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The funzone and industrial play: the choreography of childhood spaces in a Swedish context

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ABSTRACT

Over recent years, a cultural industrial branch of play and fun, focused on children, has been established in Swedish cities. Under names such as 'the mischief factory', 'play and mischief land multisport' and 'funhouse', opportunities to consume spaces filled with tools for play, so-called sports zones and celebration milieus with different themes, are offered. Children and their parents as well as schools can stay in these spaces for hours or days, as camps are one of the services provided. In information and advertisements for these businesses, playfulness, speed, parties and celebrations are marked out as key components; everything in a world that is claimed to be created for children. This paper critically investigates the temptations and the activities portrayed within this 'children's culture industry' (Langer, 2002) by analyzing informational material and advertisements as presented on websites. The study is based on the hypothesis that these spaces offer, encourage and make possible certain forms of social choreography (Hewitt, 2005) that are connected to logics of productive consumption (Lefebvre, 1991). The paper develops a picture of the characteristics of industrial play in what is conceptualized as the 'funzone'. The concept of the funzone is developed with support from research on childhood that has highlighted the tensions between nature and culture during this life phase.

KEYWORDS

Culture industry – social choreography – childhood – play – space – funzone

INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the characteristics of a developing cultural industrial branch that 1
targets children, their parents and schools as customers and offers play activities and festivity
services. In these spaces for consumption, what I refer to as 'funzones', arenas of play,
sports, parties and coffee shops are assembled to produce an attractive destination for
different groups. Analysis of these establishments can be made on the basis of various
perspectives and theories. What I will do here is highlight how these spaces portray activities
and how they are advertised and sold on internet websites. In focus are Swedish funzones,
their presented and offered content, and the cultural order they try to impose. Using Hewitt's
(2005) notion of social choreography, a reading of the (desired) content within these playful
and industrial arenas will be developed; that is, we will examine how rules, regulations and
offerings develop frameworks for (social) action and activities, such as play. Based on
Lefebvre's (1991) theory of spaces and productive consumption, I will develop an
understanding of how funzones are connected to certain bodies and cultural understandings
of the child. In the first part of the paper, I will introduce earlier research related to funzone
establishments. The second part gives direction to theoretical-conceptual thinking and
describes the empirical material used for the analysis. Finally, the third part of the paper is
used for presenting the analysis and to highlight directions for further research. The paper is
part of a larger study that analyzes culture *for* and *by* children, in the context of
entertainment and theme parks. Here, the focus is on the choreographic instructions and
directions of websites, and the paper should be read from the perspective of cultural
industries *trying* to regulate childhood. To what degree, and in what ways, this management
is successful will be elaborated in future publications.

FUNZONES

Play zone and play space are the terms used by McKendrick *et al.* (2000a) in their study of 2
commercial indoor establishments for play and fun in the UK. In several contributions,

McKendrick *et al.* (1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c) have highlighted issues of play in these spaces, how they correspond to patterns of the privatization of play, children's and parents' roles in these contexts, how these spaces are culturally constructed and made attractive. As this research has shown, these spaces are constituted on the principle of pay-for-play, that is, you enter the establishment based on your ability to pay. The contents of what I call funzones, on which I provide more detail later on, are as McKendrick *et al.* (2000a) show, made safe so as to attract the interest of parents and made exciting so as to connect to the desires of children. The authors show that advertisements are segmented by this principle; parents are the main decision-makers, and they are portrayed in the authors' conclusion as parts of a 'hidden' process of making decisions prior to play. This positions contemporary play in commercial establishments in relation to logics that are different from other possible, freer, forms of play, in which children have the opportunity to give directions and develop activities on their own. This definition of play, as a non-utilitarian and free form of activity, corresponds to the influential work of Johan Huizinga (2004), as well as everyday understandings of the concept.

In a Swedish context, Brembeck (2007) has conducted research at the fast food chain 3
McDonald's. Her analysis shows how the play spaces at these restaurants are used by children, particularly during birthday celebrations. Brembeck turns her attention to how children resist rules and regulations in these spaces, making them their own for a limited time. In this regard, Brembeck challenges in a way the results presented by McKendrick *et al.* (2000a), who state that children's involvement is limited in these commercial play spaces. One possible explanation for this difference in view is that whereas the birthday celebrations at McDonald's are highly scripted, the play spaces studied in the UK are based on interaction through a more open-ended architectural framework, where resistance may be more difficult to realize and observe; that is, resistance in scripted contexts may be more obvious. This remark on scripted events and scripted/themed architecture can be understood, with further clarity, through the works of Lash (2002), Arvidsson (2006) and Žižek (2001, 2004). Their comments on the cultural organization of contemporary capitalism, as including 'resistance' for the sake of profit, also relate to earlier work from American critical theorists, such as Piccone (1978) and Luke (1978), though not explicitly.

