

Mnemo ZIN & Tion, L. (2021) Researching Social Upheaval and Politics through Memory Stories of Childhood. pp. 58-74 In Dreke, C. & Hungerland, B. (Eds) *Kindheit in gesellschaftlichen Umbrüchen*. Beltz Juventa

Researching Social Upheaval and Emerging Political Agencies through Childhood Memories

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Introduction

Large scale societal and political unrest accompanying regime change reflect powerfully on children's lives. While children may or may not be fully aware of and understand these changes, we seek to learn about social upheavals from childhood memories of everyday experiences. Researching social upheavals through the memory stories of grownups, however, poses challenges to the researcher. How can we intimate children's experiences and understandings from childhood memories recounted by adults? How can we learn about social upheavals through narrations of childhood? In this paper, we grapple with these questions as we bring together and analyse memories that were produced as part of the Reconnect/Recollect project, where participants revisited their experiences of witnessing or participating in large scale political events as children.

The term 'social upheaval' mostly appears as a lay term in research, without clear conceptualization. In encyclopaedias, social upheaval is variously identified, such as the restructuring of everyday life brought about by economic change during the first half of 19th century (Encyclopaedia Britannica) or the period between the 1950s and the 1970s that saw "tremendous social upheaval worldwide with growing debates regarding how far civil disobedience could affect social change and civil society compared to other forms of struggles" (SAGE Encyclopaedia 2017, p.186). In sociological, political and educational texts, social upheaval refers to civil unrest, protest or struggle, times of war, an imbalance in

¹ Mnemo ZIN is a composite name for Zsuzsa Millei (Tampere University), Iveta Silova (Arizona State University), and Nelli Piattoeva (Tampere University). By adopting a collective name, we foreground our entangled, perpetual becoming-with as researchers and human beings who refuse to single out or rank our contributions. Our collective name is inspired by the figure of Mnemosyne from Greek mythology, goddess of memory and mother of the nine Muses. Spanning over almost ten years, our research examines childhood memories through the collective biography method, writing alternative histories and informing our current thinking about (post)socialist and (de)colonial pasts, presents, and futures.

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society caused by social, political or economic change, or large-scale reform. For example, ‘social upheaval’ can characterize a large scale change in a sociocultural environment (Beabout/Stokes/Polyzoi/Carr-Chellman 2011); change in the matrix of economic, social, and political balance in societies in transformation, such as in post-Soviet Central Asia (Laruelle 2013); civil war, such as in Lebanon (Zebian/Brown 2014); or dissent and protests, such as in African societies against neoliberal governance (see e.g. Bond 2019). Others use the term ‘fundamental social upheaval’ referring to the processes present in “newly formed states, regions with separatist proclivities, or unstable political regimes” (Bonikowski 2016, pp. 428-9).

For this chapter, we draw on Foucault’s theory of the modern state to conceptualize ‘social upheaval’ as emerging from the continual formation of modern states. Institutional practices of the modern state, such as the school, habituate the state in the person, and form routine social practices and regulations (Foucault 1991, 2007). In this way, the state appears in the running of ordinary life, which in turn reproduces the order of the state. In the generation of the order of the state, power, control and moral order are continuously reproduced in line with state interest. Power, at the heart of the authority of the modern state, is distributed through various disciplinary practices, state and non-state, such as education, family and work. These disciplinary processes ensure that the crisis of power can be averted. Protests and revolutions against state power emerge when disciplinary mechanisms are no longer able to avoid the crisis of power. For us, looking at social upheaval in relation to the state and its various institutions is helpful since children’s lives are very much running within institutions of the family and the school.

To define social upheaval, we see disruptions to state power of varying magnitude as important, because the disruptions that emerge cannot be absorbed by existing institutions, and therefore they generate widespread social and political unrest and transformations (paraphrasing closely Bonikowski 2016, p. 429). In memory stories, these types of crises of power are portrayed during Perestroika, the Soviet Putsch in Moscow of August 1991 (Gibson 1997) or the Romanian protests from mid-December 1989 that led to the capturing and execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu (Siani-Davies 2005). Memories also recall political regime changes and violent war, such as the short-lived one-party Marxist state in Mozambique or the post-Yugoslav wars. We explore these power struggles – which might

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range from gradual changes in norms to violent protests and wars – through six memory stories of childhood, including those preceding and following unrest, as well as those focused on the changes that seek to settle emerging norms and rules.

