The 'place' of street children in Kampala, Uganda: marginalisation, resistance, and acceptance in the urban environment

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Abstract. In this paper I examine the 'place' of street children in Kampala, Uganda, highlighting their ingenious and resourceful use of the urban environment. Considered 'out of place' in urban public space, street children create their own niches in the marginal spaces of the city. By looking at untouchable spaces, underground spaces, and rooftop spaces I show how they develop their own place identities. For survival, street children react to their exclusion by resisting this out-of-place image and encroaching into crowded spaces or by dominating the street under the cover of darkness. However, in certain city spaces, street children are also legitimised and accepted by other street users if they conform to the desired behaviours of that space. The place of street children in Kampala is one which is contested, resulting in a multiplicity of street children's niches being created which vary both spatially and temporally.

Introduction

Holloway and Valentine (2000, page 9) highlight that the most important contribution geography and geographers can make to the "new social studies of childhood" is to emphasise the importance of place. Matthews and Limb (1999) also stress the need to recognise the diversity of childhood experience and the difference in their social and spatial constructions. As interest in children's geographies has grown, so too has the proliferation of work examining the different relationships that children, as social actors, have with their everyday surroundings and work exploring children's inter-actions with diverse "spaces, places, environments and landscapes" (Philo, 2000, page 245). This has situated children's geographies within the realms of the home (Christensen et al, 2000); school (Fielding, 2000); institution (Smith and Barker, 2002); and public space (Mathews et al, 1998; Watt and Stenson, 1998).

Much less work has highlighted the position of children in the South, where life experiences are greatly contrasted to the idealised protected childhoods of the West, illustrated through Katz's (1993; 1994) work in New York and rural Sudan. This differ-ence is also demonstrated through Robson's (2000) research, which illustrates the normality of children as carers in Zimbabwe, and through Punch's (2001a) work on children's lives in rural Bolivia. However, the majority of work in children's geographies has focused on children in a Western context, within which Vanderbeck and Johnson (2000) highlight that research which explicitly explores children's place perspectives is sparse.

Aitken (2001, page 123) seeks to take work on children's geographies further by suggesting that "we (as adults) have much to learn regarding social transformations" from children's negotiation of adultist abstractions of space (Valentine, 1996a; 1996b). Street children's location outside the realms of the home and family has resulted in their social and spatial constructions transcending so-called 'normal' boundaries of (Western) childhood (Ennew, 1995). They are excluded from public space because of their status as minors and they are marginalised in society by being homeless and displaying deviant characteristics, yet their particular relationship to the street is an

inherent mark of their identity (Hecht, 1995). Therefore, street children have much to contribute to discussions of children's geographies given their unique interactions with 'the street' (used here to denote a diverse range of spaces constituting all public outdoor places in the city), and given how they negotiate and adapt to their 'out of placeness' in such an adult-centred environment.

In this paper I explore the place of street children in Kampala, Uganda. Through a consideration of the impact that other 'adult' users and their associated power relations have on street children's geographies, I demonstrate how street children have to employ alternative and resourceful survival strategies to create and shape their lives in the city. By highlighting the contested nature of their negotiation of urban public space, street children in Kampala create for themselves unique sociospatial relationships. Through their marginalisation, resistance, and acceptance, they adapt to changes that affect their spatial lives and transform the social space of the street.

Street children and 'the street': 'out of place' in public space?
The combining of the social and the spatial into sites of meaning is what Massey (1994) states constitutes place. It is the interaction of these social relations at a particular time and space that allows individuals to develop a sense of belonging (Crang, 1998). For street children, who have left the initial site of belonging (the home), attachments to specific niches within the city enable them to reassert their belonging and position in society by creating a sense of place through personal feelings and attachments (Beazley, 2000a). This sense of place is important for street children's identity as it allows them to develop spatially within the city. Lucchini (1996a) illustrates this through his discussion of the children in his study who see the street as a place where they can learn about social relationships and behaviour. He goes on to explain that these experiences are influenced by the way in which spaces are controlled culturally and institutionally in the city, creating particular 'street identities' in particular places. This 'street identity' is equated to uses of space and ideas of territoriality whereby different street children have particular place attachments (Baker, 1998; Beazley, 1998).

These attachments are both multiple and temporal. Street children have multiple place attachments as a result of the high level of mobility needed to tap into a diverse range of survival niches (Aptekar, 1996; Marquez, 1999). This mobility is based on the temporality of the street as the city changes from friendly to unfriendly or from productive to barren at different times of the day or night (le Roux and Smith, 1998a; 1998b). Their place attachments, however, are also often temporal as children occupy contested spaces and are moved on by police or have to change their location as a result of problems such as violence or hunger (Berman, 2000). It is this contested nature of these niches which suggests street children's out of placeness in some city spaces (Connolly and Ennew, 1996), a concept which deserves closer attention.

Children's use of city spaces in the South is generally limited, usually to travel between school and home in the morning and late afternoon only, or is highly controlled by their parents (Connolly and Ennew, 1996). For many poor urban children, home spaces are constrained and their role in the family is both social and economic (Rwezaura, 1998), widening their access to more public urban environments for particular activities. Children playing in residential streets or legally working in the urban domain are legitimised because they are in accordance with adult values (Lucchini, 1996b). It is when living on the main streets that children have historically been considered to be out of place.[1] The image of urban streets as adult space, associated with crime, vagrancy, deviance, and delinquency, has influenced this

[1] See Davin (1996) or Sibley (1995) for a discussion of Paris street arabs as a historical example.

construction (Bibars, 1998). Therefore, it is particularly street children's use of the city that constitutes their out of placeness. Heinonen (2004) sums it up well, stating that the otherness of street children is not based on their status as poor children but on their engagement with street life.

The idea of being out of place or 'in the wrong place' is based on ideological beliefs that certain behaviours are appropriate for particular spatial contexts, whether at home, in the street, or at work (Valentine, 1996b). For example, home-lessness is associated with the moral dangers of urban space and is considered out of place in 'purified' rural space (Cloke et al, 2000). Cresswell (1996, page 3) calls this belief "expectations about behaviour that relate a position in a social structure to actions in space." The structures that influence this behaviour are societal rules and resources (Giddens, 1984). Power relations associated with these rules, and their spatial entanglements, in turn, constrain behaviour because individuals and groups exercise power in different ways and across space (Sharp et al, 2000). It is when individuals and groups contradict each other socially and spatially that antagonism emerges, resulting in transgression and resistance which consequently cause spatial exclusion and marginalisation or place adaptation and change.

