

Rethinking the Interconnections between Family Socialization and Gender through the Lens of Multi-local, Post-separation Families

Laura Merla

December 2018

Abstract

This paper presents new avenues for the study of gender socialisation within families, through a focus on children growing “in” and “between” two homes in the context of shared physical custody arrangements. Each of these two homes are indeed governed by specific gender regimes, that children must appropriate, negotiate and navigate to construct their own gender identity. The paper connects in particular gender socialization in shared custody arrangements with the acquisition of mobility capital and territorial appropriation; and highlights the role of ICTs in everyday lived experiences of shared physical custody and how these technologies intervene in gender socialization processes.

Keywords: Gender; motility; ICT; children; shared custody.

Acknowledgements

The project <http://www.mobilekids.eu> has received funding from the *European Research Council (ERC)* under the *European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program* under Grant Agreement No 676868.

Laura Merla: Cirfase Department, Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium); University of Western Australia (Australia)

📄 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4823-9075>

✉ laura.merla@uclouvain.be; 🌐 <http://uclouvain.academia.edu/LauraMerla>

Laura Merla is Professor of Sociology at the University of Louvain (Belgium), and Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia. Her main research areas are the sociology of the family; migration, transnational families and care; social policies; and gender and masculinities. She currently conducts the ERC Starting Grant project “MobileKids” on children growing in post-divorce/separation shared custody arrangements.

1 Introduction

In this paper, I contend that a focus on children growing “in” and “between” two homes as a result of post-divorce/separation shared physical custody arrangements provides new avenues for the study of family socialization to gender in heterogeneous environments. My demonstration is based on a work in progress, and touches upon extremely complex issues that require further analysis. Therefore, I invite the reader to consider this paper as a first and modest contribution to this future research agenda.

Here I approach gender as an analytical category, not in the discourse of children, but in the gender regimes where their socialization occurs (Connell, 2009; Risman, 2004), and I connect this discussion with three major societal transformations: the diversification of family forms, the mobility turn, and the digital revolution.

In the first section, I start with a critique of mainstream family and gender sociology’s tendency to conceptualize family socialization as a homogeneous process, and to focus on parents as a “unit” that produces rather homogeneous “family cultures”; and I highlight the contribution of scholarship on ethnically-mixed couples in illuminating the ways in which parents deal with cultural differences and points of disagreement regarding the upbringing of their children. I then move on to focus on post-divorce/separation families practicing shared custody of their children, as a particularly relevant example of the heterogeneity of family socialization processes. In this situation, children who travel back and forth between two homes as they alternatively reside with their mother and father, are socialized within, and across heterogeneous family environments with their own specific gendered norms and practices. Building on Raewyn Connell’s theory of gender, I show that each of these homes are governed by specific gender regimes, and point towards the importance of understanding how children appropriate and negotiate these gender regimes, how they navigate between them and how they construct their own gender identity in this context. In the next two sections, I continue this discussion by examining two major societal transformations that are of particular relevance for the study of gender socialization across households, and that constitute the two key avenues I explore in *MobileKids*, an ongoing project on children in shared physical custody arrangements: the mobility turn, and the digital revolution.¹ I argue in particular for the importance of connecting gender socialization in shared custody arrangements with the acquisition of mobility capital (Kaufmann & Widmer, 2005, p. 201) and with processes of territorial appropriation; and highlight the role that ICTs play in the everyday lived experiences of shared physical custody and how these technologies intervene in gender socialization processes.

2 Gender Socialization in Heterogeneous Family Environments

As is reflected in the territorial “double container” classical paradigm, Western societies have been characterized by the administrative management of political territories from the national to the communal level through the registration of a place of residence, combined with the administrative assignation of each inhabitant to a household corresponding to this unique domicile. This paradigm was reflected in the standard, institutional model of the family, that represents family members as bonded together by physical co-presence and bounded by the confines of the privately-owned land and house that contains them (Morgan, 2011). Within the “family homes” of these nuclear households, children are raised and socialized by their mothers and fathers who together contribute to the formation of children’s habitus, or

lasting dispositions or trained capacities and structural propensities to think, feel, act in determinate ways, which then guide [agents] in their creative responses to the constraints and solicitations of their extant milieu (Wacquant, 2005, p. 316).