This chapter adopts a ‘child perspective’ to learn about social upheaval within the contexts of children’s everyday life as embedded in state politics within turbulent socialist and post-socialist societies. ‘Child perspective’ is constructed in memory stories by narrators’ discourses. A ‘child perspective’ represents the ‘adults’ understanding and empathy with the child’s view of their world. It is “created by adults who are seeking, deliberately and as realistically as possible, to reconstruct children’s perspectives” (Sommer/Pramling Samuelsson/Hundeide 2010, p. 22). Barad (2007) argues that in memories, the narrator’s self and available discourses produce entanglements with other multiple agencies. She continues, “[a]nd memory is not a replay of a string of moments, but an enlivening and reconfiguring of past and future that is larger than any individual. ... The past is never finished. It cannot be wrapped up like a package, or a scrapbook...; we never leave it and it never leaves us behind” (Barad 2007, p. ix). In each memory workshop, ten to twelve participants came together and, as part of *collective* engagements, shared and reflected on the sensations, intensities, and textures of individual memories to produce memory stories together (see Davis/Gannon 2012). This approach aims to underscore the complex entanglement of the individual subjects’ ways of being and knowing with others (both human and non-human) around them, connecting - rather than separating - the grown-up narrator with the child protagonist, connecting the narrators vis-à-vis the contexts and materialities surrounding them, as well as connecting narrators and readers across time and space. For this reason, memories are written in the third person, since memory stories produced this way belong to the collective and are not analysed as individual memories but through what they tell us about “social processes and affective relations” (Gonick/Gannon 2014, p. 11).

With acute awareness of the enfolding of the past, present and future, we explore memories of children’s affective and bodily actions, and their entanglements in various materialities within contexts of social upheaval. With the analysis of memory stories, we seek to answer the following questions: How do social/political upheavals enter into the life of the child/narrator? How do children sense – and make sense of – unfolding social upheavals around them? How are social upheavals and children’s memories of social upheavals

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entangled with each other – relationally, affectively, and materially – and how do these entanglements create new and different possibilities for children’s political agencies?

The six memory stories analysed here were created during the collective biography workshops (Davies/Gannon 2006) of our research project *Reconnect/Recollect: Crossing the Divides through Memories of Cold War Childhoods*. Upscaling and mixing the research tradition of collective biography with artistic forms of inquiry, the project explores childhood memories to learn about societies from the analysis of micro-moments of subjectification, discursive effects, relational, affective, bodily and material entanglements. Memory stories were collectively created, explored, and rewritten during the workshops. The goal was to break free of nostalgia, sentimentality and a biographic type of story writing that sometimes characterises memories connected to the types of social upheavals described here. During collective memory sharing, we paid particular attention to resonances between memories, including “subtle, nonlinear, affective, and often non-cognitive echoes between memory stories” (Millei et al. 2019, p. 7). These resonances point to differences or similarities in the experiences or contexts within which events took place, the presence of shared subject positions and feelings, bodily sensations, reflecting not only what mattered to us as children, but also how what mattered to us could be important for other children (Millei et al. 2019; see also Horton/Kraftl 2006). In short, a collective and collaborative comparing and contrasting of memory stories enable us “to bring into light generalisable modes of mobilisation of broader cultural, social and political ideals, governing norms and transformations” taking place in societies undergoing social upheavals (Millei et al. 2019).

From more than 220 memories produced during the workshops, we selected six memories written by five participants from four countries. We chose these memories because of their either explicit or implicit relation to the topic of social upheavals. We widely and openly called for participation internationally. All selected participants of the memory workshops were academics representing a broad range of disciplines and stages of academic careers or artists who grew up in or experienced different aspects of socialist and post-socialist life. Since the methodology asks participants to take as data their shared memories and analyse them within their groups, with the selection we made sure that all participants were in a position to work this way. The process of collective biography research included a series of

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online meetings and an intensive three day-long face-to-face workshop to generate and write memory stories collectively.

Sensing the atmosphere: Social upheavals in the air

There was this field near the house where they played football. Playing and playing, day in, day out... year after year... Then that day came: December 22nd. They were all there – same time, same place, same bunch. However, there was something in the air that day... It was a cloudy day, and it had something ominous about it: for the first time in all these years they became aware of a new feeling few of them were ready to digest. They were watching each other with what he can only describe now as suspicion. For some reason, the camaraderie and feeling of mutual caring and warmth — materialized by the usual swearing and cursing at each other — was not present, and in its place, a deafening silence floated in the air. (Memory 1, Romania)

The apartment was quiet during the day. The sole object that produced any sound was in the kitchen. ... This was the second day when she was moving between the sunny kitchen through a corridor to the darkness of the living room and back. While the girl was making these rounds, she would stare for several minutes at the entrance door in the hope that her mother would come back. ... The TV in the middle of the room was useless. The girl had tried it the other day and then again this morning. Maya Plitsetskaya was doing fouetté after fouetté for the prince and his court... The girl thought that probably something important was taking place, because Swan Lake was being shown non-stop, even though the TV schedule in the newspaper had other things in it. (Memory 2, Russia)

He woke up very early as usual, perhaps around 5:30AM, and was very excited about going out on the street, at sunrise, with his family to join the rest of the neighbours in cleaning their street — Rua Dr. Ângelo Ferreira. ... He remembers carrying a broom and noticing that everyone else was also carrying one and this made him feel as if he were a part of something big and important; something that even adults were part of ... (Memory 4, Mozambique).