Transgression occurs when someone contradicts the 'normative geographies' of a particular place where everything and everyone is in the 'correct' place (Cresswell, 1996, page 8). Transgression, however, is not an intended act of resistance but relies on that particular action being noticed and considered deviant and marginal to society, such as taking illegal drugs in a public place. The result is what Sibley (1995) terms 'the purification of space' through the urge to exclude 'others' from a particular place. Resistance is distinguished from other deviant positions because, in this instance, the conflicting actions are deliberate. This resistance is based on power relations whereby the dominant authority stifles other identities. In such cases resistance involves attempt-ing to take over and create different spatialities from those that are defined through repression and exploitation (Pile, 1997). This can result in places being changed or adapted as people become empowered through resistance (Sharp et al, 2000).

Children, including street children, have, until recently, been accorded little atten-tion in discussions on power relations. However, their presence as independent social actors suggests that they too must be included, particularly because children and adults often engage in conflicting uses of urban space (Matthews et al, 1999; Vanderbeck and Johnson, 2000). The geographies produced by street children are therefore conceptual-ised as being influenced by a combination of the physical space of the street, their social relations with other street users, and their own independent social action.

In Kampala, street children use the street for a variety of activities, both day and night (Young, 2000). Particular places provide different opportunities for survival, as street children are often drawn to those parts of the city where income can be earned. At different times and in different places the street becomes a place for work, as many engage in activities such as begging, stealing, selling in markets, carrying luggage, minding or cleaning cars, and any other informal tasks that opportunistically present themselves. However, some areas will be avoided as they are less productive, such as residential areas, or because they are well-controlled spaces, such as those near police stations or government offices. For a sense of the general geography of Kampala see figure 1 (see over).

Further, different street spaces are useful for different activities as private activities are carried out in hidden places. Particular street spaces are used for washing, both clothes and bodies; eating; sleeping; and 'hanging out', which encompasses a range of activities from gambling, playing games, watching videos, and physical training to smoking, drinking beer, and sniffing fuel (Young, 2000).
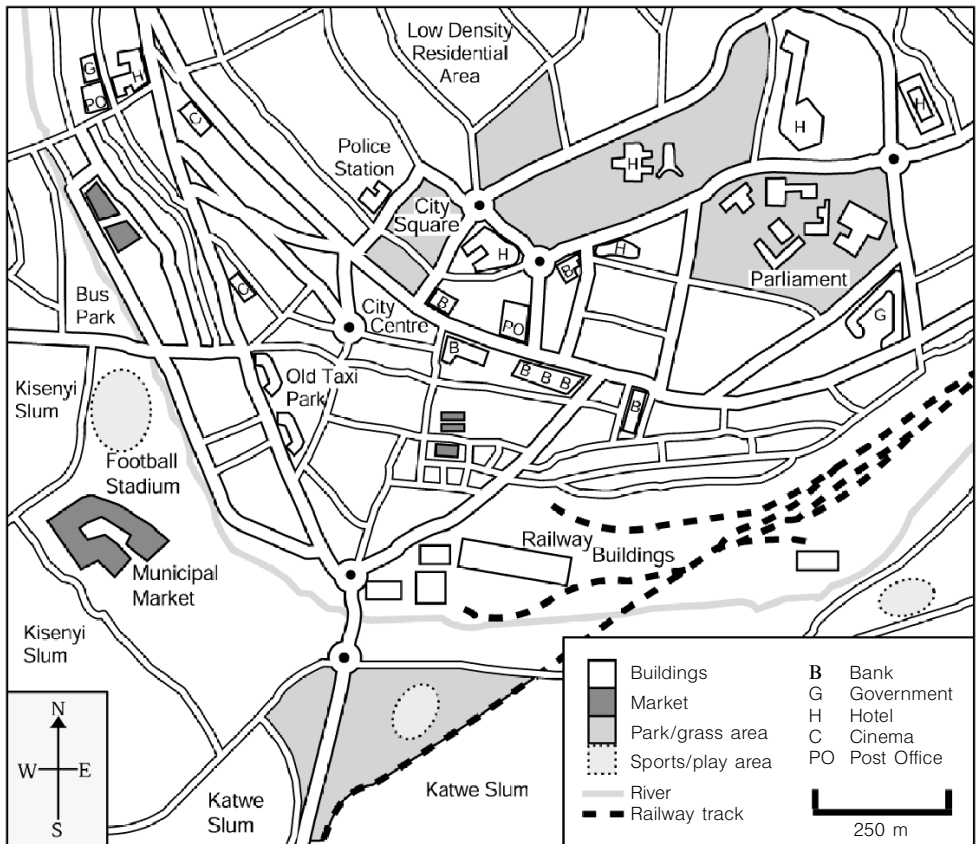
Figure 1. Kampala's urban environment.

The types of spaces that are likely to be street children's places, and to which their sense of belonging in the city will be attached, must also be understood in the context of the wider social environment. Within the city as a whole, conflict may arise because different groups have different attachments to the same locations. This means that they may each establish a different sense of place for the same area. Although the literature tends to focus on the negative relationships which exist on the streets between street children and their 'victimisers' (Dimenstein, 1991; Lalor, 1999; Williams, 1996), both Hecht (1999) and Marquez (1999) illustrate that street children are involved with a myriad of other actors. These interactions include the police, street traders, nongovernmental organisations, and members of the public, and are envisaged to impact upon street children's geographies.

It is also important to recognise the heterogeneity of street children when we are conceptualising their geographies. There is no universal notion of street children or singular street-child experience because their public existence is bound to the social, cultural, and political values of individual places (Ennew, 1996; Richter, 1991). Within this, the individual geographies of street children, like all children, will differ given their status as independent social actors. For example, Beazley (1998) discusses the difference between girls' and boys' uses of the street in Indonesia, whereas Lucchini (1996a) illustrates this difference between working and nonworking street children in Uruguay. Other factors such as age and ability are also likely to influence the spaces used by particular street children, given that they undertake a variety of different

activities (Baker, 1998; Dallape, 1987; Marquez, 1999). For example, younger children often engage in begging, but as they mature their income-generation activities change because they no longer secure adult sympathy (Hecht, 1999).

The interaction of the spatial, social, and individual aspects of street children's lives shapes the place of street children in the urban environment. The power relations operating over the space of the street cause the exclusion and marginalisation of street children into particular niches, and their attachment to such places is likely to be symbolised by the qualities they derive from that place as part of their identity (Rutherford, 1990). However, street children's nonconformity and resistance to their marginalisation empowers them as a group, allowing them to create their own places and to survive the city. This has led to the creation of street children's niches, which are receiving legitimation to the point where street children's presence on the street is gaining acceptance in some instances.