The nuclear family has indeed been recognized as one of the key instances for children’s socialization and habitus formation, including by scholars focusing on gender (Bereni, Chauvin, Jaunait, & Revillard, 2012). Over the past decades, scholars have apprehended these socialization processes in an increasingly

1. See <http://www.mobilekids.eu>. This article reflects only the authors’ view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

nuanced and complex way. Gender studies have for instance highlighted that children do play an active role in their own gender socialization (see for instance, Messner, 1990; Rouyer, Croity-Belz, & Prêteur, 2010), in line with the sociology of childhood (Corsaro, 2011; James & Prout, 1997; Sirota, 2012) that recognizes children as active social actors that can, to various extents, exercise agency and influence on their own lives as well as on the lives of the people surrounding them, while being constrained by institutions. This literature has also insisted on the increasing heterogeneity of socialization processes, which also holds for children and adolescents. Family socialization indeed takes place at the cross-section of a multiplicity of actors and institutions, such as the school, the media and the internet, and peer groups (Cromer, Dauphin, & Naudier, 2010). Beyond gender studies, this increasing heterogeneity has led Lahire (1998) to question the unifying character of Bourdieu's concept of habitus and re-conceive it as a stock of multiple, and sometimes contradicting action-schemes and habits.

Heterogeneity is not only evident through the multiplication of identification instances and spheres for the construction of gendered selves, it is also present *inside* families. If gender studies have highlighted the different roles that mothers and fathers play in children's socialization to gender (see for instance Risman, 2004; Thorne, 1993), intra-parental divergences with regards to gendered norms and expectations and their negotiation in relation to children's education have however received scant attention. This is quite surprising, as one can easily make the hypothesis that the current multiplication of masculinity and femininity norms and models can enhance tensions between parents who hold different views regarding their child's education. Attention to intra-parental tensions and contradictions is also largely absent from mainstream family sociology, that tends to conceive family socialization as a process through which parents, analyzed as a unit, together transmit a rather homogeneous set of norms, values, practices and beliefs — a “family culture” or, to quote Lareau (2011), “family cultural practices.”

Research on multi-ethnic families has taken some interesting steps in producing knowledge on the processes through which parents (and children) create and negotiate their own common family culture (Crespi, Meda, & Merla, 2018). By analyzing how parents from different nationalities and/or ethnical backgrounds deal with cultural differences and points of disagreement regarding the upbringing of children, this scholarship has shown that cultural transmission in these families does not always rely on the co-creation of an exclusive, shared model, but can also involve the co-existence of divergent (and sometimes contradictory) approaches (Caballero, Edwards, & Puthussery, 2008).² Second, research on these ethnically mixed marriages has contributed to de-construct “difference” by challenging essentialist approaches of “cultural distance/proximity” based on race, ethnicity or religion: *all* couples are “mixed” to a certain degree — be it along gender, age, class, ethnic, religious, language and/or other markers of difference. In addition, each partner comes with their own “stories of encounters and blendings that must compose together to co-exist” (Varro, 2012).

The diversification of contemporary family forms and the emergence of multi-local, post-separation families as a result of rising divorce rates in Western countries also challenges conceptualizations of family socialization as a homogeneous process.³ I am particularly interested here in those post-divorce/separation families that set shared physical custody arrangements,⁴ and how children themselves experience their regular mobility between two homes and maintain their family relations in a context marked by intermittent episodes of physical co-presence with each of their parents. In this particular situation, which has become increasingly common in Western countries, family socialization takes place within, and across two households — two different and heterogeneous family environments — which may each be governed by different, and contradictory family cultures. Ex-partners can apply distinct rules in their own homes, engage in new partnerships and form recomposed households... Shared custody best embodies the survival of the parental couple in post-divorce families but this does not presage the level of cooperation, nor the existence of educational continuities between the two

2. These processes also involve relations of power and domination between partners (Unterreiner, 2015) — an important aspect that I unfortunately don't have room to discuss here.

3. In this paper I focus on parent-child interactions and do not discuss other (important) agents of family socialization such as grandparents or extended family members.

4. Shared physical custody designate post-divorce/separation arrangements in which children spend over a one-year period 30 to 50% of their time in one household, and 70 to 50% in the other household. Two typical examples of this arrangement include weekly shifts between the parent's home, or periods of 9 days in one house, and 5 days in the other house.

distinct households — even more so when new partners and children come into play.