As shown above, different types of spaces of play are produced by cultural industries. What I 4
focus on here is not the play areas in shops or restaurants, studied by Brembeck (2007), or the play areas in pubs or theme parks. The last two categories are listed by McKendrick *et al.* (1999) next to the concept of 'indoor play centre[s]', characterized by the following properties: a 'child-specific forum'; the commercial value of the venues is primary; there is a focus on play space; there is medium costs to users; the venues are owned by independent firms or local chains; they are located in urban areas, with a local catchment area; the target groups are pre-teens; there is a large-sized play are with a demarcated space where the nature of activity is to be active.

These characteristics together may seem rather limiting, but, as I will show, they are valid for 5
a growing sector of commercial venues in Sweden. McKendrick *et al.*'s (1999) explanation for the expansion of this branch of leisure during the 1990s in the UK is the public anxiety over inactive children and notions of the social danger in neighborhoods caused by, e.g., traffic, strangers and other children. Poorly endowed playgrounds are another explanation for the popularity of the well-equipped indoor arenas for play in the UK. In Sweden, discussions concerning children's health and lack of physical activity have also been topical during recent years. In many cities, outdoor play spaces, open to the public, have been shut down. There is also a discussion about 'curling parents' who drive their children to various activities. One could argue that there are similarities between the observations in Sweden and the UK, about safety, activity and their connection to notions of health, as well as children's dependence on parents for transportation to leisure activities.

Safety, enjoyment, play and leisure are concepts related not only to funzones, but also to 6
theme parks, as Hjemdahl (2002) shows in her dissertation. In her study, it is suggested that these areas of fun are connected to a transformation of leisure in childhood, from a focus on sports and nature during the mid-20th century, post-war period, to a more intense cultural interest during the later part of the century. From a macro perspective, this interest in childhood culture and commercialization may be understood through the work of Langer (2002), who describes a developing cultural industrial childhood during the same period.

Langer gives examples of how new products have been targeted at children, such as toys and clothes. In Langer's analysis, little attention is paid to spaces of leisure activities, such as those treated by Hjemdahl, Brembeck or McKendrick. However, Langer's notion of a cultural industrial childhood is helpful when looking at the developments described by McKendrick *et al.* (1999), concerning the intense commodification of play in the UK during the 1990s, as well as when considering the development sketched by Hjemdahl (2002), concerning the cultural focus during the 20th century.

Katz (2008) develops a more relational analysis of childhood and commercialization through her use of the term 'childhood spectacle'. Building on the work of situationist Debord, Katz shows how children today are involved in processes of development via images of success, often constructed by their parents in relation to calculations of future pay-offs and ideas about how to succeed in competition with others. Katz's notion of spectacle involves, explicitly, the steering of feelings and social relations to a greater degree than in Langer's theory of the culture industry and thereby enables us to highlight the importance of power and control in relation to the spaces of leisure and fun. As shown by Hjemdahl, these spaces are not only 'pure' fun, they are also politically constructed. Spectacle, in Katz's terms, seems to serve well notions of safety, calculability, enjoyment and leisure; which are characteristics of the funzones, as mentioned above. 7

In various contexts of capitalism, spaces of fun and play emerge as side attractions in stores and restaurants (Crewe and Collins, 2006, p. 9; Cook 2008, p. 226) and sometimes as standalone play centers, as mentioned above. The expansion of these spaces, in various ways, is explained by Davis (1996, p. 412) as being connected to how major corporations, such as Disney, have found an interest in creating 'mini-park industries' that complement major theme parks. Through the work of Wasko (2001, p. 58), we can understand this diffusion of entertainment in relation to regionalization; there is an interest on the part of consumers as well as cultural industries in spaces of fun that are closer to the everyday environment, as opposed to distant amusement and theme parks. 8

