Fathers' Work and Children's Distinctive Lifestyle: Children of Israeli High-Tech Men

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This study sheds light on the lifestyle of children of R&D male engineers as distinctive in their socio-spatial milieu, and as subordinate to adults. In Israel, a world high tech center, family life is a key constituent of the national culture. As many R&D engineers are family men, their families also bear the burden of their highly committing jobs which results in their being away from home a great deal. Based on in-depth interviews with twenty-five children aged 7-13 in high-tech families, this study reveals the distinctiveness of their lifestyle, by comparing it with that of their friends, and of their 'othering', by singling out expressions of marginality and dependence. These are presented on three spatial scales, home, cyberspace and locale. Attention is also paid to the children's spatial mobility. The use of computers in their homes is most prominent, usually supervised by the parents. Computers are used intensively to maintain daily contacts with their fathers and to support the children's local network; they don't seem to disrupt the children's outdoor activities which are similar to those of their friends. However, the children often feel that because of their fathers' work they are compelled to visit places such as a distant sports club and recreation sites selected by the fathers' employers. As a result of this and of their fathers' frequent business trips these children possess greater geographical knowledge than most of their friends. In all, the interviews show that these children compensate for their absent fathers by developing an interest in their fathers' world of work.

Keywords: Lifestyle, high-tech men, fathers, children and geography, Israel.

The lifestyle of children of traditional families whose fathers are high-tech engineers, regularly away from home, is examined in this paper. In Israel, a global high-tech center, where *'familism'* is highly valued, the daily involvement of high-tech male engineers in their family life is harmed by the high-tech culture (Blumen, 2003; Kunda, 1996). Recently, research attention has turned to the lifestyle of children as a category of Others (Holloway and Valentine, 2000), but it has rarely focused on the impact of work-family separation of fathers (but see Aitken, 1998, 2000). This study highlights the effect of the fathers' occupation—high-tech engineers—on the lifestyle, usually associated with the upper middle class milieu. It also contributes

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to the growing interest of scholars, including geographers, in the cultural world of children, revealing how they are alienated from the world of adults on some spatial scales.[1]

WORK-FAMILY SEPARATION AND THE LIFESTYLE OF HIGH-TECH EMPLOYEES

Research has emphasized the impact of occupation in determining one's life-style, along with education and income (De Graaf, 1991; Sobel, 1983; Ultee and Ganzeboom, 1991), particularly in high commitment jobs (Goldthorpe et al. 1978). In such occupations commitment is a burden born also by members of the employee's family. Previous research reveals the (negative) effects of men's employ-ment on their wives, or the practical and emotional domestic arrangements that compensate for employed women's absence from home (Blumen, 1994; Hanson and Pratt, 1995). It implies that the separation of gainful work from family life is a key principle in employees' lifestyle, yet little attention has been paid to the effect of fathers' absence, especially those in jobs demanding high commitment.

High-tech R&D employees, mostly men, work in a competitive environment of a global industry, and must overcome the constraints of long distances and different time zones (Massey et al., 1992). The management of these workers relies heavily on their high compensation, self-regulation and intensified commitment (Henderson, 1994; McCafferey, 1988, 1992; Milkovich and Newman, 1993). As a result, long working hours at the base office and frequent work trips for several days to remote customers and branch plants are very common (Cooper, 2000; Kellerman, 2002; Massey et al. 1992; Massey, 1995; 1998). Together they structure a distinct, job-ori-ented lifestyle where separation from the immediate family is a major constituent. Research tends to elaborate how this work style influences these workers' family life, mostly focusing on R&D women (e.g., Steffy and Jones, 1988; Davis, 1995; Jones and Causer, 1995; Singh and Vinnicombe, 2000; Baron et al., 2000). It is rarely noted that a fierce work-family conflict also typifies the life of R&D men (Cooper, 2000; Kunda, 1992; Massey, 1998; Massey et al., 1992; Perlow, 1998). To a large ex-tent this separation as well as the benefits and material comfort associated with this R&D employment determine the lifestyle of the families of R&D men. This study focuses on the lifestyle of their children, highlighting the influence of the fathers' occupation; it asks how this separation, in conjunction with the skills and benefits of R&D married fathers, jointly produce a distinct lifestyle for their children.