As Winther (2015) notes, children from divorced parents travel between rules, roots and ways of doing that vary from one house to the other. In their everyday family lives they are exposed to, engage in, and negotiate potentially contradicting normative constructions of gender that can in turn nourish a broad repertoire of (contradicting) action-schemes and habits — and potentially equip them with the capacity to adapt to, and navigate between different environments. The mother of Marie,⁵ a 12-year old girl interviewed within the MobileKids project, provides a very interesting example for our discussion. During a conversation, she explained that her girl had a separate set of clothes at her mothers' and fathers'. Contrary to the mother, the father was indeed strongly committed to raising — and dressing — his daughter in a gender-neutral way (which involved a ban on pink clothes). This difference had not gone un-noticed at school:

Everything is half-half. But not the clothes. It's not half-half. She has her own wardrobe (in each house). And it's funny because at school they used to say "Ah, you are with your father this week?" [laugh] They recognized... because she has a completely different wardrobe at her fathers'. A completely different style. So it's funny, really, it made me laugh the first time I heard this.

This quote shows that symbolic representations of gender differ from one house to the other, and may lead children to embody different types of femininity/masculinity depending on where they reside. Clothes (in this example), but also body language and attitudes, or symbolic representations of masculinities and femininities in the interior design form parts of symbolic representations of gender that participate in the gender regime that characterizes each household. Symbolism is indeed one of the four structural models that shape gender regimes (Connell, 2009). Other models include a) the sexual division of labor that establishes for example who in the house does/is expected to wash the clothes, do the dishes, engage in paid work; b) power relations, involving for instance how much boys, girls, men and women living in the house have a say in family decisions; and c) emotional relations that establish amongst others the type of attachment that girls/boys are expected to develop with their parents and their new partners, or the age at which a girl/boy can go out on a date. These four gender regimes and the elements that compose them are constantly co-produced, reproduced and challenged by household members: they constrain practices but can also be the object of practices. Interesting questions in this regard concern how children appropriate and negotiate the gender regimes of their two homes, how they navigate between these gender regimes and how they construct their own gender identity in this context.

This family configuration indeed invites us both to analyse what happens inside each house, but also what happens in-between them. My study of children living within two homes thus pays particular attention to the (dis)continuities that children create or experience between and across their places of residence and the people that inhabit them. I examine this question through the lens of their own relationships with space, and their uses of communication technologies. These two entries correspond to two major societal transformations that are also of particular relevance for the study of gender socialization across households: the mobility turn, and the digital revolution.

3 Mobility and Gender Socialization in Shared Physical Custody Arrangements

Mobility has become a normative standard in many areas of social life, including family (Urry, 2007). The capacity to appropriate mobility thus becomes crucial in this context, to the point that scholars have identified today a new form of capital, closely interconnected with economic, social and cultural capitals, and that can be transformed into these capitals: mobility capital, or "motility." This capital is defined as "*the way in which entities access and appropriate the capacity for socio-spatial mobility according to their circumstances*" (Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye, 2004, p. 750).

5. Marie is a pseudonym. The interviews with Marie and her mother were conducted by Bérengère Nobels, a doctoral student from the MobileKids team.

Children's acquisition of motility not only depends on families' economic, social and cultural resources. It also relies on three dimensions of family norms and practices, or family "functionings": autonomy/fusion, openness/closure, and regulation. *Autonomy/fusion* refers to "the amount of individual resources that are controlled by the family as a whole" and "the degree to which they are shared" (Kaufmann & Widmer, 2005, pp. 114–115). *Openness/closure* defines the family's relation to the outside world, while *regulation* involves how family members coordinate, make decisions and establish routines (see also Kellerhals, Widmer, & Lévy, 2004). These dimensions are evidently influenced by family norms and cultures that are partly shaped by class, ethnicity and/or religious beliefs, and that produce intrafamilial inequalities along gender and age lines.⁶ Parents for instance may be more reluctant to leave girls travel alone than boys (de Singly, 2002), or hang out in the neighborhood without surveillance.

Children who travel back and forth between two homes are placed in a situation that potentially enhances their need — and capacity — to acquire mobility capital. But the fact that they live in heterogeneous family environments (Widmer & Favez, 2012) where different resources and functionings may co-exist, makes this process particularly complex. And the picture becomes even more complex when taking spatial contexts into consideration. As Kaufman and Widmer (2005) note, family functionings and children's acquisition of motility are also partly shaped by residential locations (see also Authier & Lehman-Frisch, 2012). The spatial contexts where children's double households are located thus also form part of children's family environments. These contexts include the size and quality of housing, the availability and affordability of transport and communication infrastructures at each place, the proximity of schools and of spaces for peer sociability such as public spaces and leisure infrastructures, etc. And one should not forget that spatial contexts are also gendered. There is indeed today a large body of literature that highlights the gendered dimensions of space (see for instance Spain, 1992), and how much boys and girls may be respectively (dis)encouraged to access and make use of private and public spaces (Maruéjols-Benoit, 2014).

