space. Recent research focuses on children's consumption spaces and vertical family living. Lia had visiting professorships in Uppsala, New York and Hong Kong. In 2013 she received an honorary doctorate from the University of Uppsala. Together with her husband, Lia raised three children in an inner-city neighborhood of Amsterdam, which formed an endless inspiration for her professional career.

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