The research context
The research discussed here was undertaken with full-time street children [2] in Kampala, between October 1998 and May 1999. Kampala was selected for study because of the rapid increase in numbers of street children there over recent years as a result of increasing urbanisation and social and economic deterioration in many home environments, linked to HIV/AIDS, internal conflict, and socioeconomic restructuring (Bayat, 2000; Harper and Marcus, 2000). A combination of such events has resulted in street children becoming an increasingly familiar sight in many of the rapidly expanding cities in sub-Saharan Africa.

In Kampala, the majority of homeless children on the streets are boys aged between eight and seventeen. Girls are also present but are less visible and in smaller numbers. Children are there for a variety of reasons. Although most have run away because of problems in their home life, being abandoned or abused by stepparents and guardians, or because there was no one to care for them as a result of the death of a parent, others have been enticed by friends or by the opportunities of the city. Many feel unable to go home, do not want to go home, or have no home to go to. The street has become their home and their friends have become their family.

In order to create a sense of the city from the perspectives of street children, a multimethod participatory research strategy was employed by using children-centred and children-led methods (Boyden and Ennew, 1997). A range of oral, visual, and observational activities were undertaken with street children, aged between eight to seventeen years, including participant observation, focus groups, maps, drawings, and photographic diaries. Interviews and discussions with adult city-users were also conducted to include their views on their interactions with street children.

Participant observation was undertaken initially by volunteering at a drop-in centre for street children, run by a local organisation, the Friends of Children Association (FOCA). This provided access to children in a nonthreatening 'neutral' environment. Participation in their day-and-night outreach programme facilitated my familiarity on the streets and over time this resulted in increasing my contact with street children outside of the parameters of FOCA's activities.

Oral and visual methods were employed and adapted to reduce researcher influence and to increase children's control of the research process [issues of researcher access and identity are discussed more fully in Young and Barrett (2001a), see also Punch (2001b)].

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[2] Here reference to 'full-time street children' indicates that such children are independently working and living on the city streets. It is necessary to make this distinction from 'part-time street children', who only sporadically come onto the street, as they often receive more legitimation in the urban public space and have very different geographies. For a fuller discussion see Lucchini (1996a).

Through brainstorming, in regard to their use of space in the city, street children designed and led their own focus-group discussions. Visual methods were particularly useful fun action-based activities, which were controlled by the children themselves. Approximately twenty children designed and drew pictures and maps illustrating how they use the urban environment for their daily activities. The inclusion of photographic diaries, however, was particularly instrumental in identifying the place of street children in the city from their own perspectives. Fifteen disposable cameras were distributed to individuals or to small groups of children to take pictures of the spaces and places that they used over a twenty-four-hour period. This was especially useful for accessing areas inappropriate or impractical for an outside researcher. All the visual images produced during the research process subsequently acted as catalysts for oral description and-helped to refocus the research towards being children-led rather than researcher-imposed [for a more detailed discussion of the visual methods and methodology used, see Young and Barrett (2001b)].

The methodology discussed emphasises the ethical stance, employed here, of children's participation in designing and undertaking their own research methods. However, it is important that children are involved throughout all stages of the research process. Although the practicalities and ethics of undertaking research with street children have been discussed elsewhere (Young and Barrett, 2001b; 2001c), it is important to point out that all the children who participated were fully aware of the research context and consented to taking part (Ennew, 1994). The research process itself was constantly negotiated and discussed with the children, including the timing and setting for each activity.

Street children in Kampala: in place and out of place
Kampala's street children have a sense of the city, which they perceive to be both exciting and dangerous based on their understanding and use of urban space. Many of the survival strategies that they employ conflict with their out of placeness and have resulted in the creation of street children's niches in marginal spaces, and in obligatory resistance to the contested central spaces of the urban landscape. However, in some instances street children are accepted on the street because some of the activities they engage in enhance the functioning of the city. The aim here is to explore such domains by examining the spatial marginalisation of street children, and how they resist and adapt this position to become antagonistic to, or accepted into, the dominant behaviours of the street.

Spatial marginalisation
In line with Sibley's (1995) notion of spatial exclusion, street children in Kampala are marginalised into negligible and obscure urban locations through antagonism with more dominant users of the cityscape. Street children adapt to this peripheralisation by developing a variety of niches exclusive to them and this emphasises their position as an unwelcome, and somewhat unruly, population. It is their dependency on urban society for survival that has resulted in their refusal to leave the city. The friction that exists between street children and other street users forces them to compromise their urban existence.

The removal of street children from certain locations in Kampala is particularly pertinent to their marginalisation. The children themselves state that they are not allowed to frequent wealthy places such as hotels and restaurants because it is off-putting to the customers.

"Which place don't you go to eat?"

"Those big hotels like Havana because the boss doesn't allow us to enter there" (focus-group discussion 1).

Furthermore, depots[3] or other niches are sometimes abandoned because of the pressure exerted on children by other street users, most notably those maintaining order on the street, namely the police and local defence unit. The result is the movement of street children towards the south of the city near to the city-centre slums, away from the financial, government, and wealthy commercial sectors of the city. A discussion with FOCA social workers highlighted the increasing marginalisation of street children within the city. As a relatively small and expanding urban area, Kampala is constantly changing and acquiring enhanced security, communications, and services, which has subsequently resulted in the desired removal of overt signs of poverty. Many depots have therefore disappeared from wealthy areas in central Kampala that have been improved with street lights, fences, and increased security, forcing street children to establish new depots in the more informal and busy commercial areas.

Now that I have established the marginalisation of street children it is necessary to examine how they react to this exclusion spatially. The examples of 'untouchable' spaces, 'underground' spaces, and 'rooftop' spaces, all of which have the image and stigma of marginality, highlight this (Shields, 1991). It is not the outskirts of the city that are taken over but the marginal niches of the city centre, which allow the centrality necessary for survival. This is akin to Shields's (1991, page 3) contention that marginal places are "not necessarily on geographical peripheries but ... have been placed on the periphery of cultural systems of space." It is also through such places that street children's transformation of the city is revealed, highlighting that they take over areas impossible or impractical for adults and thus exert their influence on the social production of the peripheral urban landscape. The use of these spaces is varied and diverse, although many provide opportunities to conduct private out-of-place activities in the public arena.

