Exploring Family Spaces: Place-Based Research Methods with Children & Families

Bree Akesson
Wilfrid Laurier University

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Place-Based Methods

1. Observation of Daily Life
Minnieh, Lebanon
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Place-Based Methods

1. Observation of Daily Life

2. Family Interviews with Collaborative Mapmaking
Mourad (10), East Jerusalem
“It’s school, and showing how it’s not suitable. It’s in the middle of the camp. Also, because it’s beside houses. It’s not comfortable, because of the crowds and the market, which is nearby.”
“The interview didn’t go exactly as I envisioned … the whole family joined—all the brothers and sisters—in the living room to hear the interview and draw. The youngest son—a four-year-old—drew the most pictures. He was so proud and he would draw something and then show me. The eldest son—an eight-year-old—was a bit shy and didn’t want to talk. When I asked him a question…, I would wait for a response. It looked like he was about to answer, but instead, it seemed as if the family couldn’t handle a moment’s silence and would give him suggestions for what to answer or repeat the question for him. It was interesting in terms of seeing how the family interacts, but not helpful for eliciting his own individual response.”

—Palestine Field Notes, 26 March 2012
Place-Based Methods

1. Observation of Daily Life

2. Family Interviews with Collaborative Mapmaking

3. GPS-Tracking Neighborhood Walks
“Every corner, you will find a story.”

—16-year-old male, Hebron
1. the entrance to Balata
2. street where we play football
3. the textile factory where they make clothes
4. another factory
5. the playground for football with friends
The use of GPS technology produces a visual longitudinal record of significant places to correspond with other data. The resulting data is visualized through maps, representing mobility patterns and socio-spatial interactions.
What can place-based methods tell us about the experiences of children and families in humanitarian and refugee settings?
Preliminary Findings Using Place-Based Methods

the biggest challenges facing families tend to be economic
Preliminary Findings Using Place-Based Methods

families face limited access to good and affordable social and health services
Preliminary Findings Using Place-Based Methods

mothers and fathers face specific psychosocial challenges
Policy & Practice

Implications

understand everyday realities

determine safe and unsafe spaces and how this affects well-being

explore how access to certain places and engagement with environment can contribute (or not) to health and well-being

inform appropriate socio-spatial design, effective child-centered practice, and meaningful psychosocial programs to enhance well-being
What are the strengths and challenges of place-based methods?
Methodological Strengths & Challenges

- family size
- engaging with young children
- gendered differences
- confidentiality
- interpreting visual data
- triangulation of data
- unforeseen events
Future Research Directions

36 Syrian families displaced in Lebanon in 3 different spaces (informal settlement, apartment, house) in 4 different regions (northern Lebanon, Bakaa Valley, Beirut, southern Lebanon) using place-based methods (family interviews with collaborative mapmaking, neighbourhood walk, mobility tracking, individual child interview)
Thank You!

e-mail: bakesson@wlu.ca

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