THE MARGINALIZATION OF CHILDREN ON THREE SPATIAL SCALES

Lately, research has recognized the public space as the adults' domain, where chil-

dren are sometimes not allowed except under the supervision of adults, usually their parents. Hence they are constructed as 'others' (Valentine, 1996, 1997). As a result, under normal circumstances children-environment relations are greatly determined by their parents' social standing and scholars have noted the need to unpack the category of children accordingly (Bunge, 1973; Sibley, 1995; Mc-Dowell, 2001; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). This article addresses this need. High-tech families whose men are assimilated, at least partially, into the transnational capitalist class (Sklair, 2001), comprise a unique local group which is largely defined in relation to space. From the children's testimonies three spatial scales—home, cyberspace, and locale and more distant sites—were recognized and are reviewed briefly.

In recent decades children's confinement to the home and their restraint by home rules has increased in middle class families (Holloway and Valentine, 2000). A friendly, rather than authoritarian domestic supervision allows children to negotiate child-adult boundary lines (Sibley and Lowe, 1992). One such boundary line is drawn by the child's private room, which is nothing out of the ordinary in well-off families. Children defend their private rooms where they exercise their privacy and autonomy, and escape parents' supervision. Yet, the décor, objects in the room and their positioning, daily maintenance and the timing of this private space prove that parental control crosses the threshold (Sibley, 1995).

A common item in the rooms of well-off children is the computer. Although most parents implement some kind of supervision over the use of computers, those who apply a friendly style of supervision are less likely than authoritarian parents to limit this use, including access to the Internet (Holloway and Valentine, 2001). The Internet dissolves the physical limits of space, allowing children into other, real and imaginary, places. While this far-reaching potential can widen the children's educational, cultural, technological and social horizons it also raises deep concerns among parents since it exposes children to what adults consider improper for them (Bingham et al., 1999).

Among the most common concerns about children in cyberspace is their isolation from the local environment. Yet research shows that children with their own PCs do become involved in their locales. Moreover, PCs help children to communicate with local friends they already know, and approach others whom they know casually. So home PCs often function as the local street corner and an issue for bonding, and also help to integrate children with limitations into the local social network (Holloway and Valentine, 2001; Suess et al., 1998; Durham, 2001). In that sense PCs mostly blur home-neighborhood boundaries, enabling children inside the home to initiate and participate in local activities outside it.

However, places beyond the independent reach of children in the immediate neighborhood are also significant for their spatial routine. Sites of adults' activities such as the local sport clubs, libraries, supermarkets, restaurants, shopping malls, beauty salons, and even doctors' clinics often offer attractions for children in order to attract their parents (McKendrick et al., 1999; McKendrick et al., 2000). The same

applies to more distant sites visited at greater time intervals such as places for vacations or family gatherings. Children also experience distant places through books, movies, and stories of immigrant parents and grandparents or family members who travel. David Sibley notes this point on the local scale that the daily environment today is "more likely to be experienced from the car, necessarily in the company of adults" (Sibley, 1995:136). However, before examining how these spatial issues shape the lifestyle of high-tech children as distinctive 'others' some methodological information is essential.