It thus seems crucial to me, when studying children's socialization to gender in shared custody arrangements, to analyze the connection between gender socialization and the acquisition of motility. Of central importance here is the recognition that family resources and "functionings" as well as the spatial contexts of family environments, are gendered. Gender regimes also influence processes of territorial appropriation and the development of a sense of "home" by associating certain places and spaces in the house to males or females. The kitchen for instance has been commonly considered as female territory (Meah, 2014), and we also find this in our study: Marie spontaneously associates her mother with the kitchen, based on the fact that "She does the dishes so yes, this is her territory."

Furthermore, gender regimes shape how and to what extent boys and girls appropriate their own physical mobility between two homes, and establish (dis)continuities between them. Fear of sexual harassment and physical aggressions on public transports may lead parents to restrict the autonomy of their daughters, but ex-partners do not necessarily react in similar ways. Marie takes public transports alone to travel back home from school. This causes her mother a lot of anxiety, and she therefore insists on her coming home before 6 pm:

Marie comes back from school in the evening, but for me she must be home by 17h30–18h max! I don't mind leaving her home alone, but knowing she's alone on the way [...] you hear so many things!

On the other side, Marie's father tried to reassure her:

We put her in a self-defense course. Her father found this course and it reassured me, to know that she was going to travel alone by public transports with this training [...] they explained certain things about boys [...] I hope this will bring her something.

Both parents also "taught her to never talk to strangers." While the mother imposes a time limit on her daughter to reduce her exposure to danger — "she mainly travels when there is a lot of people, during peak hours. [...] But it's still hard for me" — Marie's father seems much more relaxed about this, as he gives his daughter more autonomy — and this is a subject of dispute between the ex-partners:

6. This also points to the need for intersectional approaches of gender socialization, including in situations of shared physical custody.

But her father lets her do more. [...] I told him I want her home by 18h max but he says “but she’s not alone” and “bla bla.” [...] She takes the metro, she goes to the movies, and he lets her do many other things.

Still, she recognizes that Marie has learned to manage her own mobility, with her father’s help:

She has been taking the metro and public transports for long now with her father, she handles it well [...] She even shows me the way when I travel with her because she’s very comfortable with this.

More broadly, this example further attests that children’s lived experiences of multi-locality,⁷ defined as the everyday experience of residing in more than one household, are shaped by gender, and in turn influence children’s socialization in gendered ways, that are sometimes contradictory.

4 Connecting Mobility, Virtual Connectedness and Gender Socialization

Shared physical custody arrangements also involve episodes of intermittent absence and co-presence (Duchêne-Lacroix, 2010), an aspect of mobility that cannot be studied in isolation from the digital revolution, another major transformation in contemporary societies. Indeed, information and communication technologies (ICTs) have acquired a central role in children’s sociability and friendship practices (Ito et al., 2010); they enhance possibilities of maintaining “virtual proximity” across space and time (Urry, 2002); and they have been shown to play a key role in the maintenance of friendships, family and intimate relations across distance and national borders (Madianou, 2012).

A survey conducted in 2018 with 1,600 adolescents in Wallonia and Brussels (Belgium)⁸ reveals that children in shared physical custody arrangements stay in regular contact with their mother and father across households, communicating with their mother while at their father’s, and vice-versa. Interestingly, they do so more often than children in the survey who are living with both parents under the same roof (Merla, Dedonder, & Murru, Forthcoming). This communication relies on the mobilisation of a large array of platforms and technologies, including phone calls, texting, social networking sites such as Facebook, instant messaging via WhatsApp or chatting while playing multi-player online games. ICTs thus form a new “polymediatic environment” or an environment of “affordances” through which family members can navigate — opting for different platforms or technologies depending on the type of message they wish to convey, the place where they are located, the devices they have access to, their emotional state, and/or the characteristics of the relationship with their interlocutor(s) (Madianou & Miller, 2013).