Using the concept of funzone, we can connect various spectacles and settings of play, fun and celebration, delivered by children's cultural industries, to a body of research that has, thus far, drawn upon different but related conceptualizations, a few of which are mentioned above. Connecting disparate research under the concept of funzone may provide insights into global structures and local differences, concerning how childhood is negotiated and constructed culturally under contemporary capitalism. 9

STARTING POINTS FOR AN ANALYSIS OF CHILDHOOD SPACES, CHOREOGRAPHY AND WEBSITES

During the 20th century, childhood was a spatially isolated phenomenon (Gillis, 2002; Jenks, 2005). Institutions such as schools and daycare centers fostered children, within certain spatial limits, to the prevailing norms of the adult-dominated society, so that children will become good citizens according to prevailing standards (Berggren, 1995; Ehn, 1983). Today, in a consumerist society where cultural industrial childhoods are offered via establishments and spaces of sports and culture, we also find the production of ideologically normalized childhoods (Giroux, 1999). I have argued that these cultural industrial childhoods are often based on logics of flexibility and variation in enjoyment, in contrast to the more homogeneous, and many times disciplinary, childhoods of the early 20th century (Cardell, 2009). This transformation corresponds well to Katz's (2008) notion of a privatized childhood and Hjemdahl's (2002) concept of changes in childhood during the past century. It also corresponds to notions of a consumerist society, developed during the late 20th century (Bauman, 2008). This change, in different forms of choice of leisure and culture during life in general and in childhood in particular, can be understood through several contemporary theories of cultural complexity (Adkins and Lury, 2009; Lash, 2002; Thrift, 2008). 10

Theories of cultural complexity emphasize the need for an empirical understanding of expressions of intense modernization, of how 'all that is solid melts into air', as noted by Berman (1982). In this process of steady change, cultural industries produce services and commodities that are subject to new 'needs' and various trends in the sphere of consumption (Böhme, 2003; Horkheimer and Adorno, 1997; Lefebvre, 2008). Individuals, as well as friends and families, consume services and products, again and again, thereby including 11

themselves in contexts of what has been called an experience society (Bjurström, 1998; Cook, 2008; Heidegren, 1995; Schulze, 1995). The notion of the experience society involves new forms of consumption, new patterns of style and taste and increasing diversity on the cultural market. As proponents of the experience economy, Pine and Gilmore (1999) state, this branch is profitable because consumers have to renew their relationships to industries to experience what is offered now and what will be offered in the future. Understanding a consumer/experience society is possible through an analysis of the logic of the development of new services and products, such as funzones and play spaces, by questioning why and how these new services are produced, what desires and needs they produce, and whether they offer new forms of activities. In line with other social researchers, I claim that there is a need to investigate empirically these arenas, not falling into structuralist traps while ignoring actors' actual use of these arenas as sites for interaction (Brembeck, 2007; Hannigan, 2003; Mathiesen Hjemdahl, 2002). But a limited understanding, restricted to individual actors' phenomenological interpretations, is problematic, as I argue in accordance with Pratt (2004), for the need of a critical understanding of the production of space, as a great deal of contemporary research focuses on consumers' perspectives. The logics of production of these spaces require further investigation, so as to understand the structures consumers are offered and can act within (Cardell, 2009; Gotham, 2005). If we did not understand the space of consumption as structurally ordered, we might proceed on the basis of idealistic individualism, where subjects are 'freed' from the demands and limitations of capitalist social choreographies and leisure in post-industrial society.

Space gives structure to people's lives, as Lefebvre (1991) shows. Actors both shape space 12
and are shaped by space. We find interventions in the social sphere *by proxy* of space, as Lefebvre shows by highlighting architectural planning, the specialization of roles in the production of space, and the global fragmentation of spaces of production. In later research, the production of spaces for fun and childhood culture has been analyzed from a global perspective, including the sweatshops manned by children that manufacture goods used for fun by privileged children in the West (Borchard and Dickens, 2008; Langer, 2004). This research clearly highlights issues of interrelatedness of spaces, materially, culturally and politically, and the differentiation of childhood on a global level. As shown by O'Dell (2002), the spaces of the experience society are not isolated, rather they are based on processes of interaction and exchange as well as exploitation. I will highlight the active making of distance between social actors in a local context, as a part of the funzone's mission, later in the article.