SETTING AND METHODS

By the end of the 1990s Israel, together with the Boston and Stockholm-Kista regions, was ranked second among the world high-tech centers after Silicon Valley (Kellerman, 2002; Kipnis, 2002). Israel is a modern, Western, open society closely familiar with postindustrial and postmodern processes; still, traditional familism keeps its primacy as a key value and a meaningful constituent of national identity (Fogiel-Bijaoui, 1999; Kipnis, 2004; Lavee and Katz, 2002; Peres and Katz, 1991). Women and men, including engineers and other professionals, ranked family as their most important activity and placed work as their second (Harpaz, 1990). True, a work-family conflict does figure among Israeli high-tech workers. Data on the proportion of women among them are unavailable, but a survey of twenty-five firms in the south Haifa high-tech park showed that men dominate this group (82 percent on average; Blumen, 2003). In his Israeli study Kunda (1996) focuses almost entirely on how men experience this conflict and how this troubles the high-tech organization, reflecting the male majority among R&D workers and the local significance of family life.

During 2000, at the peak of the high-tech prosperity, fourty-seven mothers, wives of shopfloor R&D men, were interviewed. This article is based on subsequent interviews with some of their children. All these families reside in the well-off neighborhoods of Haifa, the second largest high-tech center in Israel. The fathers work in two practically adjoining science parks in the south of the city (Matam and Tirat Carmel), which are located ten to twenty minutes driving from their family homes. The wives were approached through personal contacts; mothers of children older than seven years were asked permission to interview one child alone. In families of more than one child over the age of seven the interviewers followed the mother's recommendation in the choice of cooperative interviewees. At this point children were asked if they were willing to talk to the interviewer alone about "the families of computer workers."

Altogether, these fourty-seven homes had one hundred and seventeen children. The interviewers asked thirty-one non-sibling children to take part in this study, explaining to them their right to refuse, and promising to protect their privacy; this

was confirmed by the parents. Unlike the case of approaching children via school authorities, where a child might distrust the right to refuse (see Valentine, 1999; McDowell, 2001), the Israeli family usually allows children freedom to discuss their right to disagree with their parents. However, in these homes a positive attitude to participation in the study already prevailed as the children were aware of the parents' cooperation with the interviewers (talking to the mothers). Only two of the thirty-one children declined to be interviewed and four lost interest early and chose to leave. Eventually, the interviewers spoke with twenty-five non-sibling children, fourteen boys and eleven girls, aged seven to thirteen. The children interviewed were approached twice: the full interview, about two hours long, was conducted at the first meeting, held at the child's home, mostly in the early afternoon after lunch, a time when most of the mothers were still at work (seventeen interviews). When mothers were home, the conversations took place in the child's private, closed-door room (three interviews); in fine weather it was held outside the home in a nearby playground or park of the child's choice (five interviews). Two or three days later the interviewers returned for a quick, ten to twenty minutes verification process, again talking to the child alone. The interviewees are presented in Table 1, which also identifies other names mentioned in the findings section.

Table 1: Names of interviewees and others.

Age	Males	Females
	Interviewees	
7	Lior	Hila, Neta
8	Ben, Matan	
9	Danny, Amir, David	Tamar, Nili
10	Nir, Yaniv, Ron	Anat
11	Eran, Yotam	Maya, Shelly
12	Nadav, Uri	Limor, Nofar, Adi
13	Asaf	Dafna
	Friends	
	Eli and Ari (of Ron)	Dana (of Ron)
	Ilan (of Yotam)	Gili (of Anat)
	Ziv and Shay (of Danny)	Or and Talya (of Shelly)
	Family	
	Gal (brother of Nir)	Dalia (mother of Matan)
	Dan (father of Hila)	Rita (mother of Hila)
		Shulamit (mother of Anat)
		Ruth (mother of Uri)

The interviews aimed to illuminate two main issues regarding these children's lifestyle as connection with their fathers' work style; distinctiveness and Othering. The first objective was reached by the children being asked to compare themselves

with their neighborhood friends whose fathers were not R&D engineers; information about the second was gained by looking at the children's verbal expressions that reflected their dependency on adults, mostly their parents, and their autonomy. In addition, a few parts of the mothers' testimonies were incorporated regarding parents' supervision of access to the Internet.