For John Urry, what is ultimately at stake beyond the capacity to appropriate mobility is the relationality of individuals with others, that is, the “capacity to engender and sustain social relations” (Urry,

7. Social geographers conceptualize “life spaces,” defined as the concrete material experiences of space and the representations attached to them, as being articulated with “lived spaces,” or the intimate networks of someone’s real and imaginary places and territories. In this literature, territoriality refers to people’s global sense of being “in” space, with its various social components of territory, place, network and scale. According to di Méo (2012), every individual experiences a tension between objectively normed territories and his/her own lived spatial experiences. This conceptualization of spatiality and lived experience is reflected in the emerging literature on multilocality, which highlights the interconnections between multi-local residentiality (spatial practices or “life space”) and multi-local living (the appropriation of these practices, or “lived space”). The appropriation of places is therefore a key-defining dimension of multi-local residentiality (Duchêne-Lacroix, 2013).

8. See: <https://uclouvain.be/fr/chercher/cirfase/leuven-louvain-adolescents-survey.html>. The Leuven/Louvain Adolescents Survey (LAdS) was collaboratively designed in 2017 by a team of researchers from the Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Families and Sexualities (CIRFASE) at the University of Louvain (UCLouvain) under the supervision of Prof. Laura Merla and Prof. Jacques Marquet, and from the LAGO and IMS teams of the University of Leuven (KULeuven) under the supervision of Prof. Koenraad Matthijs and Prof. Leen D’Haenens. The Brussels-Wallonia survey was conducted in 23 secondary schools and includes a balanced number of boys and girls aged between 11 and 19, with varied socio-economic profiles, as attested by the distribution of respondents along the four main educational tracks (general, professional, technical and artistic). 30% of our respondents live in post-separation/divorced families, and amongst them, approximately one third lives in shared physical custody arrangements (living 30 to 50% of the time with one parent and 50 to 70% of the time with the other parent).

2007, pp. 196–197). These polymediated environments offer children living in two homes the possibility to sustain family relations in a multi-local context by allowing them to take part in the coordination of activities across households and, more broadly, in everyday family practices, through various forms of co-presence with their significant others. In their everyday lives, (conventional) physical co-presence can be combined to various degrees with three forms of co-presence: a) “live or real time” virtual co-presence on *Skype*, *FaceTime*, or *WhatsApp* where children can talk with, and see their (physically absent) parent in real time; b) “selective” or “discretionary” co-presence generated by texting through SMS or *WhatsApp* where children can choose if, and when to send or reply to a message; or c) “ambient” forms of co-presence generated by the continuous awareness of the (virtual) presence and activities of others through their social networking websites (for instance, through news feeds on Facebook, or statuses indicating if a person is currently connected, what one is currently up to and/or one’s current emotional state) (Baldassar, 2016; Madianou, 2016). According to Boyd (2012), the conjunction of mobile phones and news feeds creates an “always on” lifestyle amongst teenagers, which forms an integral part of their socialization. As I have argued elsewhere, “always on” lifestyles in polymediated environments require children “to develop a repertoire for the daily maintenance of social relationships that relies, among others, on their capacity to navigate between various forms and mediums not only of communication, but also of co-presences” (Merla & Papanikolaou, forthcoming).

Understanding children’s socialization to gender in shared custody arrangements thus also requires to analyze the gendered processes involved in their family socialization to polymediated environments. Do boys and girls use the same tools and platforms to communicate with their mothers/fathers across households? How much control do parents exercise on boys’ and girls’ online activities? Do parents allow/encourage them to use the same tools and platforms, or do they consider that some tools/platforms are more adequate for boys than girls, and vice-versa? Are these rules similar across the two households?

Very few studies have so far addressed these questions, and our MobileKids interviews on this topic have only just started. However, the LAdS survey offers us some interesting clues. Amongst our total population, no gender differences appeared in the use of Facebook and *WhatsApp/Skype/FaceTime*, the two major channels for parent-child communication in the survey. However, two other digital media appeared to be invested differently by boys and girls to communicate with their parents: Snapchat, a photo and video messaging app which is mostly used by girls, and chatting through multi-player online gaming which is almost exclusively used by boys in the survey — a trend also confirmed in other Belgian studies (Pateson, 2016). In addition, nearly 50% of all girls indicated that their father and mother did not allow them to engage in multi-player online gaming or spend time in virtual worlds, whereas this was only the case for nearly 25% of all male respondents.

