Children and Young People's Outdoor Environments in Chinese Cities

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As part of an equitable and inclusive society people need to be understood and catered for within the urban open spaces of the built environment. In many cities children and young people are not only increasing in number but poorly understood and provided for.

Children and young people's outdoor environments in cities are important because they support a wide range of activities including play (Lester and Russell, 2008) sometimes described the culture and nature of childhood (James et al., 1998). Outdoor environments also support children's independent mobility in cities, which has been shown to be decreasing in many cities of the world including New York (USA) (Gaster, 1991), Newcastle (Australia) (Tandy, 1999), Amsterdam (Netherlands) (Karsten, 2005), Brumundal (Norway) (Skar and Krogh, 2009), Tokyo (Japan) (Kinoshita, 2009) and Sheffield (England) (Woolley and Griffin, 2015) as a result of increasing urbanisation.

Within cities a wide range of urban open spaces exist including domestic, neighbourhood and civic open spaces (Woolley, 2003). Many of these can support children and young people's activities but often some urban open spaces appear to be specifically provided for children and young people. In these situations society expects children and young people to use only these nominated spaces. In many parts of the world a Kit, Fence, Carpet (Woolley, 2007, 2008) approach to the provision of children's playgrounds is taken which has been shown to have limited play opportunities (Woolley and Lowe, 2014). Skateboarders use civic open spaces but can be excluded by social, legal and physical constraints (Woolley and Johns, 2001; Woolley et al., 2011).

Little is known, especially internationally, about the situation in China because relevant research in China is limited and mainly held within dissertations and internal publications of universities in China. Some cities in China are now moving towards a Child Friendly City approach, although the extent of this is unknown.

Aim: to explore some of the issues about the planning, design, provision, management and use of children and young people's outdoor environments in Chinese cities by addressing:

• What specific provision is made for children and young people in urban outdoor environments in Chinese cities?

• In what ways are children and young people allowed and facilitated in their use of urban outdoor environments in Chinese cities?

• In what ways are children and young people controlled, constrained or prohibited in their use of urban outdoor environments in Chinese cities?

• Which cities in China and how are they seeking to become Child friendly Cities?

What impact on planning, design and management of Chinese cities do air pollution and change in one child policy have?
Participants will be invited to bring to the workshop a Pecha Kucha presentation and presentations will be followed by a roundtable discussion.

Outputs - (initial thoughts):

- A network focussed on children and young people's outdoor environments in Chinese cities;
- Exploration of funding to support the network and undertake research that can be both published in academic journals, such as Cities, and used in policy and practice.