'BECAUSE OF DAD'S WORK': THREE SPATIAL SCALES IN THE LIFE OF HIGH-TECH CHILDREN

The children's reports show how the father's work style shaped their lifestyle as compared with their friends in the upper-middle sociospatial environment, and how they were marginalized by the adults. Their daily routine was structured on three spatial scales: domestic space which is 'real'; cyberspace which blurs real-imaginary and inside-outside binaries; and the locale and places beyond it, which are partially imaginary.

Domestic Space

Inside their homes all the interviewed children had their own room, a standard facility for their families and for their friends' families. Most of them were aware that this was one of the benefits of their fathers' work. Nir recalls how he received his room.

> Nir: Because I am older I gave Gal [his younger brother] our [shared] room and moved to another [not-used] room; just as dad worked hard to give me my first [original] room when we moved here [their current home—six years ago] I gave Gal our room: Now dad is at work, mom has her study, I have my room and Gal has his. Because of dad's work each of us has a room.

Amir drew a more direct link between fathers' high-tech work and children's private room.

> Amir: All my friends have a room of their own, only two share [their rooms] with their sisters. We don't like to play there. Now my friend's dad is starting to work in a new place [a famous high-tech firm] and they [his friends] will have more money for a bigger house so that we'll be able to play in his room.

Although a private room is considered standard in the children's social environment, what the high-tech children had in their rooms was a little more distinctive and related directly to their father's work. Hila collected Barbie dolls.

> Hila: Barbies are very expensive here, the dolls, their clothes, their house

and many other Barbie 'possessions'. This is something special to me. Since my dad travels a lot he brings me many Barbies and things for them. I tell him everything about Barbies and he knows what to buy. My friends [each] have five or ten dolls at the most, because of dad's work I have fifty-seven Barbies...

An older boy reported on a similar experience.

Eran: Whenever he [his father] goes abroad I know I am going to get a new pair of sport shoes. I have the largest collection, more sport shoes than my friend, only because of my father's work. I have in my room this long, three-decker bench where they are all displayed, and my friends come to see what my dad brought me when he returns from his work abroad.

In some homes material comfort was limited by the parent for educational reasons. Eleven children were like Yaniv, who did not have a TV set in his room, and who was aware of how his parents controlled his domestic activities by the design of his room.

Yaniv: I wanted only two things in my room, a computer and a TV, like all my friends have ... My parents decided against TV although they have one in their room. I know they have money because of dad's work and I don't like them making me watch TV in the living room, and telling me what to watch.

Timing and spacing of children's activities is a central tool of parental control. Often this yields negative feelings toward the private room, which is usually thought of as an empowering space (Sibley, 1995). Twenty-two of the children mentioned that bedtime rules restrict them to their rooms, and in fact to their beds.

Danny: Usually dad gets home very late, after my bedtime. He always looks if I am in my bed. He says it is because he missed me during the day. But when he finds me out of bed, playing or listening to music at my desk, he doesn't like it, and he asks me to go to bed. Then I can talk to him for a few minutes, but when he leaves I hate my room because I want to be with them [my parents] in the living room or in the kitchen where they sit together. Other children have more time with their dads, they see them every day. This is not true for children of divorced parents, or like Ziv, whose father was killed in a car accident ..., I mean ordinary children.
Interviewer: You don't think you are an ordinary child?
Danny: I do. But because of dad's work I am more like Shay [than like others in traditional families] whose dad is a police officer and he is hardly at home.

Note that Danny, like most of the children, hints at a friendly style of control,

yet quite frequently he is sent to his room. This detaches him from his father, just as the father's work is detached from the family. Another report of a similar friendly scenario links bedtime compartmentalization and the father's work.

> Tamar: Mom says that if I want to be as successful as my dad and work in high-tech, I ought to go to bed on time. A good night's sleep will give me power to think of what I can do with my computer.