Untouchable spaces
Much of street children's activity in Kampala centres around rubbish skips or 'untouchable' spaces. Figure 2 (over) shows the meaning that a particular skip has for a group of small boys. Although the majority of street users avoid these unsightly, filthy areas, street children uniquely service each skip, based on its location, contents, and environmental significance. At City Square the skip serves mainly as a resting and eating place because of its grassy environment and strategic location near to a variety of restaurants and hotels. The children who have claimed this niche know the exact times when leftovers are dumped and wait in anticipation of chicken, chips, and other palatable delicacies.

"Men bring food in buckets and we pick and eat at 10.00am, and at 1.00pm and at
  6.00pm" (focus-group discussion 4).

On arrival, squabbles ensue as each child attempts to claim a morsel by fighting off both peers and marabou storks, the city's other major scavengers. The 'Fido Dido'[4] skip, located on a main shopping street, is more economically based as rubbish can be collected from the surrounding shops for a few shillings. The proximity of the skip to a number of fast-food outlets also means that a meal of chips can be scavenged.

"At Fido Dido they pour leftovers and chips there [in the skip]" (focus-group
  discussion 7).

Moreover, skips form the hub of much depot activity, providing shade from the hot sun, food during the day, and warmth at night because the contents are regularly burned by the city council or by the children themselves.

[3] 'Depot' is the term used by street children in Kampala to refer to the place where they 'live'. A child's depot generally serves as a place for sleeping, eating, and 'hanging out'.
[4] The Fido Dido skip receives its name from the nearby Fido Dido ice-cream parlour.

Figure 2. The skip as untouchable space. "This skip is our home and we eat food here. These are my friends who I stay with. It is now later in the afternoon and we are still waiting for them to bring food here" (M aged 9, photographic-diary extract). The children's faces have been obscured to protect their identity.

Kakuta[5] depot, although not a skip, is also an 'untouchable' space, as it is located on a rubbish dump in one of the city-centre slums. This undesirable area serves the local carpentry workshops as a rubbish site and is therefore well hidden from mainstream city activities. This has resulted in Kakuta being an ideal place for older street youth to live, because it is located away from the gaze of police patrol officers, making it safe for the consumption of illegal substances. It is also an area unknown or avoided by other street users because of its main function as a rubbish place, thereby evoking the same dirt and disgust as the city-centre skips.

"[One boy] sells fuel here [Kakuta] because there are so many children at Kakuta and others will come here to get their fuel. It's a good place to sell fuel because it's hidden and police don't come here so we are not disturbed ..." (N aged 17, photographic-diary extract).

These examples demonstrate the marginalisation of street children because 'the skip' signifies an area of the street that is necessary but avoided in the sophisticated urban environment. As Douglas (1966) points out, rubbish, or dirt, is associated with disorder, a by-product of the creation of order, and is considered to be out of place in the city. Rubbish is therefore confined to 'untouchable' spaces, marginalised within the city because of this association with impurity and danger. This makes the skip an ideal location for street children because it is avoided and excluded from the spatial location of the majority of street users. For example, school children traveling across the city are generally clean, neat, and located in mainstream spaces, often with adults. Street children greatly contrast with this image of childhood because of their association with disorderly dirty places, further increasing their social exclusion.

[5] Kakuta, a rubbish dump for local carpentry shops, means 'waste heap of wood residues' in Luganda.
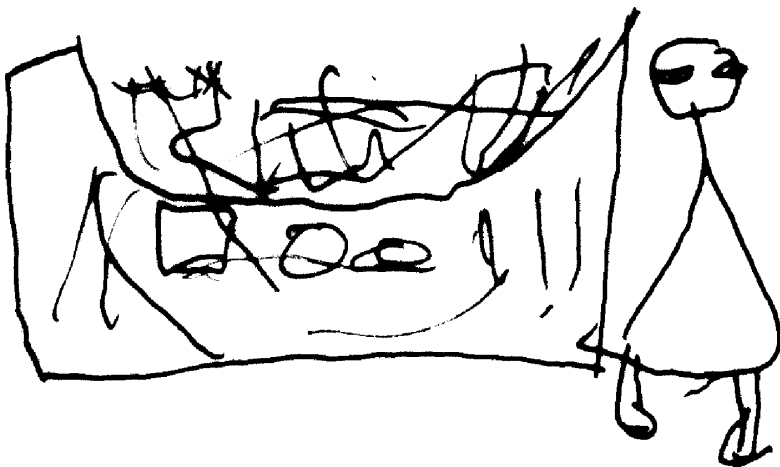
Figure 3. The skip as a dangerous place. "This is the skip at Miniprice. I don't like it as they put bad things in it and you can catch disease" (S aged 11, drawing session).

The skip also marginalises street children into dangerous living as they retrieve rotten food and items to sell amongst decaying matter. Many of the children contract skin infections or have septic wounds because they are unable to keep them clean. In the children's drawings of safe places and dangerous places in the city, it is not surprising that the skip features as an ambiguous place. In one sense the marginality of skips provides the children with an undisturbed location where they are free from outside harassment; in another sense the danger associated with skips is also apparent, as demonstrated by figure 3.

"I like this place as it's where I work. I carry rubbish there" (I aged 15, drawing session).

"You can get disease like cholera there" (A aged 10, drawing session).

Underground spaces
When they are excluded from private space by being homeless, and excluded from public space because of undesirable and out-of-place behaviour, many of the younger children have been forced to create an existence beneath the city, in underground spaces, in order to satisfy some of their basic needs. They do this by encroaching upon the water system that serves the city, which is particularly useful for washing and bathing. This allows private activities to be conducted out of sight in the public domain. Further, the tunnels also double up as a private play area where the children slide along letting the wet surfaces carry them. This is a place for escapism and play, where the children cannot be touched by the 'outside' world.

"The sun might be very hot and it burns me and I decide to go in [a tunnel]. That's putting my legs and hands apart, and you slide because it's slippy inside there" (focus-group discussion 1).

This use of public space for private activities can be likened to Smith and Barker's (2000) work as they highlight how children create 'dens', turning the public realm into the private realm. These underground spaces, however, are also used for illegal activities such as evading the police after 'soft touching'[6] or snatching a watch or necklace from unsuspecting passersby. For this purpose the children periodically remove the concrete manhole covers for easier and quicker access. Street children's knowledge of

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[6] Street children have different terms used to describe stealing. 'Soft touching' refers to pickpocketing, as opposed to snatching watches and necklaces.

the underground tunnel system is also useful for avoiding ticket collectors for entry into the football stadium. Here the tunnels provide a means for blurring the boundaries between the legitimate and illegitimate city.