Here, I focus on the presentation of funzones on their respective websites. The results of this 13
research will be contrasted, in later contributions, with empirical findings on the material production processes of these arenas, thereby contrasting the childhood spectacle with related realities of global childhood. It is my conviction that this is important, if we are to challenge assumptions of the experience economy as isolated, and grounded in liminality and the practice of the 'islandisation' of childhood often constructed by adults (Gillis, 2002, 2008; O'Dell, 2002). From my perspective, interpreting the websites' frameworks for choreography of childhood is relevant to understanding the attractions of these spaces in Sweden; these funzones that people are supposed to fill up with certain activities, and seem happy to do. From the perspectives of Lefebvre (1991) and Hewitt (2005), these activities are not to be seen as productive for subjects alone, but also to be handled as forces of reproduction of the social structures of work, through leisure, including principles of 'rational' behaviour.

The present analysis of the funzones' websites is based on the thesis that spaces oriented 14
toward delivering experiences, fun and safety, as mentioned by McKendrick *et al.*, produce frameworks for various activities. These frameworks are not to be understood as structures separated from actors, but as trying to engage actors into the very structures themselves, for the sake of efficiency (Arvidsson, 2006; Fleming and Spicer, 2003; Lash, 2002; Luke, 1978; Piccone, 1978). Such structures, possibly related to funzones, cannot, I argue, impose orders via disciplinary arrangements, but must seek to establish an order of consent (see further, Tyler, 2009). Why is this so? Arenas of enjoyment can in fact impose order and structures, but as they often target consumers, it may be more profitable to construct arenas that correspond to the dreams and wishes of the consumers, which also makes consumers easier to control (Fine, 1996; Philips, 1999). As Bauman (2008) has noted, consumers seek enjoyment rather than disappointment. The culture industries of today may therefore be understood as playing or drawing on attractive components of consumption, while at the same time producing distance to alternatives, which are to be found somewhere else (Lash

and Lury, 2007).

In another context, I have claimed that body cultures, activities and spaces are constructed to meet the desires of consumers and to create new needs in them (Cardell, 2009). This enjoyment-oriented way of producing spaces for childhood, and activities for children, may also correspond with funzones, which is more or less obvious in light of the research initially referenced here. How then can these activities be interpreted through the funzones' websites? By understanding this material in relation to other types of activities, of fun, enjoyment and body culture, I claim that we can develop an understanding of some characteristics of the *product offered for sale* within these cultural industrial arenas. To map out these characteristics, I use the notion of social choreography (Hewitt, 2005) to develop an understanding of the forms of motion and activities promoted, and prohibited, in these contexts. Social choreography, as it has been developed by Hewitt, is a way of explaining the interplay between aesthetics and ideology, how actors are incorporated into structures while at the same time (re)producing them. I do not suggest that the interpretation of discourses on the websites describes the social choreography *within* the *social space* of the funzones, though the websites do give detailed instructions on how to behave there, how to play (or not), and more. This is similar in a way to how sports rules and regulations manifest the ideology of modern sports, as a certain type of body culture (Gustavsson, 1994), or choreographic order (Hewitt, 2005). In the following analysis, I will touch upon some interesting questions concerning the funzones' frameworks of body culture. 15

According to Hewitt (2005, p. 13), social choreography is the use of bodies as material; one area of such use is within the discourse of websites. Within regulatory frameworks for sports, play and other activities, we may find statements regulating *how to do* one thing or another. As mentioned above, I expect to find more than just the strict regulations or rules, like those in sports, as today's funzones may have an interest in selling activities of openness and in appealing to opportunities for freedom via their websites. Based on Hewitt's notions of social choreography and aesthetic-ideology (the use of body as medium), I understand these implicit or explicit instructions dialectically. They are not something in themselves, but in relation to other forms of body culture and ideological practices, which are possible for social actors to reproduce or to resist. Some interpretations of arenas of popular culture have developed the notion of the cultural dupe; for one example, see Umberto Eco's (1986, p. 48) analysis of Disneyland, in which the visitors are seen as robots. If we use the perspectives of Hewitt and Lefebvre, this deterministic and anti-social ideology can be avoided, as theories of productive consumption and choreography ascribe the potential for action and resistance to children and subordinated actors, within controlled structures, such as events and spectacles. 16