It was a beautiful day – warm and sunny. His mom picked him up from the kindergarten. ... The second they left the grocery store they heard sirens – the ones that indicated they were

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under air attack. They ran to the closest shelter ... huge, but dark and quite stuffy ... (Memory 6, Croatia).

In these memories, adult narrators describe mundane events taking place in their routine lives as children, where routine is either upset or the child's frame of understanding is interrupted by the large-scale events taking place in society. Some narrators show children having some premonition or sense of the atmosphere, which they pick up through the sights, sounds, and smells, including radio or TV programs, or by being together in a crowd with other children or adults. Some clues are very explicit, such as the loud sirens, but often the change in the atmosphere is more implicit. For example, a child growing up in the Soviet Union would know that a continuous replay of the famous Russian ballet *Swan Lake* on TV - overriding all planned programming across different channels, often for several days in a row - meant that something important had happened, whether the death of a political leader or a political coup or an environmental disaster. Playing *Swan Lake* on continuous loop - "in its full-length, four-act, three-hour expanse" - was supposed to block access to the news for the masses, while the Soviet government developed the official response and a plan of action (Ross 2015). But for many Soviet citizens, including young children, *Swan Lake* became "the backdrop for Soviet political upheaval," indicating a major political, economic, social, or environmental shift that was taking place (Schonbek 2015). By picking up these implicit energies or more explicit clues, children seemed to effectively attune to the changing atmosphere and became aware that something was 'in the air.'

Energies and atmospheres are abundantly present in these memories. Atmosphere is a particular quality of events with propensities of pull, force or energy, it is events' energetic dimension (Brennan 2004). 'Affective atmosphere' is "something distributed yet palpable, a quality of environmental immersion that registers in and through sensing bodies while also remaining diffuse, in the air, ethereal" (McCormack 2008, p. 413). Affective atmospheres are forceful moments that modulate a body's capacities to affect and be affected in specific places. Atmospheres may exceed rational explanation and clear figuration and "be spatially diffuse versions of the 'vitality affects' that the child psychologist Daniel Stern writes about – dynamic qualities of feeling such as 'calming', 'relaxing', 'comforting', 'tense', 'heavy', or 'light' that animate or dampen the background sense of life (Stern 1998, p. 54)" (cited in Anderson 2009 p. 78). For Anderson (2009), atmosphere is impersonal; it belongs to

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collective situations, while Brennan (2004) also emphasizes the difference between ‘feel’ (as an emotion running through one’s body) and ‘feel with’ (others), as in atmosphere (p. 5).

What senses are at play in these memories? Do they go beyond or are ‘more than’ rational and cognate? Brennan (2004) explains that affect can go through a “faculty of discernment,” involving “a process whereby affects pass from the state of sensory registration to a state of cognitive or intelligent reflection” finding “the right match in words” (p. 120). These memories tell us about collective atmospheres, affects, and emotions. Children are enveloped in atmospheres, collectively piecing together, enfolding different senses, emotions, and experiences that signal something is happening, or is about to happen.

One emotion that reappears across memory stories is anxiety or intense anticipation. Anxiety does not have a specific object: it is a hovering feeling imbued with a sense of foreboding: something is going to happen - or is already happening - but it remains unclear just what that is or will be. The feeling of anticipation is situated on the threshold between an inchoate, prepersonal or a-subjective affect (Hickey-Moody/Malins, 2007) and a conscious emotion. Emotions work in concrete and particular ways “to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective” (Ahmed 2004, p. 118). In particular, “emotions work by sticking figures together (adherence), a sticking that creates the very effect of a collective (coherence)” (ibid.). The memories reveal the entanglements and mattering of child, parent, others, affect and emotions, and non-human entities through which the world is in the making. New sensations are generated with the pulsation in the air, the change of light and sounds in the apartment, the invitation and energies of the street, and the lightness of the sunny day and heaviness of the shelter, and the child senses that something unusual is going on.