The least mentioned aspect of parental control was tidying the room. Usually the mothers fixed the rooms every evening and the children helped. Only five children link this activity to their father' work, as an argument in their negotiation with their mother.

> Nadav: When I ask mom why dad doesn't help tidying, she always says that he works hard and by the time he is back home he will be very tired. Because of his work, we are lucky to hire help and to do less cleaning than there really is. But my friends' parents also have hired help.

While Nadav's mother excluded his father from domestic work because his earnings enabled the family to hire domestic help, Nadav noted that this issue did not separate his family from its social milieu.

In general, the process of domestic socialization is ongoing (Holloway and Valentine, 2000). First, class affiliation determines the 'need' for a private room for each child. Second, children are informed of the traditional gender division of labor, in which their father is repeatedly praised as a successful breadwinner. Third, despite this traditional model of gender roles, the fathers are admired professional models for both girls and for boys. Finally, the children confirm that separation from the fathers distinguishes their lifestyle. The domestic space however, is not separated from the world outside it. The standards applied inside the home are reinforced from outside, by the contacts these children have with their friends (Dyck, 1990; Holloway, 1998); many are maintained through computers from within the home.

Cyberspace: Blurring the Inside and the Outside

In upper-middle class homes computers and the Internet connection are not limited by lack of financial means. Indeed, in these high-tech homes everyone "except babies" has a PC, and in half of them there are more PCs than people. At the age of five to six, all the interviewed children received, at their parents' initiative, a PC for their rooms; additional PCs are located in playrooms, dens, and kitchens. This domestic geography reflected social standing in the material sense, but above all it showed the great involvement of these families in Information Technology (Holloway and Valentine, 2001; Van Rompaey et al., 2002). The conversation with Ron is an example.

> Ron: You ask questions [about number and location of PCs] that are more
> suitable for families where the dad has other [not high-tech] occupation, like
> at Eli's or Ari's [two friends]. Their parents bought them PCs only after they
> asked them to do so, and they have only one or two computers in the home.
> The parents of Eli even asked *my* dad [his emphasis] what PC to buy. Dads
> who work with computers, like mine, know what to buy. Sometimes I have
> problems [with the computer] and *I* [his emphasis] tell dad what I need, and
> we fix the PC together. I know this because we talk about computers a lot:
> I show him what I do [games, sites] and he shows me things he thinks that
> would interest me, especially about animals and ships. [his friend] Dana's fa-
> ther found incredible games with dolls for her, and she searches for books [of
> specific topics] for him—I know this because our dads are interested in the
> same things. Anyway, I and my brother and all my friends whose dads work
> with computers get new stuff before everybody else does and we also know
> how to do lots of fun things. In fact, the computers of our [high-tech] dads
> are old… We know more about computers, just like Ari goes to many hotels
> because his dad works in a hotel [chain].

Ron revealed that computers were assimilated in these children's daily experience
as part of their domestic socialization. Four additional points, common among
these children, emerged. First, the children were aware that their lifestyle is largely
determined by the jobs of their parents. Second, different jobs generated different
lifestyles and the distinctiveness of high-tech children was built around the pro-
fessional expertise of their fathers. This included a social capital utilized in their
contacts with their friends and their friends' parents (Van Rompaey et al., 2002).
Thirdly, although the fathers' hegemony was not undermined, there was also evi-
dence of the children's competence. Fourth, fathers seemed to aim for the gendered
interests of girls and boys equally.

However, gender proved a more complex issue underlying this seemingly egali-
tarian stance. While the interviewers talked to the children about *parents* who work
with computers, all the children narrowed down this definition to the fathers. This
was especially interesting for Ron, and four other children whose mothers were also
computer engineers, but unlike the fathers, they worked in the public sector.