In the following analysis, I draw upon Hewitt's theory of social choreography in relation to the frameworks of activity presented on the websites of Swedish funzones. By doing so, I highlight how children are ascribed roles as productive consumers (Lefebvre, 1991), and how the activities presented correspond to other forms of (popular) choreographies, such as sports and play. The third and final section gives directions for further research. 17

ANALYSIS

This analysis has been conducted in several steps. First, I made an inventory search for Swedish funzones by using internet search engines and by looking for links on special web forums, oriented toward themes such as children and families.¹ I also searched for newspaper articles and reviews of funzones and, by using this strategy, found 21 establishments throughout Sweden owned by 16 different companies that were offering indoor play spaces. These companies are local, national and multinational actors. After locating these websites, I systematically extracted information from them regarding their rules, regulations, target groups, pricing, and the size of the establishment, its geographical location, events, contents and explanations for why people should visit these establishments. This information has been gathered to develop a thematic understanding of funzones as an emerging cultural industry focused on offering choreographies to children and their parents. 18

HALLMARKS OF SWEDISH FUNZONES

There are many similarities between funzones in Sweden. They are located in urban areas, often in close connection to shopping facilities. Access to these establishments is based on possibilities of mobility to the funzone, payment, ability to follow the rules and that parents, 19

or other appropriate adults, assume responsibility for their children obeying these rules in situ (or paying child care takers to do so). The funzones are spatially divided, depending on age and height, serving groups with different types of play. Connected to this division is also the mode of payment, as the cost of some attractions is based on the total time of use or the number of times used. The differentiation of age during childhood is also observable when it comes to the economical choreography of eating. Most of the funzones do not permit consumers to consume their own food, but they do allow parents to serve toddlers their own baby food.

Funzones are trying, in different ways, to create opportunities for different groups to enjoy their stay. The websites are filled with rhetoric on how popular a given establishment is, how it appeals to everyone and offers opportunities for fun, regardless of age. In this way, funzones are presented as functioning as a meeting place, not just for children of different ages, but for families who are invited to engage in the activities of their choice. All funzones serve coffee and snacks, many invite parents to take it easy, relax and sit down while their children experience the speed and enjoy the play space located nearby. Though the parents and children are separated within the establishment, there are ways of connecting one room to another, via electronic surveillance equipment, monitors and the architecture of the funzones, as advertised on some of the websites. In the website information directed to parents, one can read about how parents can ignore their playing children while taking it easy themselves. 20

At one funzone, you can get your hair cut, while other members of the family use distant parts of the funzone for play. This portrayed differentiation of activities is interesting, as some funzones also offer play so that parents can shop in the malls next to the play area. It is, therefore, not necessarily the case that play is the central reason for children's use of the funzones; there may be explanations for why this activity involves a certain child that are distant from the activity of playing itself. 21

A popular activity at funzones seems to be birthday parties, which are offered in different packages. One can celebrate by using thematic rooms based on (gendered) figures such as knights, princesses, pirates or Spiderman, or themes such as a jungle, disco or animals, or for eating, handing out gifts and singing, and by using the play spaces for additional fun. A few of the funzones also offer home party services. Many offer entire concepts, including events for companies' families including their children, sports competitions or summer camps. Schools and groups are offered funzone visits at reduced prices. Common to most of the funzones is that they try to appeal to many different groups by differentiating prices as a function of time of the week and time of the day. 22

By setting the prices at different levels, the funzones turn out to be spaces of efficiency, seeking to fill a structure with bodies/profitable consumers as much of the time as possible. Restrictions in time use for consumers are the norm for funzones, in that they limit the time for users in relation to what they have paid. Not all visitors pay an entrance fee; babies under one year of age and adults over 18 years get in for free. This seems to be the norm, but there are some exceptions; some funzones offer these groups entrance at a relatively low price. Children between 1 and 17 years of age might also have to pay to play, depending on their age or height. The logic behind this differential pricing is that the shorter you are or the younger you are and the cheaper the price you have to pay. It is possible for returning customers to buy discount cards. Some funzones offer membership clubs, which are free from parents and serve food to children once a week. 23

On the websites, one can read about how nice, safe, exciting, friendly, healthy and enjoyable funzones are. They present these characteristics as targeted to children, though they are often rhetorically aimed at adults as readers, observable through the invitations to parents to bring their children to these areas. 24