Affects and emotions envelop and energise children’s bodies as flows of energy. The flow of affect in-between subjects and objects, and human and non-human materialities, is important here as subjective states and related feelings and emotions emerge from these. It also means that circulating affect plays a significant role, in that even when children’s acts do not explicitly signal an active engagement, emotions might still be present. In this way, children contribute to the intensification of particular emotional states in society at large no matter

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whether these are negative, such as anxiety or fear, or positive, such as hopefulness or enthusiasm.

Moving with atmosphere: Social upheavals in the classroom

Her strongest memory is of saying those exact words about a sacred person – “Lenin killed people” – and feeling triumphant. She knew things that adults knew and could voice them aloud. She sensed that she was getting her teacher in trouble by making such an argument. She knew that it was no longer about voicing the utterly forbidden – it was worse – she said something that (still) belonged to the liminal. (Memory 5, Russia)

That day, while Stancu was being unusually late, the boys in the back of the room – always the unruly ones – were bored with teasing the girls.... Soon enough there was a fight, which turned into an all-out war between five or six of the boys who were using everything that came within reach as projectiles to be thrown in the enemy’s general direction... then he made an unusual move. Instead of picking a classmate he had a grudge against, he made an about-face, and, with the sponge still dripping coloured liquid to the floor in the middle of the room, he stood facing the portrait of the supreme leader that was hanging, as in every classroom in the school, on top of the blackboard. Then, without missing a beat, he arched his arm behind him and threw the sponge into the picture on the wall. (Memory 3, Romania)

The figure of the child in the memories appears wrapped in the energies of major events reverberating across spaces. While the child might lack the resources to make full sense of the events, and the physical presence of the child is usually missing at the events taking place, paradoxically, it is the child’s physical un-presence that impregnates the atmosphere. The intensification of energy, that something that is ‘in the air’, moves the child to do, think, or feel something that was unthinkable or impossible before.

The child may be curious to make sense of the changing atmosphere by testing the boundaries, often resulting in breaching the existing social norms. For example, a regular classroom brawl between girls and boys takes an exceptional turn in the fall of 1989. One of the boys dares to throw a wet rag at the portrait of Ceaușescu hanging above the blackboard in the classroom - an act that would be unthinkable before. It shocks his friends and upsets his teacher, but severe punishment does not follow. The teacher notices the smudging of the

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portrait, and, instead of a greater punishment, he only administers a lower grade for behaviour, and calls the child's parents to school, the usual strategy used for lesser misdemeanours. A few weeks later, the portrait disappears, leaving only an outline on the wall as a sign of its past existence. Similarly, a girl in Russia raises her hand and officially announces to the whole class that "Lenin killed people" - an act that was unimaginable in a Soviet school before Perestroika but which became possible on the verge of the collapse of the USSR during the late 1980s with only mild consequences. She gets away with a mild scolding and her parents are called to school for a discussion with the teacher. These memories reveal how children gather energies that 'move' them to act in unpredictable ways, upsetting the order of things and thus unknowingly becoming a part of, and perhaps even contributing to, the looming social upheavals.

Affective atmosphere creates a space of intensity within everyday spaces, such as the school. These spaces offer children a sense of belonging or non-belonging, a protective environment in which they can experiment with their agencies (Wilson 2018, p. 458). The child protagonist who smudged the portrait feels sheltered by the school even after the rupture between the two political regimes. The outline left by the portrait acts as a symbolic marker offering a sense of protection. The girl protagonist who revealed the 'real' Lenin is also sheltered by both the school and the family. As Wilson argues, these spaces create ambivalence for children as they continually negotiate between belonging and non-belonging (p. 461). The outline of the removed picture and the liberal newspapers in the home the child used to learn about Lenin perpetuate the feelings of safety and protection. Therefore, children depend on, and sometimes create or imagine, the necessary set of markers taken from the environment to assure their wellbeing and continuous functioning through social changes even if the marker, the portrait of the Romanian dictator, stood for an era of tyranny and abuse. Wilson describes these spaces and experiences as an "imaginary 'cocoon'" (p. 469) that creates a sense of safety. It is therefore important to filter the children's experiences of politics through the markers children use to make sense of their surrounding environment. There are several other recurring markers related to space in the memories, including the fields where the group of boys gains safety through the collective playing of football, while in Moscow, the apartment itself represents the very 'cocoon' that shelters the child in the particularly tense moments of social upheaval.