Gender differences in the uses of these two mediums in the family context is all but insignificant, as they are embedded in and sustain wider gendered cultures, and influence how boys and girls respectively display themselves online. On the one hand, Snapchat is based on “performative showing off” of one’s face and body in a context of temporal fastness and ephemerality, where girls in particular are exposed to a high risk of negative gossiping and judgement based on their physical appearance (Charteris & Gregory, 2018; Handyside & Ringrose, 2017). On the other hand, online gaming has been consistently described as a site for the reproduction of patriarchal, hegemonic masculinities based on violence and aggression (see for instance Disalvo, 2016). The increased presence of female online gamers and the industries’ strategies to encourage this presence (involving games based on values of collaboration and/or with non-violent content; and an increased availability of female characters) has led researchers to nuance this analysis. But gender disparities are still present, as women and girls tend to privilege social games on mobile devices while men and boys continue to specialize in multi-player games based on violence and/or competition, and first-person shooter games (Siyahhan & Gee, 2016). Yet, online video gaming is an important venue for parent-child interactions in families, especially for fathers who have been shown to invest this type of family time much more than mothers (see for instance Horst, 2013).⁹

How does this connect with our discussion of gender socialization in shared custody arrangements? Well, we can make the hypothesis that gendered cultures shape and constrain the way boys and girls,

9. For a study of mothers and girls’ online gaming activities and practices in the family setting, see for instance Siyahhan & Gee, 2016.

mothers and fathers, and other members of the two homes appropriate ICTs.¹⁰ The gendered cultures of each household intersect, and interact with the specific gendered cultures that characterize the communicative platforms that family members use, influencing, along gender lines, their communication styles, the elements they consider appropriate to display online, and the types of co-presence they engage in within and across households. Gendered cultures therefore color in specific ways the repertoire that children develop to appropriate and navigate polymediatic environments, and sustain family relations across households through a continuum of on- and off-line interactions.

5 Conclusion

Children's socialization to gender in the context of shared custody arrangements raises fascinating, yet extremely complex, questions and there are of course many important aspects that I have left untouched in this discussion. One of the key points I have developed here emphasizes how these children grow up within and across two homes that are "separated, yet connected" (Smart & Neale, 1999). They are separated and different because they are each governed by specific, and probably in part divergent, gender regimes. But they are also closely connected in the lived experiences of children, through processes of mobility, territorial appropriation, and continued communication in polymediatic environments. As they learn to move from one house to the other and engage in virtual forms of co-presence that blur the distinction between "here" and "there," girls and boys are continuously exposed to, co-creating, and also challenging different norms, visions, rules and practices that equip them with a large repertoire of action-schemes and habits. These in turn guide them in how they embody, enact, and (re)produce gender in specific interactional contexts. Moreover, this happens in an environment that can be fraught with tensions, especially when there is a high level of conflict between ex-partners — an aspect that I was not able to develop in this paper but that is of course extremely important. Still, I argue that these two homes and the "gendered family cultures" that characterize them, should be apprehended as interconnected rather than fragmented and mutually-exclusive, socialization spheres, because they do form a continuum in the lived experiences of many children.

The research body that I mobilized in this discussion mainly highlights the enduring character of gender roles, norms and stereotypes and how they are reproduced within families. However, to conclude this paper, I would like to emphasize that children do exercise agency in their own gendered family socialization. Let me end by illustrating this point once more through the story of Marie and her separate wardrobes. Now that she's 12, Marie's mother stressed that her schoolmates and teachers can no longer guess from her clothes where she spent the night. She now regularly carries with her the "stuff" she likes to wear, regardless of what house they are supposed to belong to. She has indeed reached this age where kids explore their "own" style, as they progressively become more autonomous. By carrying "her" clothes from one place to the other, she blurs the distinction between her two homes and their sub-cultures. She establishes continuities between them, appropriating certain aspects of these sub-cultures, rejecting others, and bringing elements of one sub-culture into the other. In this process, she contributes to challenge, reproduce, and re-shape the gender orders that govern her two homes.

10. There is today a growing array of studies focusing on children, ICTs and family life, but that do not specifically focus on children in divorced families. I cannot cite them all here, but see for instance: Aarsand & Aronsson, 2009; Barbosa Neves & Casimiro, 2018; Ito et al., 2010; Lahikainen, Mälkiä, & Repo, 2017.

