Materiality and mobility in mobile preschools

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Within the context of Mobile preschools we discuss preschool (ages 4-6) children’s socialization, informal learning and participation in public space in terms of their mobilities (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006; Mikkelsen & Christensen 2011) and appropriation of space and material objects (Horton & Kraftl 2006; Ingold 2011; Rautio 2013).

The Mobile preschools are Early Childhood Education practices hosted in buses that have existed in Sweden about a decade and today there are approximately 40 buses all together. On a daily basis the mobile preschools travel to different locations about 30 minutes away from the ‘home pre-school’ and use spaces in and around the city (including the space of the bus) to engage in early childhood education.

The empirical data is from a longitudinal ethnographic research where methods as participation observations and video-recordings are used. The focus in this presentation is on the mobility (in terms of movement and mooring) of the (children in the) bus in a wide range of public space, of children’s bodies in different local spaces, and on children’s interactions with the social and material aspects of these spaces.

In our analysis, we discuss mobile preschools as collective bodies which appropriate a variety of public spaces through mobile choreographies and rhythms. The materiality of the bus serves as a prosthetic device (Cresswell 2009) for children’s participation and informal learning in public space.

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