The activities available at the funzones are listed on the websites and include various structures for climbing, crawling, jumping, shooting balls or slide/shooting the chute, playing sports and doing exercise. One funzone promises that 'it's hard to sit still during a visit to our place!', describing their focus of activities as play and hubbub, in this way, focusing on children. Some funzones provide instructions on how many people can play at the same time at a specific station. Because of the particular interest in certain activities, there are in some 25

cases also restrictions on the amount of time spent at each one. This divides the space of funzones on the basis of a logic connected to a Tayloristic use of space, where efficiency and time use are of primary interest (Guillén, 1997). This is interesting because visually, via the design of the websites, funzones portray a sort of Utopian image, through the islands of play and leisure for children. However, funzones restrict this Utopian dimension by enforcing rules, based on the logics of contemporary capitalism and its experience economy (Bauman, 2008), thereby limiting the possibilities of founding new worlds or alternatives outside the prevailing system. Pay or you have to leave. Pay again, and you can stay. One of the funzones, according to its web presentation, is a (relatively) cash-free zone, allowing kids to wear membership cards loaded with credits, which gives this funzone another visual characteristic (the card), showing how the Utopian concept has been constructed, as free from money, and showing how some prevailing notions of childhood are deployed (Jameson, 2005; Zelizer, 1985, 1994).

Enjoyment of these activities is not restricted to fun per se, but according to the website of one establishment, it also corresponds to ideas of promoting physical abilities and social skills. These ideas have had some success, as politicians in the northern parts of Sweden proposed to the city council in Bollnäs that they should promote the establishment of funzones. This view of the funzone is highly selective, as it ignores the offerings of potentially unhealthy activities in these settings, such as eating fast food, which is a key symbol for the settings on the websites. 26

Based on the features mentioned so far, funzones seem to be arenas of multiple usages that are trying to appeal to different needs, groups and activities; they are not only for play, but based mainly on ideas of what is fun. They are spread throughout the country and are based on various concepts. Many things are common to funzones, such as the rhetoric and narratives on how the space serves children as a 'paradise', a place where 'the sun always shines', 'a palace of play' or a 'paradise for children'. These short notes on the foundation of funzones are observable via the aesthetics used to promote the establishments; many use illustrations in a cartoon-like manner to appeal directly to children, stories about the funzones are offered online, for example, about a character named Captain Kid, who is said to have started a certain funzone. Images of islands in a hot climate, surrounded by the sea, and the use of bright colors promote images of fun and connect to the aesthetics of theme parks. These images of an attractive atmosphere are based on conceptions of childhood as natural, related to remote places and close to animals (Gillis, 2002; Löfgren, 1984). While these characteristics promote a natural, primitive, sense of childhood, there is a more rational sense on the websites concerning how kids should act; they are obliged to use certain clothes and recommended to wear others in order to avoid hurting themselves. It is thereby a very safe 'jungle' or 'nature' that they are invited to come to, which is regulated in text but (via images) connects to other imaginary horizons of Utopian experience, of a paradise outside everyday spaces and routines. 27

The spaces offered by funzones should be understood as thematic milieus, based on the same principles of control as those used by institutions such as Disneyland. They are produced in relation to images of children's dreams (Philips, 1999), to offer a total experience where everything is served in a de-differentiated space of consumption (Gottdiener, 1999) and where the architecture of safety and experiences are put to work (Strömberg, 2007). What seems to differ is the short length of time one can spend at funzones, compared to theme parks, where a visit requires many hours or days. According to the information, funzones can be consumed in a matter of hours or even less, as it is possible to try out activities for 15 minutes or so, for a standard fee. 28

The funzones in Sweden tend to be located in urban areas, next to other facilities, such as malls. This gives them the potential to be more everyday settings than are venues such as theme parks. One interesting point here is how funzone use might take place in the everyday lives of children, transforming their lives through choreographies of the spectacular. Funzones may be able to intervene in children's everyday life, as they are portrayed as meeting the needs of parents by providing childcare, while delivering what seem to be the dream spaces of children. Whereas theme parks appeal to families on vacation, or during their leisure time, funzones can offer an alternative for parts of the family, thereby making a division of leisure/work and fun-time/shopping-time possible within the family. Some of the funzones market their coffee shops as suitable areas for relaxation *from* children and *for* work. Others 29

encourage parents to shop in the mall next to the funzone. One paradox here is the talk about how whole families should come to funzones, but at the same time they are split up by suggestions that family members should engage in separate activities. Explaining this, I suggest, are the logics of economics and parenthood; children may have a hard time getting to the funzone on their own, which is why parents and families are targeted with information and commercials. On the websites, one can read about the service work of funzones, how they make life easier, for example, in the case of birthday celebrations. Easier for whom? Arguably, the parents.

