

"...my Occupations, my City..."

Collaborative ethnography with children

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Introduction

This study is entitled "...my Occupations, my City..." and it is a project aiming to explore the everyday occupations of children 9-15 years old living in Athens, Greece. For the implementation of this study a collaborative ethnographic design (Lassiter, 2019) is employed, acknowledging the children's rights to research and valuing their perspectives and understandings. This design is based on the idea that the world is subjective and relational, understood through a pluralism of actions, voices, ideas, places, elements, and transactions that are characterized by diversity, complexity and contextuality.

Research Aim & Objectives

To explore children's everyday occupations situated within the context of the city.

Objectives:

- ⊙ To explore children's occupation in the city of Athens – the "what", the "when", the "where", the "how"
- ⊙ To explore children's understandings of their occupations
- ⊙ To explore the situated nature of children's occupations within the contextual elements of the city.

Methods of generating data

For implementing this study various methods were considered as age-appropriate tools to inspire the children's interest and motivation and promote creativity (Greene and Hogan, 2011). In alignment with its epistemological stance, data are generated by various methods respecting and contributing to the ethnographic nature and the participatory character of the study.

Methods include the use of time-geographical diary, photo-capturing and photo-elicitation interviews, participatory occupations, walking interviews, focus groups, fieldnotes, and the researcher's reflexive diary (see photos on the right).

The active nature of the methods is the catalyst for meaningful entanglements that inform ethnographic data (Dennis and Huf, 2020) and capture the fluid real world of children's lives.

Developing research tools for exploring occupation in context

- Children's Research Folder: As co-researchers they keep their own folder and documentation
- Children's friendly Participants' Information Sheet- Comic Version (see on the left side pictures) (see on the left)
- "Occupations & Days" / Time-Geographical diary: especially made to include information on the "what", "when", "where", "with whom" and other ideas and thoughts of everyday life
- Permission Form – for use of image: A special consent form for the children as co-researchers, when they want to take photos of persons of significance
- Development of photos and Photo-elicitation interview

Participatory

Children participate in research

Researcher participates in children's life

Ethnographic

Multiplicity
Complexity
Contextuality

Explorative

Known and real world of children

Field-notes
Reflective diary
Time agenda

Time-Geographical diary

Participatory occupations & Walking Interviews

Photo-voice & photo-elicitation interviews

Collaborative ethnography in the context of everyday life:

- Children take part in the research process as co-researchers - valuable and respectable partners:
 - Sharing tools and equipment
 - Recording and sharing ideas and visions
 - Using the process that fits to their everyday experience
- Main researcher takes part in the context of children's everyday life as a witness and a facilitator of generating data:
 - Being part of what they do
 - Sharing experiences of spaces and places they go
 - Relating to persons of their everyday life
- Children and researcher generate data together through:
 - Taking photographs and discuss about them
 - Walking and talking
 - Reading and writing texts
 - Informing children's diaries and main researcher reflexive diary

Implications for Occupational Science

Findings are expected to enhance the theoretical understanding of occupation as complex, dynamic, and situated (Madsen and Josephsson 2017). Capturing children's understandings is expected to offer insight into the local social and cultural context and open possibilities for reflection and change.

The use of various methods and the employment of ethnographic gaze and participatory lenses will inform how research about occupation situated in everyday life might be implemented.

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