The underground world that the tunnels give to street children provides them with a place for a variety of activities. Despite this it further marginalises them within the city environment as they encroach upon this filthy and dangerous playground. The volume of water is often unknown and variable and is also host to rats and other vermin. The children who play here are therefore at risk of contracting illnesses or hurting themselves. These underground spaces are unclaimed by other social actors as they are outside the moral boundaries of the urban topography, as outlined by Stallybrass and White (1986) in their discussion of 18th-century European cities. Stallybrass and White (1986) place underground spaces at the bottom of a hierarchy of city spaces, associated with dirt and disease, and avoided in favour of 'high' places, such as civic centres, churches, and suburbs, which emanate purity and cleanliness. By moving between these two spheres, street children may be seen as bringing the contamination of the underground into the sophisticated city environment. Therefore, although they are able to encroach on underground spaces by transgressing these boundaries, the negative image of street children may be reproduced.

Rooftop spaces

As well as being marginalised underground, many children have moved upwards in order to secure their own place within the hostile environs of the city centre. The prime example of this is at the Miniprice[7] depot, where children use the Old Taxi Park rooftop to escape the public gaze and therefore avoid confrontation with other social actors in the city. In figure 4 the range of activities carried out there is demonstrated.

Figure 4. The rooftop as marginalised space. "This is on top of Miniprice. In the picture there is a boy who is washing. On the left [just off the picture] there is a group of boys who are eating leftovers they had collected from a hotel at Katimba" (H aged 11, photographic-diary extract).

[7] The Miniprice depot is so named because of its proximity to the very prominent Bata Miniprice shoe-shop sign at the Old Taxi Park.

Although centrally located in the busy commercial sector to the south of Kampala, the area has an air of notoriety about it as drug consumption and gambling are carried out there. However, the inaccessibility of the shop rooftop area legitimises and obscures street children's presence as the rooftop is accessible only by scaling the wall. The result is a constant presence of large numbers of children living, socialising, and functioning at an elevated position outside the reach of security forces and away from the unwelcoming public and distrustful gaze of the passerby.

"[Street children gamble at Miniprice]. They do this on the roof where they are not disturbed" (G aged 15, drawing session).

By being raised above the street, street children are invisible yet visible; although still exerting a notable presence, they are more readily ignored and avoided by the rest of society, they are peripheralised rather than conflicting with the use of the street. This is akin to Matthews et al's (2000a) image of children in the street as *flaneurs*; despite being located *in* the street, they are not considered part of its social function.

Although the rooftop is well located out of reach of the rest of the activities in the street, street children are marginalised within the urban environment because of the difficulties associated with adequately utilising this space. Washing is made difficult, as water has to be transported onto the rooftop; and cooking is impossible. Shade is also minimal on the roof, so, at the height of the day, children have to move off the roof for a time. Furthermore, their safety is compromised on the rooftop—particularly if they are fighting or intoxicated, which may make them more likely to fall. However, the adventurous spirit and ability of children to scale the wall and seek out a place on the roof makes it inherently a street children's space, located outside the domain of adult existence.

Spatial resistance
Marginalisation is only one aspect of street children's sociospatial interaction with Kampala's urban environment. Much of their survival is bound up with the functioning of the city, as they depend on 'street activities' such as picking vegetables in the markets as they 'fall' from the trucks, snatching under the anonymity of a crowded area, begging from passersby and the many shops and restaurants in the city, and dominating street children's niches in the city by reducing their appeal to other street users. For survival, it is necessary for street children to contradict their excluded out-of-place image and to exert an influence on the urban milieu.

Street children's geographies of resistance take place through encroachment into crowded public areas and under the cover of darkness when the dominant commercial and business functions of the city have become dormant (Cresswell, 1992; 1996; Pile and Keith, 1997). Under such conditions street children are able to resist successfully their peripheral position and influence the urban landscape both socially and spatially. Both of these elements of resistance have been exemplified to show how street children are gradually becoming a part of the urban fabric by refusing to comply and by continuing to thrive in the city centre. This is akin to the development of the Tekyan subculture among Indonesian street children, which Beazley (2000b) notes to be a form of social resistance to hostility in the city. In Kampala, resistance is created because of antagonistic relationships with other members of the street, based on different ideals, or different place-images (Shields, 1991), of city life. Illegal activity creates relationships based on antagonism with the public and city workers because they are targeted by street children as victims. Engagement in such activities also creates conflict with law enforcement officers, who strive to keep order in the city and to protect the public. Street children have to resist such ideals in order to survive. This research illustrated that street children influence the street through two processes of resistance: antagonised resistance and dominant resistance.

Antagonised resistance: crowded spaces

Street children's survival is dependent upon urban activity, with busy streets providing numerous opportunities to make money. During the day and evening such crowded spaces are full of children begging and stealing. At the Miniprice traffic lights, several small boys can be observed clutching dirty cloths, darting between cars and taxis as congestion brings the traffic to a halt. Cloths are ferociously rubbed across wind-screens, smearing dirt and reducing visibility. Before the drivers have time to close their windows, hands are thrust inside accompanied by pleas for money or soap. Figure 5 shows some young boys begging from cars at this busy junction. Congestion also hits traffic lights at other main junctions in the city; and when the lights are broken there is greater scope for begging. This type of begging activity often antago-nises other street users because the children are very persistent, and when stopped at traffic lights the drivers cannot move away. They have employed strategies such as ignoring the children or locking their cars because they are afraid that the children will try to steal from them. Drug use amplifies the antagonism towards the presence of street children on the urban landscape because of the behavioural influence it has over them. When children are participating in the use of illicit substances they are more likely to feel courageous and react in an abusive manner or to conduct themselves disruptively. This is one reason why people are not always very sympathetic to their plight.
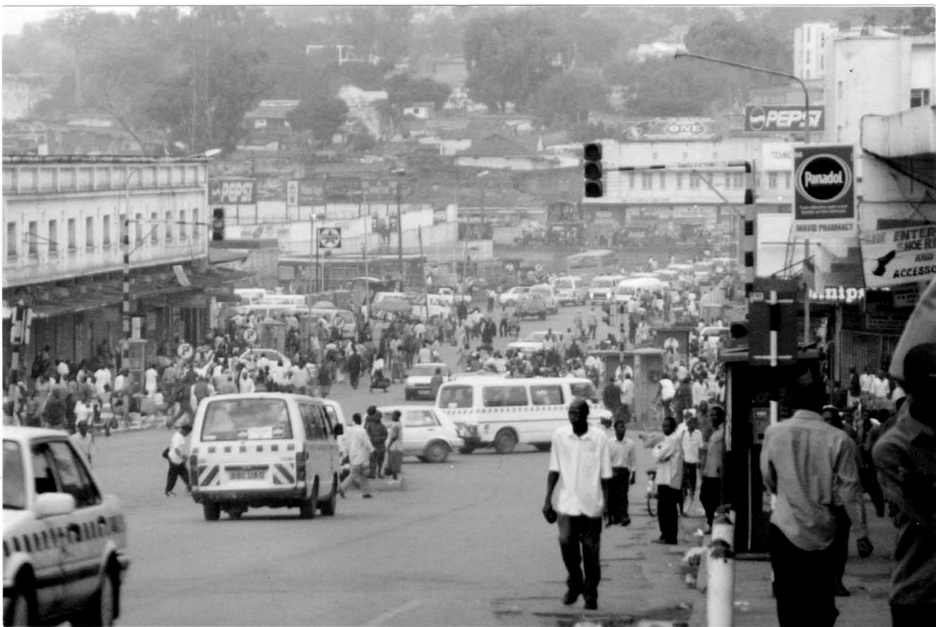