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In regard to discussions about children's capacity for political action and agency in general, Sundberg (2013, p. 34) reminds us that we should refuse to treat the human as "disembodied and autonomous, separate from the world of nature and animality". The construction of the child, especially the one that the new sociology of childhood promotes, is bound up with the human, and constructed as a rational and independent human self, and as the locus of agency. MacRea's (2019) work is helpful for us in rethinking children's agency in memories. In her analysis of children's play with a red blanket, MacRea (2019, p. 3) brings forth the importance of "the biological, the physical and the material" in children's cognition, but not as more primitive or precognitive forms of understanding which are later exchanged for adult cognition. In her understanding, there is a greater emphasis on the force of matter in ways that we come to know the world. Surpassing the socio-cultural trajectory through which children gain the ability for self-expression and reach cognitive maturity, MacRea (2019) reminds us of Manning's (2016, p. 19) minor gesture and the vital part of nonconscious movement and its creative potential for children's sense making and actions. MacRea (2019, p. 5) further explains:

According to Manning (2016) 'the minor gesture often goes unperceived, it's improvisational threads of variability overlooked, despite their being in our midst' (p. 2). The minor is often expressed in micro-moments that we miss. It is characterised by a wildness, and an indeterminate and an unpredictable quality (Manning, 2016: 1). Hovering on the cusp between the unconscious and conscious (Manning, 2016: 24), it has a vulnerable quality that by its nature is insignificant – and this failure to signify is both its strength and its weakness. Because the minor is an expression of action that emerges from a body thinking through encounter as it moves, it does not carry the weight of an inevitable arrival.

The wild and vulnerable quality of minor gesture emerges from the child's body – unconscious and conscious – it moves the child to throw the sponge or to say the truth about Lenin. In the football field, the Moscow apartment, the shelter, the children are entangled with the manifold material forces that reorganise their sensations and generate new senses. Emerging from their bodies, these movements sometimes turn into emotions and at other

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times disappear before cognitive maturity, producing creative potentials through which children act, politically or otherwise.

Drawing on the memories of the narrators, we see the ways in which the child, through his or her mere existence as part of the affective system that was created by, and in turn created, the social upheaval, and minor gestures, becomes a part of the network that shapes the fate of the event and its aftermath. To put this in concrete terms, although the children in the classrooms, similar children playing football next to their houses or a child in a Moscow apartment, do not physically press upon and influence the unrolling of the events (i.e., not participating directly in the putsch or revolution), they become part of a larger affective system which 'moves' them to act in particular ways. In turn, their actions contribute to and sometimes enable the larger 'moves' that shape social upheavals. In other words, it is not only the child that is affected by the social event, but, following Massumi (2002), also the child, and the child's emotional state at the moment of upheaval that influences the event. Massumi (2002) states that "What is being termed affect ... is precisely this two-sidedness, the simultaneous participation of the virtual in the actual and the actual in the virtual, as one arises from and returns to the other" (p. 33). This means that the child's emotions and actions at the time of the event in turn influenced the event, and thereafter, the type of society that was created after the event. This puts the affective state of the child at the time of the event and thereafter in close relation to politics and the political changes taking place during and after social upheavals. From this perspective, politics itself carries the child in its fold, that is, it represents the child's emotions in its structure, imprinting society with a sense of anxiety or uncertainty that continues to define the bounds of societal life.

Becoming with atmosphere: Social upheavals in child/adult relations

They all knew about the Radio Free Europe broadcasts of the previous days. And imagined (although they didn't dare voice it) that parents must have told everyone about those. There were mass protests in other cities. They knew it was only a matter of time till they reached their hometown. And although they wanted to play football as much as anything, they couldn't do it as they had done previously (Memory 1, Romania)

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The girl thought that her mother was outside in the sun surrounded by people. The girl knew that because her mother told her about the meetings that were taking place, about people who showed up in the square. Her mother was doing something useful and important, while the girl felt suffocated in this huge apartment. Alone (Memory 2, Russia).

He remembers the campaigns to mobilize people to get up and clean the streets and the rationale that cleaning was their responsibility because the streets were theirs now. Yes, there was a municipality service responsible for cleaning the streets and they did clean the streets, but there was an additional responsibility expected of the citizens of a newly independent nation. The kids, the boy and his friends, even re-named their street, 'rua ligados comunistas' (Communists' League Road) ... to counter the colonial name, 'rua dr. Ângelo Ferreira.' Anyway, he has no idea who came up with the idea, but they all agreed that this was a suitable name – but it didn't last long and was never made official, even though the kids painted the name on the sides of the street pavement/sidewalk (Memory 4, Mozambique).