The social choreography that funzones distribute concerns more than just play. It also connects to the management of everyday life for families, how to organize the various collective activities of a family by offering specialized activities as shown by the potential for differentiation between activities at funzones and outside them. Funzones declare that they are here to serve us with many services and activities that are sought after today. As private initiatives, these funzones seem to offer some activities that the public sector has previously supported, for example, public outdoor play spaces and leisure activities. This signals a development toward the privatization of childhood, which today is to be outlined by parents rather than supported by the public sector (Dahlstedt, 2009). Because parents may not have the energy or time while working to take care of their children, funzones could be an alternative. One interesting feature I found on the websites was how advertisements about the personnel who took care of the children were made explicit, and in one case it was proclaimed that the people working at the funzone *enjoy* the screaming and mischief of children. Compared to (adult) society at large, this seems to make the funzone a carnivalesque space of childhood, where values are turned upside down because children's noises are not valued in other spaces of society (Jenks, 2005). But the carnivalesque may not be a deep structure phenomenon at the funzones, as suggested by the rules and regulations of these establishments. The funzone is, the rules suggest, a highly controlled environment, which allows some types of behavior to take place according to the logics of Tayloristic management. The limits of the carnival are also set, individually, depending on one's resources in terms of cash and time. These investments relate more to the structures of the childhood spectacle (Katz, 2008) than to a break, a carnival, in the everyday. 30

The title of this paper, in terms of industrial play, gives direction to an explanation of how economic management and play activity interrelate, and how the arenas of funzones offer some possibilities to consumers within a given site. One irony here, or *too* outspoken a meaning in the literal sense (Žižek has discussed this as a 'problem' in contemporary capitalism, and Horkheimer and Adorno before him), is in the names of the funzones, which proclaim to be *factories of play* or *factories of mischief*. The naming of the establishments is ironic in the sense that they display activities *related* to freedom, such as play, under frameworks of management and control. This is not unique, however, as a great deal of culture for 'fun' today is regulated and instrumentalized to serve the purposes of profit or aims of branding (Cardell, 2009). Lefebvre's (1991, 2008) analysis of leisure as a part of the structures of production and work seems to serve well the purpose of explanation here, where fun is in a direct dialectic with the social choreographies of money-making. The remarks of Kracauer (1995) about the synchronized dancing troops of the early 20th century as extensions of the capitalistic logics of Fordism seem here to have taken their contemporary expression: fun is one expression of the logic of contemporary capitalism, something to pay for, as a 'leisure' activity, while being integrated into structures of the capitalizing system itself (Gill and Pratt, 2008; Gustafsson, 1994; Kristensson Ugglå, 2002). 31

FURTHER WORK AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As Lefebvre argues (1991), even spectacles make room for oppositional practices. In this paper, I have highlighted some of the key characteristics as presented in the discourse of the funzones. Lefebvre's critique of reductionist analysis is important here; the information and advertisements are *one* expression of how funzones are constructed and can be interpreted, thus they are not representative of the practiced social choreography going on inside the funzones. What I suggest is therefore an analysis that takes children and parents into account from an ethnographic perspective, showing how they use the establishments, as well as how they are being used by cultural industries via the choreographies of late-capitalist play-work. 32

During the process of writing this paper I have noticed similarities in design between funzones through the images representing the play spaces. Such similarities may be 33

explained by studies of the equipment, which are delivered by national and international distributors, such as *Knights Castles*, and *Play System Sweden Ltd*. A broader take on this field of industrial play would be necessary to provide details with a higher explanatory value. Here, I've tried to map out some themes for further investigation, while at the same time delivering some (preliminary) conclusions. Much work is left to be done, as the development of funzones in Sweden can be compared with the expansion of commercial childhood spaces in the UK. Comparative studies could be of further interest, as childhood, globally, seems to be becoming both more homogeneous and more heterogeneous.

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1 I have used keywords such as "inomhuslekland" (indoor play space) and "lekland" (play space) to find these funzones. See references for a list of the analyzed funzones in question.