References

- Aarsand, P.A., & Aronsson, K. (2009). Gaming and Territorial Negotiations in Family Life. *Childhood*, 16(4), 497–517. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568209343879>
- Authier, J.-Y., & Lehman-Frisch, S. (2012). Il était une fois... des enfants dans des quartiers gentrifiés à Paris et à San Francisco. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 195(5), 58–73. <https://doi.org/10.3917/arss.195.0058>.
- Baldassar, L. (2016). De-demonizing Distance in Mobile Family Lives: Co-presence, Care Circulation and Polymedia as Vibrant Matter. *Global Networks*, 16(2), 145–163. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12109>
- Barbosa Neves, B., & Casimiro, C. (Eds.). (2018). *Connecting Families? Information and Communication Technologies, Generations, and the Life Course*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Bereni, L., Chauvin, S., Jaunait, A., & Revillard, A. (Eds.). (2012). *Introduction aux études sur le genre* (2nd ed.). Bruxelles: De Boeck.
- Boyd, D. (2012). Participating in the Always-on Lifestyle. In M. Mandiberg (Ed.), *The Social Media Reader*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Caballero, C., Edwards, R., & Puthussery, S. (2008). *Parenting “Mixed” Children: Difference and Belonging in Mixed Race and Faith Families*. London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Charteris, J., & Gregory, S. (2018). Snapchat and Digitally Mediated Sexualised Communication: Ruptures in the School Home Nexus. *Gender and Education*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2018.1533922>
- Connell, R. (2009). *Gender: In World Perspective*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Corsaro, W.A. (2011). *The Sociology of Childhood* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Crespi, I., Meda, S., & Merla, L. (2018). *Making Multicultural Families in Europe. Gender and Intergenerational Relations*. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Cromer, S., Dauphin, S., & Naudier, D. (2010). L'enfance, laboratoire du genre: Introduction. *Cahiers du Genre*, 49(2), 5–14. <https://doi.org/10.3917/cdge.049.0005>
- de Singly, F. (2002). La “liberté de circulation”: un droit aussi de la jeunesse. *Revue des politiques sociales et familiales*, 67, 21–36.
- di Méo, G. (2012). Éléments de réflexion pour une géographie sociale du genre: le cas des femmes dans la ville. *L'information géographique*, 76(2), 72–94. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lig.762.0072>
- Disalvo, B. (2016). Gaming Masculinity: Constructing Masculinity with Video Games. In Y.B. Kafai, G.T. Richard, & B.M. Tynes (Eds.), *Diversifying Barbie and Mortal Kombat: Intersectional Perspectives and Inclusive Designs in Gaming* (pp. 105–117). Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon, ETC Press.
- Duchêne-Lacroix, C. (2010). Continuités et ancrages. Composer avec l'absence en situation transnationale. *Revue des Sciences sociales*, 44, 16–25.
- Duchêne-Lacroix, C. (2013). Éléments pour une typologie des pratiques plurirésidentielles et d'un habiter multilocal. *e-Migrinter*, 11, 151–167. <https://doi.org/10.4000/e-migrinter.323>
- Handyside, S., & Ringrose, J. (2017). Snapchat Memory and Youth Digital Sexual Cultures: Mediated Temporality, Duration and Affect. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 26(3), 347–360. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2017.1280384>
- Horst, H. (2013). From *MySpace* to *Facebook*: Coming of Age in Networked Public Culture. In M. Ito, S. Baumer, M. Bittanti, R. Cody, B. Herr-Stephenson, H.A. Horst, P.G. Lange, D. Mahendran, K.Z.