As in the cases of severe misbehaviour, her parents were called to school for a discussion. When she told them at home what happened [the girl telling the whole class that Lenin killed people], they could not take the situation seriously. At the time, the girl's maternal grandmother – herself a teacher of literature and former vice principle – was visiting them. The girl's parents decided that in such a situation sending Grandma to the school was good enough. The teacher and Grandma discussed the girl's grades and her occasionally disobedient behaviour. No political issues were discussed in that meeting. The teacher ensured that by inviting her parents to school she had fulfilled what she probably perceived as her pedagogical duty and the expectations of her superiors. The girl's parents fulfilled theirs by sending an adult family member to school at short notice (Memory 5, Russia).

[In the shelter the mother] ... did something that, for him, marked the seriousness of the situation: she took off her high-heeled shoes [to get to the other shelter where the sister was]. This strange act confused him deeply. 'This way I will run faster'. Yes, it made sense, but in his mind this whole thing was just not right. His mom taking off her shoes in public? Running away barefoot? On a dirty road? He had never seen her do something like that. 'Ready?', she asked. He nodded. They started running. All he could see were the beige high-heeled shoes in

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his mom's hand. All he could hear was the sound of her bare feet hitting the asphalt (Memory 6, Croatia).

These memories vividly illustrate mutual relations between children, adults, flows of affects, emotions, spaces and materialities. Narrators describe children as sensing and piecing together changes in the societal context and feeling increasingly aware of changing routines. Whether feeling curious, uncomfortable or anxious, these inexplicable feelings emerge within the adult-produced spaces. Children produce their own (perhaps less formulated) interpretations and feelings of the events unfolding around them. These palpable changes in the messages, behaviours, materialities, and the overall atmosphere and emotions in the adult-generated spaces reconstruct children's space. In all the stories, it seems that unrest is experienced through/with the adult/s and within caring relationships. Interestingly, these adults are mostly mothers or teachers, although some memories also include references to neighbours, grandparents and school administrators. Understanding childhood through a relational concept of generational difference and ordering sheds light on how children's agency is both framed by, and is reproductive of, the status-quo but may also have a transformative effect on the generational order (Esser et al., 2016).

In the memories, adults and children's spaces, together with materialities, affect and emotions that are differently interpreted, are simultaneously at play in a co-constitutive manner. For instance, the girl waiting for her mother in a Moscow apartment is a child whose position is constituted by her mother's decision to leave her home, presumably judging the protests to be too dangerous for a child of her age. At the same time, as the mother leaves the child without supervision for long spans of time with the family's most important identification documents, their generational order is transformed, and the girl becomes an enabler of her mother's role in the protests. If we think of both the child and the adult as relational becomings rather than beings and always in a process of change (Spyrou 2018, p. 131), the fact that the mother suspends her caring duties for the child to participate in a protest amplifies her as a determined political actor amidst the ongoing historical change.

As Spyrou (2018) writes, there is a danger that children's agency is interpreted through a rigid lens of transformative, even emancipatory action. These celebratory approaches neglect the more mundane, everyday forms of agency that are nevertheless crucial even in

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circumstances of social upheaval. There is perhaps a greater danger of research neglecting these forms of agency when children's role in significant political events is at issue. As we saw above, the metaphor of an active and moving agent is misleading in the sense that a political actor may also stay put or stay in place. As the child stays at home in the apartment of a friend in Moscow, while her mother goes out to the barricades on the 19th and 20th of August 1991, the putsch accelerates, leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The girl's act of not doing anything enables her mother's participation, and by extension, the events of the putsch. The question remains whether the child can be considered in this scenario as a political agent. We think she definitely can, but only in a relational understanding of agency.

Children's' agency is situated in the generational relationships that span both children's hierarchical relationships with adults and the diverse ways by which children are positioned in the intersectional matrix of age, race, class and gender that all produce different experiences for children (Spyrou 2018, p. 124). Allison James and Adrian James (2004) make this clear when they say: "it is . . . the case that even within one generation of children, in any one society, each child's experiences of 'childhood' will nonetheless be tempered by the particularities of their social circumstances" constituted through differences of age, sexuality, gender, class, disability, geographical location and various other particularities of upbringing (p. 22)."

Across the memories, children of different ages have different experiences of upheaval. The children on the football field are older, about 12-15 years old when the story unfolds, whilst the child staying in the apartment in Moscow is about ten. And the child who is sheltering during the war following the breakup of Yugoslavia is about five or six years old, still in kindergarten. They have different relationships with adults, and their imagined places in the eyes of the narrators also change with it. They need to be sheltered, literally, from the danger of falling bombs and the barricades or from the wrath of teachers or neighbours, through the creation of a safe place. Or older children needed to be made aware, as in the case of the boys on the football field, of the expectation adults have for them during social upheavals. At other times, children's actions were evaluated in a liminal space, no longer prescribed by the old regime and its norms that would have resulted in severe consequences or punishment, but in a space where something needed to be done, but even the adults were unsure about the course of action.