> Interviewer: But your mother also works with computers.
> Ron: Yes, but I can talk to her about other things, my friends, school, when
> and what to eat, when my clothes are dirty and need to be laundered, and
> sometimes also about my computer. I have more time with her because she's
> home early. With dad I like more to talk about computers because he doesn't
> have much time with me, he doesn't know all the things about me that mom
> knows, and this is something we do together, me, dad and our computers.

The gender division of practical and emotional labor between the parents is sali-

ent. While Ron was aware that he could develop a multi-faceted routine with his mother, he also realized that it would be more satisfying for him to integrate himself into his father's world by taking advantage of what they had in common. In fact, Ron explained this gender division in terms of separation from his father: Because he was more distant he identified his father with his work regardless of his mother's job. While he expected his mother to show an interest in his life, he and his friend Dana expected their fathers to attune themselves to the children's interests in cyberspace more than in 'real life.' Hence, cyberspace has become real, as a means around which father-children bonding is constructed.

Indeed, all the children reported how they took advantage of the Internet to stay in touch with their fathers.

> Neta: I love to send him my paintings and he alters them and returns them to me, and we play this way. Sometimes he prints them and decorates his office, sometimes he brings them home. I love to get up in the morning and to see my paintings from dad's printer. That way I know he thinks of me at work.

The communication of older children was more varied, also because they were better skilled at writing, and often there was no adult waiting for them at home.

> David: I write dad several times a day. When I return [home] I phone mom and write to my dad saying hi. Later I ask how he is, is he doing anything interesting, does he have to go out [of the office], what he had for lunch, these kind of things. I want to know what he's doing. If I go out I usually tell [write] him, also before my shower, say good night. If I have problems with my homework I ask his help. I write to him if I'm alone and I want to visit a friend or invite one. But sometimes I don't talk [write] to him at all. Usually I write two or three times [each day].

Apart from their need to keep fathers and children in touch, PCs help parents to monitor their children's movements from a distance (McKie et al., 2002). Yet this requires the children's cooperation. In this study older children proved to be less in need of their parents, and less cooperative with this form of communication.

> Limor: I write dad only if I need something and mom is not available… I also write when I miss him, but now I'm older and I don't miss him as small girls do [often]. I think I write him twice a week, maybe less… Yes, I think less.

By cutting down the use of her e-mail Limor expressed her developing autonomy as an agreed step.

It is noteworthy that the children saw themselves as the active partner; they initiated communication with the fathers rather than the reverse. This raised a more delicate point. All the children admitted that their fathers tend to ignore their communications occasionally. The older children were well familiar with this reality.

Nofar goes over the main points others emphasized.

> Nofar: Sure, some times he doesn't reply. It doesn't happen much but it does happen. As a little girl I used to call [phone] him and cry a lot because I was insulted. I asked at least a short reply saying he's busy. He usually did so, but sometimes he forgot even that. Now I am older and I understand better that he works hard and he's very busy... if I need him I call the secretary and ask her to get him on the phone. I hate it, but if he doesn't reply, I know this is the only way to reach him.

All the mothers corroborated Nofar's report but from a more critical view. Dalia, a mother of two children younger than ten, said:

> He can cut himself off from the world outside [his work] by disconnecting his phones and e-mail. This is difficult especially for the children. Why do you think the kids write and don't call his mobile? All the [high-tech] mothers know that men often don't pick up the phone and direct domestic e-mails to other computers so as not to see them... e-mail is a compromise, not a very intimate one. I also think it's good for the children to read and write early, and to learn some English, but it is mostly a compromise.