Figure 5. Crowded space: an opportunity for street-child survival. This photograph shows the busy Miniprice Junction between Ben Kiwanuka Street and Luwum Street at the corner of the Old Taxi Park. Some street children are begging at the crossroads.

It is stealing, however, that is the most antagonistic activity that street children engage in because this type of survival is dependent on the invasion of personal space and property. Watches, necklaces, and other goods that are snatched can be sold, and money acquired through pickpocketing can easily satisfy a child's daily needs. This means that street children deliberately move into crowded areas where there are opportunities for snatching and pickpocketing, as demonstrated in figure 6. Crowds also provide the
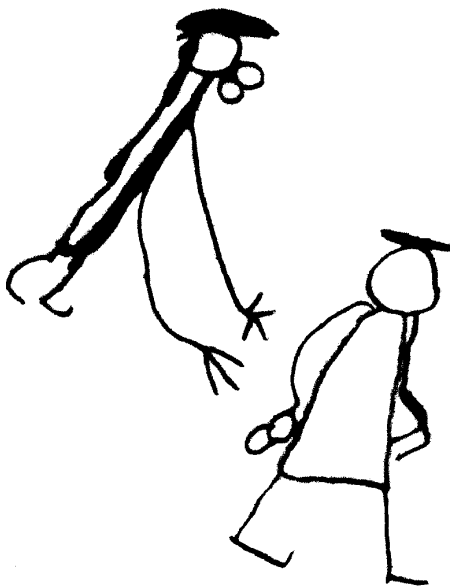
Figure 6. Snatching a bag from a woman in the street. "I am timing [waiting to steal] the bag this woman is carrying, to pull it and go with it" (P aged 9, drawing session).

anonymity that is essential for escape. It is easy to 'become lost' in a busy street or to hide in a skip or tunnel. A substantial majority of people change their behaviour or avoid street children's places because of this fear of being robbed or abused. The result is an antagonistic existence on the street whereby the public fear the children and the children fear being reprimanded or 'arrested' by the police.

"[I do not have contact with street children because] they have the wild behaviour of animals, they use foul language, take opium [marijuana], for example, and steal" (interview, male, 18–29).

By encroaching into crowded spaces and conducting behaviours that are in contradiction to the dominant behaviours of the commercial functions of the street, each street child exerts his or her own influence on the urban landscape by resisting his or her marginalised and excluded position. In taking control of their own survival street children can be seen as essential social actors. However, this type of resistance on the streets is spatially and temporally fluid, dependent on which places are crowded at particular times of the day. Restaurants and food stalls are especially crowded at meal times, whereas markets and taxi parks provide greater opportunities for stealing and begging at the beginning and end of each day, as people travel to and from their places of work. The result is an antagonistic use of these urban localities. This is similar to what Bayat (2000, page 551) terms 'quiet encroachment', whereby actors (in this instance street children) use public space as a site of contestation for their survival.

Dominant resistance: night spaces
In line with Cresswell's (1996; 1998) argument that deviant or out-of-place populations exert an influence on the cityscape after dark, Kampala's street children also renounce their marginalised and antagonistic positions at night by dominating particular spaces. At the Miniprice depot, for example, when night falls children come down from the rooftop area and take over the streets below. At this time they can engage in pickpocketing and sniffing fuel, shielded by the anonymity of the dark and powered

by sheer numbers, asserting the space as their own. Their presence dominates the street not only physically but also visually as they set the rubbish skips ablaze to generate warmth. The flames from these fires subtly illuminate drug transactions and intoxicated behaviour, demonstrating that street children are empowered by their resistant acts (Sharp et al, 2000). Street children's domination is further legitimised by the reactions of the public, who fearfully avoid the area because of their dangerous and deviant image.

"I especially avoid areas where they are at night, like [at Miniprice] because they steal your things" (interview, male, 40 – 59).

"At night I avoid the downtown area [informal shopping and transport sectors] because after taking drugs they are bad" (interview, male, 18 – 29).

"... especially at the Old Taxi Park garbage dump [Miniprice] at night. They tend to be violent at night" (interview, female, 30 – 39).

Other places are also encroached upon at night such as main roads, where daytime trading restricts the presence of street children, or at the 'Diamond Trust' depot, located next to the Diamond Trust bank, just off an area associated with wealth and affluence. The police presence reduces here once the commercial functions of the city cease to operate, which allows the children who sniff fuel and sleep there to take over the street. The spatial function of the city is controlled by groups who harbour preconceived notions of urban living, but once these regular 'legitimate' functions cease, reducing the number of people in the streets, marginalised out-of-place children can enter and dominate. Figure 7 demonstrates this, showing teenage girls preparing to sleep on one of Kampala's main streets.

Figure 7. Dominant space: two girls preparing to sleep on a busy daytime street. This photograph was first published in *Area* **33**(2), page 147. "We sleep at Nakivubo Road because we are not disturbed. We lie on the box on top of the ground. It is softer than the pavement to sleep on a box, it is like a mattress. It was 10.00pm and we were getting ready to sleep because all the shoppers had gone home. We had come from Miniprice where we get fuel to sniff and I met my boyfriend there" (S aged 14, photographic-diary extract).

Street children's dominance of certain city spaces at night is, however, temporary and related to their marginality within the urban environment. Although in this instance street children are using mainstream city spaces, and are therefore dominant, their use of such areas is confined to those times when they can be hidden by darkness. Their use of public space is still considered to be out of place given that at this time the majority of people have moved off the street. To be on the street at night is associated with deviant and illegal behaviour (Cresswell, 1996). The result is that these dominant spaces become temporary street children's places, as it is only at this time that children are legitimised by the cover of darkness and by the dormant functions of the city.