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Examples of intra-generational differences in the memories include those marked by gender or class. In the memory about revealing the hidden history of Lenin, the girl who confronts the teacher references liberal newspapers that were particularly popular at the time among young, liberal intelligentsia. On the contrary, the boy who smears the portrait is described as “*an unusual type ... His long curly hair made him look like a girl, but the curses that came out of his mouth reminded one of the uneducated sons of a garbage collector or a bricklayer. His uniform would always carry stains of some nature or another, while his pioneer’s tie was so worn out as to actually look torn.*” While the girl’s parents appear as co-operative and attending to her misbehaviours, the boy’s family seems to have no interest in disciplining his appearances or attitudes: “*No matter how many times the class-mistress threatened him with bringing his parents to school, and no matter how many phone calls she actually made to his parents, this didn’t change. In a week or two, George’s outlook would soon return to the dilapidated state with which everyone was familiar: that of a boy coming from a difficult social background that was making his way through life largely on his own.*” (*Memory 3, Romania*)

Conceptualizing the adult/child relations as a decentred, heterogeneous assemblage - often mediated by non-human actors - is helpful in highlighting the presence of diverse actors who relationally enable or constrain agency. Oswell (2013) defines assemblage in relation to children’s agency as “an arrangement (that) carries with it the connotations not only of network, which may appear sometimes static and flat, but of an assemblage which is a composition of dynamic, generative and agentic parts, such that those parts have temporality, movement and capacity only by virtue of their being composed or arranged.” (p. 73). Similarly, Prout (2005) argues that “childhood could be seen as a collection of different, sometimes competing and sometimes conflicting, heterogeneous orderings. These can be fragile, but they can also be stabilized, become widespread and, therefore, found on a large scale” (p. 71). Prout (2005) explains that “new forms of childhood arise when new sets of network connections, for example between children and technologies such as TV and the internet, are made.” A key question, therefore, is “what makes up the network that produces a particular form of childhood?” (Prout 2005, pp. 71–2). Expanding this discussion to agential realism, the continuous mattering of human and non-human elements, the discourses, adult/child relations, flows of affect and emotions that are all implicated and enfolded in the

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iterative becoming of children, adults, agencies and worlds, in which their embodied presence is not situated in the world but, rather, they are of “the world in its dynamic specificity” (Barad 2014, p. 229). Thus, children’s dynamic agencies, also within adult/child relations, emerge with the creation of the world, for us here social upheaval, which they are part of.

In the memories, particular tropes of childhood also appear, telling telling about adult/child relations. Erica Burman (2018) offers a strategy to be “attentive to forces and relations of (re)production at issue within ‘adult–child’ and ‘child-state-growing up’ relations (p. 1). In ‘child as method’, “‘child’ is understood as a figure or trope (Burman 2008; Castañeda 2002), ‘childhood’ as a social condition or category, and ‘children’ [as] the living, embodied entities inhabiting these positions and their corresponding institutional practices across a range of geopolitical arenas” (Burman 2018, p. 3). Paying attention to this three-fold meaning of ‘child’ and their relations with ‘adult’ and ‘social upheaval’ aids us in making visible the mutual and mutually constitutive relations between different avenues to social transformations and children and childhood’s assumed roles in those.

A trope is children’s innocence and perhaps ignorance, which might be lifted, even very rapidly or violently, during social upheavals. Play, for example, is considered to be a realm of childhood, and we can see children playing football, playing before class starts, playing on the streets or being entertained by books. In some memory stories, children’s play is abruptly interrupted. In other memories, they fear for others’ lives, as in the story taking place in the Moscow apartment, or being reminded to feel guilty for the deaths of others which they cannot ignore anymore by playing football. Yet again, children acquire the kind of responsibility that is usually the preserve of an adult, which can also indicate a loss of childhood, for example when the child in the Moscow apartment was given and accepted responsibility with the passport, though she is presented as being ignorant of what that means for her later actions. As yet another facet of the trope of childhood, memories reveal how children feel disconnected yet thoroughly affected by what is going on, either being apathetic or calm, and claustated and incapacitated in light of the upheaval unfolding, or being engaged in childish, ignorant or unconscious contestation, thus active engagement. However, the child actor is still restrained even if he/she is active, as in the portrait or the Lenin story. We could understand these moments as signalling a loss of childhood by the narrators. Narrators draw on tropes of childhood that link politics and political action, the possibility of

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and thinking about death, loss of space and time for play, and acquired overwhelming responsibilities which all in a way end the period of childhood innocence.