- Martínez, & C.J. Pascoe (Eds.), *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out. Kids Living and Learning with New Media* (pp. 92–116). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ito, M., Baumer, S., Bittanti, M., Cody, R., Herr-Stephenson, B., Horst, H.A., Lange, P.G., Mahendran, D., Martínez, K.Z. & Pascoe, C.J. (Eds.) *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out. Kids Living and Learning with New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- James, A. & Prout, A. (Eds.). (1990). *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood. Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*. London & Washington DC: Falmer Press.
- Kaufmann, V., Bergman, M.M., & Joye, D. (2004). Motility: Mobility as Capital. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28(4), 745–756. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0309-1317.2004.00549.x>
- Kaufmann, V., & Widmer, E.D. (2005). L'acquisition de la motilité au sein des familles. *Espaces et sociétés*, 120–121(1), 199–217. <https://doi.org/10.3917/esp.120.0199>
- Kellerhals, J., Widmer, E., & Lévy, R. (2004). *Mesure et démesure du couple. Cohésion, crises et résilience dans la vie des couples*. Paris: Payot.
- Lahikainen, A., Mälkiä, T., & Repo, K. (2017). *Media, Family Interaction and the Digitalization of Childhood*. Cheltenham: Elgar.
- Lahire, B. (1998). *L'homme pluriel. Les ressorts de l'action*. Paris: Nathan.
- Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Madianou, M. (2012). Migration and the Accentuated Ambivalence of Motherhood: The Role of ICTs in Filipino Transnational Families. *Global Networks*, 12(3), 277–295. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2012.00352.x>
- Madianou, M. (2016). Ambient Co-presence: Transnational Family Practices in Polymedia Environments. *Global Networks*, 16(2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12105>
- Madianou, M., & Miller, D. (2013). Polymedia: Towards a New Theory of Digital Media in Interpersonal Communication. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16(2), 169–187. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877912452486>
- Maruéjols-Benoit, E. (2014). *Mixité, égalité et genre dans les espaces du loisir des jeunes: pertinence d'un paradigme féministe* (Doctoral dissertation in Geography). Université Michel de Montaigne - Bordeaux III. Retrieved from: <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01131575>
- Meah, A. (2014). Reconceptualizing Power and Gendered Subjectivities in Domestic Cooking Spaces. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(5), 671–690. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132513501404>
- Merla, L., Dedonder, J., & Murru, S. (Forthcoming). Sense of Home, Virtual Communication and Quality of Parent-Child Relations in Post-Divorce Families. In D. Mortelmans, & L. Bernardi (Eds.), *Interdisciplinary Insights on Shared Physical Custody*. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer.
- Merla, L., & Papanikolaou, K. (Forthcoming). “Doing” and “Displaying” Family in Polymediatic Environments: Conceptual Tools for the Analysis of Children’s Digital Practices. In J. Mikats, S. Kink-Hampersberger, & L. Oates-Indruchová (Eds.), *Creative Families: Gender and Technologies of Everyday Life*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Messner, M. (1990). Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 18(4), 416–444. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124190018004003>
- Morgan, D.H.G. (2011). Locating “Family Practices.” *Sociological Research Online*, 16(4), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.2535>

- Pateson, R. (2016). *Enquete sur l'usage du smartphone auprès de 1.589 jeunes en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles*. Retrieved from Université libre de Bruxelles. <http://reform.be/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ReForm-Enqu%C3%AAte-Smartphones-2016-WEBI.pdf>
- Risman, B. (2004). Gender as a Social Structure. Theory Wrestling with Activism. *Gender & Society*, 18(4), 429–450. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243204265349>
- Rouyer, V., Croity-Belz, S., & Prêteur, Y. (2010). *Socialisation de genre, perspectives développementale et psychosociale*. Toulouse: Editions Erès.
- Sirota, R. (2012). L'enfance au regard des Sciences sociales. *AnthropoChildren*, 1(1), 1–20.
- Siyahhan, S., & Gee, E. (2016). Understanding Gaming and Gender Within the Everyday Lives of Mexican-American Family Homes. In Y.B. Kafai, G.T. Richard, & B.M. Tynes (Eds.), *Diversifying Barbie and Mortal Kombat: intersectional perspectives and inclusive designs in gaming* (pp. 92–104). Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon, ETC Press.
- Smart, C., & Neale, B. (1999). *Family Fragments?*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Spain, D. (1992). *Gendered Spaces*. Chapel Hill, NC and London: University of North Carolina Press.
- Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick/New Jersey, NY: Rutgers University Press.
- Unterreiner, A. (2015). Les enfants de couples mixtes et leur rapport à leur pays étranger d'origine: Une identité "symbolique" affective fondée sur le lien de filiation. *Sociologie et sociétés*, 47(1), 249–273. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1034426ar>
- Urry, J. (2002). Mobility and Proximity. *Sociology*, 36(2), 255–274. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038502036002002>
- Urry, J. (2007). *Mobilities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Varro, G. (2012). Les "couples mixtes" à travers le temps: vers une épistémologie de la mixité. *Enfances, Familles, Générations*, 2012(17), 21–40. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1013413ar>
- Wacquant, L. (2005). Habitus. In J. Beckett & M. Zafiovski (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Economic Sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Widmer, E., Favez, N., Aeby, G., De Carlo, I., & Doan, M. (2012). *Capital social et coparentage dans les familles recomposées et de première union*. Genève: Université de Genève. Retrieved from: <https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:19277>
- Winther, I.W. (2015). To Practice Mobility – On a Small Scale. *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*, 7(2), 215–231.