Spatial acceptance

By focusing on marginalisation and resistance we can see that there is always hostility between street children and other street users, constantly in conflict over how they influence the production of the street. However, it is not always the case that disharmony exists, and positive relationships also develop between street children and other street users. They help, and are helped by, many of those who use the city.

The spatial acceptance of street children takes two forms. They coexist harmoniously with others in particular spatial niches when they seek to engage in a similar activity and not to cause disruption. This is especially true for some leisure spaces where street children want to participate in public activities. Here they have to act in accordance with the rest of society so as not to be excluded. This is also true of their use of other spaces that are not overtly street children's niches. For example, eating at local food stalls or engaging opportunistically in income generation can take only place when street children act in accordance with other groups.

The other form of acceptance of street children is when they become incorporated into a particular aspect of society and, for a time at least, can renounce their 'street-child image'. For example, children who work in the markets and alongside other street vendors often become incorporated into these aspects of society.

Coexistence

Some of street children's leisure activities, such as watching films in local video halls, occur within the public arena, causing the children to interact with other members of society. Often the owners of such places are sympathetic to the plight of street children and help them out. The children have to display certain behavioural characteristics in order to be allowed to enter: they have to be sober, polite, and clean. This compromise exists because the children want to spend their time watching films and therefore will comply with the rules outlined by the owner. Once inside they watch with other members of the public, although sometimes they sit in a separate part of the video hall, highlighting that they are only partially accepted.

"They behave good [in my video hall] because I tell them they should not take fuel and they don't and you tell them to wash and they go and wash" (interview, owner of Akai video hall).

This is not the only example of street children coexisting with other street users during their leisure activities, as their use of parks and open spaces also results in coexistence. Although many children frequent these areas to rest, they are easily identifiable by their appearance and often the younger ones are engaged in sniffing fuel. However, they do not attend the park for antagonistic activities like stealing and begging, and often just relax or play games. This means that they use parkland simultaneously with other members of the public who come to rest. Figure 8 (over) shows street children enjoying a concert with other members of the public. It also illustrates the difference in behaviours between the two groups, with one street child
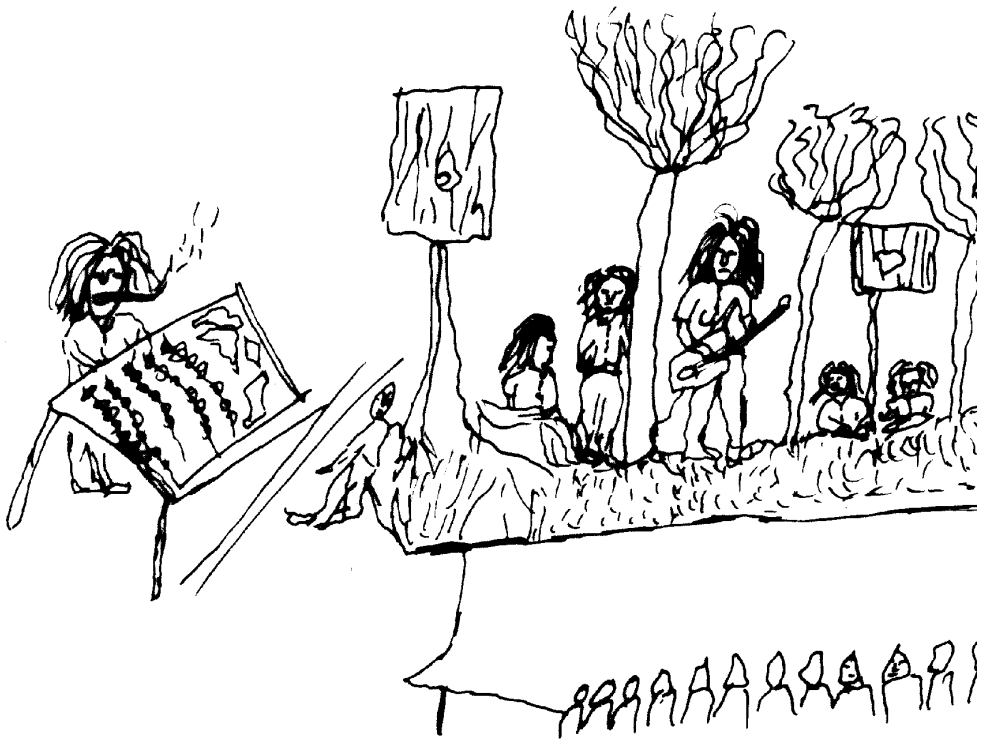
Figure 8. Street children coexisting at a public gathering. "The Rastas are singing about Bob Marley in a concert at Freedom Square. The street children and the other people are happy because they are listening to sweet voices. One street child is timing [watching] the meat so that he can eat what has fallen down from where the man is roasting it" (BL aged 17, drawing session).

begging cooked meat from a food seller. Although the children are coexisting with members of the public, they are still set apart by their behaviour.

Eating is another street children's activity where coexistence is identified. Although they eat from 'untouchable spaces', many, particularly girls and older boys, purchase food in the markets and local 'hotels'. To do this they have to interact with members of other street-using groups, and, again, conditions are sometimes placed on the children before they can eat. They often have to leave their fuel behind and wash before they are allowed to sit with other customers.

The final type of coexistence that is worth highlighting here is in regard to work activities. As previously noted, street children engage in informal jobs, such as carrying luggage or taking rubbish to the skip. Such tasks are not really considered inside the realms of 'work' but are useful, legal activities from which street children, most notably boys, can earn their survival and be legitimised on the street (Lucchini, 1996a). Furthermore, these types of employment are beneficial to other street users and not antagonistic. The result of this is a symbiotic relationship and coexistence on the street.

Incorporation
Street children are not only accepted in the cityscape because they coexist with society's norms, but, in some cases, they become incorporated into society because of the nature of their activities. This is particularly true of adolescents who develop a sense of responsibility and engage in legal work. In the evening it is normal that the south of the city, around the markets and taxi parks, becomes awash with activity as numerous informal traders flood onto the streets. Many people engage in this work,

unregulated, including some older male street children. They dress smartly and blend into the mass of hawkers and traders. It is not possible to identify them as street children at this time, as they have become completely immersed into the functioning of the street and are legitimised by their activities (Lucchini, 1996a).