Social upheavals and childhood memories

Upheavals are presented by narrators in relation to atmospheres and emotions, upsetting or settling norms, breaking in or interrupting routines. Social upheavals do not change the whole of society at once. For example, some institutions, such as schools, continue to function in the same way as before for a long time. In the operation of state institutions, such as schools, bureaucratic categories sort and code people as well as create and maintain norms for behaviour. These codes and norms are redrawn during and after upheavals, enfolded in different processes of institutional and everyday life (Kapferer and Bertelsen, 2009). Changing social realities (re)generate a new society. However, these changes need time to unfold and they may not last. In many memories, it is the changing of routine that is an obvious sign of the child being in the middle of a social upheaval or even becoming aware of social upheaval. In the memory that takes place in the Moscow apartment, elements of the routine that remain unchanged in the house are the books, the TV, and the dog. What probably makes the girl feel nervous or unsettled, however, is that the mother is not there. It seems less important whether the girl *wanted* to be a part of the upheaval or not. She was in fact *already* a part of it, even though she came to this realisation through her experience of her mother's absence from the apartment and the interruption of her routine. Therefore, even though children were not expected to literally take part in what could turn out to be a dangerous, violent protest (as in the Moscow apartment story), or they were anxious or afraid (like the boys playing football in Romania), as the world around them was gaining a new shape through a rupture in their daily routines, they became aware of an unfolding social upheaval in which they also emerged with new agencies.

The story of the child whose normal day was interrupted by the siren signalling the arrival of aircraft during the post-Yugoslavian wars further exemplifies this. Watching his mother run barefoot in the street and hearing her footsteps on the asphalt signifies the danger the protagonists in this memory are facing. Even if hearing the siren and going to the shelter is not presented as frightening for the boy, it is the breaking of an intimate everyday routine of seeing his mother carefully dressed and now watching his mother taking off her shoes and

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running barefoot in the street that makes a difference in the world. It is not the bombs, therefore, but the sound of his mother's shoeless footsteps on the pavement that brings the realization of the social upheaval.

Sensing and making sense of social upheaval are produced by difference, for example, changing values and norms, even in environments that remain unchanged. In the memory of the boy smearing the leader's portrait, as the world changes around him in the immediate aftermath of revolution, places like the school building, with the marks left by the portrait on the wall after it had been removed, represent stability in the midst of social change. The difference between the energies of the world and the stasis of the school produces a different sense of the upheaval. Similarly, situations in which the child is in the liminal position predicated on the transition between the bygone socialist regime and Perestroika, or the new social norms emerging on the streets in Mozambique, difference in adults' behaviour produces a sense of social upheaval for the child and opens possibilities for different child becomings and agencies.

Looking at politics from a broad perspective, research seeks to learn how children's everyday lives are impacted by, and what views they have on, political events taking place in their societies, such as economic crisis, new forms of governance or war (e.g. Buckingham, 2000). Researchers argue that children's own views on politics take into consideration how their notion of politics relates to their local environments and everyday life (e.g. O'Toole, 2003). Children's political agency is also described as relational, intergenerationally structured, and situationally specific, drawing on discourses and materialities, and is shaped by the ethics of encounters. In our chapter, we have introduced a more dynamic understanding of children's politics, agencies, and social upheaval. Applying affect theory and agential materialism, we have demonstrated how energies, flows of affect, emotions, human and non-human entities, including norms and routines, are entangled to produce senses and orient sense-making and action. The mattering of these entities and energies figured in the world of social upheavals and entangled agencies of children, adults, and non-humans. We see social upheavals and agencies as mutually constituted, since "no-thing stands separately constituted and positioned inside a spacetime frame of reference, and no divine position for our viewing pleasure exists in a location outside the world" (Barad, 2014 p. 229). Thus, the political does not enter into children's lives, and they do not see social upheaval as a context in which they are situated

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and influenced by anxiety, fear or enthusiasm. The very political, maybe as minor gestures or series of differentiation, is entangled in the mattering of the world and figures or reiterates possibilities for agencies. Social upheavals and children's politics are mutually constitutive and emerge in their intra-active becoming. As Barad (2014, p. 231) explains, "there are no independently existing things that precede their intra-action. Rather, differences are materialized through a dynamic of iterative intra-activity. It is through specific intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of agents [including child and social upheaval] become determinate". In this chapter, we set ourselves the task of describing social upheaval through memories of childhood. From these memories we have shown the many differentiations that children, adults, and societies found themselves in as social unrest or change took hold and the different possibilities created for their agencies. It is these entangled agencies of human and non-human entities – atmosphere, affect, emotions, child-adult relations, timespaces, routines, norms and tropes of childhood – that make up social upheavals.

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