In the markets there is a similar incorporation of full-time street children into the workforce, regardless of their age. They engage in a multiplicity of tasks, such as taking rubbish, off-loading, washing plates, and selling a variety of small items, such as vegetables and plastic bags. These are not exclusively street children's activities, so they work alongside other children who are also employed in the markets or who assist their parents before and after school. Often employment is based on the familiarity of the workforce to the employer, and, once children are well known and trusted, they are readily employed. In one of the markets they have even been provided with uniforms, hiding their street identity so that they are not separated out as street children (interview, Nakasero market official).

"We go and collect oranges and sell them to get money, plus Irish potatoes" (focus-group discussion 1).

"There are quite a few of them near our shop and we try to help them now and again to stay off the streets by employing them. I allow them to sleep in the alley here and give them a uniform and food. I find them honest and hardworking" (interview, shop owner, Kampala Road).

Although they are accepted into the street when conforming to particular behaviours, for street children this is a temporary adaptation to their subculture and is specifically related to their individual survival strategies in the city. Those children who are clean and sober in the video hall are the same children who were stealing or begging under the influence of fuel at the traffic lights earlier in the day. Their acceptance is also temporarily linked to the geographies of other children in the city. Working in the markets out of school hours is legitimised by the number of other children engaged in similar activities to fulfil their economic role in the family (Rwezaura, 1998). The acceptance of street children, like their resistance, is therefore temporary as they move between urban niches to engage in particular activities at different times of the day and evening.

Conclusion

In this paper I suggest that to street children the city is a place of difference in which they seek out an existence. They perceive Kampala dualistically, visualising it as a place which is both exciting and dangerous because of the conflicting nature of living on the street. Therefore, they have uniquely placed, yet diverse, childhood experiences as they exist on the margins of adults' and children's worlds.

Regarded as out of place by society, they are noted to be immediately marginalised within the urban environment, which results in a series of street children's niches being created on the edge of Kampala's city-centre spaces. Many of the activities undertaken in these niches are commensurate with activities normally confined to the private space, illustrating that street children also have to undertake basic living requirements out of public view in order to secure legitimisation. Further, the illegality of many of their activities has forced them to retreat onto rooftops and underground for fear of arrest and to continue with their activities undisturbed. The distaste that Ugandan society has generated for children living and surviving outside the 'normal' domain has resulted in the street being considered as the 'wrong' place for street children to exist. As Shields (1991) notes, they are adapting to the dominant place-images of the city by retreating into marginal sites. Therefore, untouchable spaces, underground spaces, and rooftop spaces, located on the margins of city living, have been utilised

by Kampala's street children to enable them to continue existing. These sites of marginalisation are mostly located in informal spaces, which are visible within the cityscape and located on major streets. This demonstrates that, within an inherently hostile environment, street children are seeking out specific localities that they can adapt to their individual needs. Therefore, street children are not only ingenious in 'colonising small spaces' (Ward, 1978) but they are also particularly adept at utilising opportunity-poor environments to create their own informal sites (O'Brien et al, 2000).

Kampala's street children have developed a sense of their marginalised position in the spaces that they occupy in the city. Although they perceive such spaces as difficult places to live in or as difficult to access, these spaces have become safe havens for the children because of the children's exclusion from mainstream city life. The danger associated with surviving in such marginal niches has been traded-off against the benefits, such as a source of sustenance, fun, or economic survival.

I have also demonstrated that street children are not only marginalised in the city. Given that some of their activities are often dependent on the workings of urban life, they have developed resistance to their exclusion (Beazley, 2000b; Pile and Keith, 1997; Sibley, 1995). Both crowded spaces, where they antagonise other street users, and night spaces, where they temporarily dominate the street, allow for the elusiveness of street life. Antagonism towards street children generally occurs when they engage in illegal and disruptive ventures, heightened through intoxication from sniffing fuel.

In Kampala the children are aware of their antagonism with society in that they fear being arrested or reprimanded by the police and local defence unit. This often results in street children being beaten or removed from the streets and placed in detention centres or adult prison. Therefore, street children can resist the dominant mode of social production in the city only in certain spaces and at certain times, especially those that are less regulated or controlled. For this reason the quieter streets to the north of the city, where offices are located, are generally free from street-child antagonism. It is in the busy streets further south where street-child resistance is most noted, making them more visible on the urban landscape. Street children's antagonistic survival strategies highlight them as deviant and as transgressors in the city (Bayat, 2000; Cresswell, 1996). However, at night street children are able to stifle other identities in the city, as those using the street as a place for business transactions or as a meeting place are much reduced in number. At this time street children come to dominate the street (Pile, 1997), influencing the cityscape by visibly displaying their subcultural identity (Beazley, 1998). This is in line with Matthews et al's (1998; 1999; 2000b) work on British teenagers who view the street at night as 'their space' where they can develop their own identities, because of their marginalisation and exclusion from public space at other times.

Finally, I have looked at how street children are not only considered as 'other' (Aitken, 2001) in Kampala, and have highlighted their acceptance into the street. Their acceptance, however, is based on specific conditions or situations which depend on them renouncing their subcultural behaviours in order to fit into conventional society. This is in contrast to their marginalisation and resistance on the street, and to Beazley's (1998; 2000b) discussion of Tekyan subculture among Indonesian street children.

Acceptance of street children results in a trade-off between them and other street users, although this trade-off is not uniform or complete. In some instances street children have to renounce deviant behaviours and work in harmony with society to be allowed to engage in a desired activity. In other cases they are driven by a money incentive to behave according to the social rules that govern their working activity. 'Working' children are therefore viewed with much higher regard than 'begging' children or 'pickpocketing' children, particularly as working children

are less likely to be under the influence of intoxicants. This is in line with Lucchini's (1996a) argument that, by engaging in work activities, children have their presence in the urban environment legitimised. The contradiction here is that street children, although accepted in the city, may use the money they earn to purchase drugs, an excluded commodity, or may return to the skip to eat and sleep, illustrating their temporal use of accepted spaces.

The result is a complex existence played out in a variety of marginal, resisted, and accepted spaces. Although they are still considered to be in the wrong place by being in the street for certain activities, in certain spaces and at certain times, street children's out of placeness is eroded by their persistence and adaptability. This results, at least partially, in acceptance of their reaction to the more conventional use of the street. Here children are creating their own places within the city. These sites of meaning are the survival niches which are more than just settings of interaction; they are specific places that are central to the identity of each street child. In this sense, then, street children can be considered as out of place on the street only when the rest of society is in conflict with their presence. They must be considered 'in place' when they are producing their own sites of meaning and transforming the cityscape. The place of street children in Kampala is one which is contested, resulting in a multiplicity of street children's niches being created that vary over both the spatial and temporal dimensions of the street.

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