In this connection, the distinction Sibley uses between separated and disengaged parents regardless of spatial proximity, which shows how children-adult boundary lines are drawn, is very useful (Sibley, 1995). First however, it is noteworthy that none of the children complained about 'disengaged' fathers although they experience episodes of fatherly 'disengagement'.[2] The two preceding testimonies show that non-attending high-tech fathers rely on their professional skills to engage with their children, even if occasionally the same skills are used to cordon off the children at their professional convenience. The children cannot negotiate such a decision independently, but they can argue with it by seeking support outside their intimate relations with the fathers, and occasionally outside the family (their mothers and secretaries). Excessive separation is an inevitable, distinctive consequence of fathers' work-world for these children; their lifestyle is also characterized by occasional fatherly 'disengagement,' and it results in emotional distress. Dalia knew very well how high-tech fathers avoided domestic phone calls, and like fourty-one other mothers felt that the e-mail articulated a degree of 'disengagement.' The children tended to reveal a different impression. The power structure was quite evident: the fathers were they who drew the boundary lines and changed them to suit their work commitment by suspending their daily commitment to the family.

The child-adult power structure also appears in relation to the use of the Internet, which was not as accessible as the children thought. In twenty-nine of the fourty-seven families, the children's access to cyberspace was limited by technical means that the children were unaware of; nineteen limited the children's PCs and ten limited access to the Internet on all the PCs at home. The mothers initiated this deci-

sion, but it was always executed by the fathers. Nearly 53 percent of the boys and 48 percent of the girls were unknowingly limited, indicating that parents' concern for their children's safety was not gendered, but rather age-related. Rita, mother of a seven-year-old girl and a nine-year-old boy, illustrates this point:

> Little boys and little girls are different but equally vulnerable. Dan [the fa-ther] limited access for both when the eldest got his PC four years ago. We decided to leave it this way for a *very* [her emphasis] long time.

In ten of the eighteen families with unlimited access to the Internet, the children were asked to leave the door open when they use the computer. This is quite common in families where the mother and the children arrive home at the same time. In these homes the mothers' jobs seem to dictate how the parental control is implemented. Yet, this method is more flexible as it allows children some negotiation. Shulamit, mother of nine-year-old twins (a girl and a boy), recognized this potential:

> Soon I will have to stop watching them behind their backs and let them have their privacy; I'd better do it before they start to demand it loudly. There's no reason to think that they're not trustworthy,... I guess we'll have to learn to trust them.

Shulamit understood the difficulties of protecting her children without limiting their autonomy. She was shifting from an authoritarian to a friendly style of parental control as her children matured. The older children in this study were aware of this method of supervision, and most of them did not resent it.

> Amir: I love it when mom or dad come into my room. I don't care if they look at what I am doing. They can always look at my PC.

Age was an important determinant of how children perceive this infuriating yet negotiable method of control. Dafna showed a different attitude:

> I hate it when she [her mother] snoops around my computer. I have a million ways to hide what I'm doing. I have a small mirror on the top of the computer and I see when she's at the door and ask her to leave. Usually she does.

Most of the children (in thirty-nine families) did not have free access to the Internet. The older ones, who enjoyed unlimited access, were aware of this privi-lege.

> Uri: My father knows there is no point in it [limited access to the Internet] because there are other ways to get into the Internet. My parents told me ne-ver to give information about myself and my family, not even to my friends. When I'm not sure what to do I ask my dad, he always knows, because he works in network security.

Uri provided obvious evidence of how friendly supervision is implemented with regard to the Internet. Echoing Dafna, he acknowledged the linkage between his father's professional skills and the free access to the Internet.

The children report that they rarely communicate with strangers whom they met in chat rooms. They also reported on unwanted exposure to "repulsive," "sexual" and "violent" material, which they would glance at before going on with what they were doing. The impression is that the children were accustomed to encountering such material (for example, Potter and Potter, 2001), and while some were embarrassed to report this none seemed distressed. Ruth, Uri's mother, explained:

> 'Dirty' sites are everywhere on the street. The video machine on the street
> corner has at least four columns of sex and violence movies, just next to the
> video cassettes for children. Street posters are no better. I don't like it at all but
> I don't lock them [the children] up at home. I explain what is wrong in mov-
> ies and huge posters that try to sell things through sex and violence. They have
> to learn how to deal with this material, it's part of their growing up process.

Ruth saw the similarities between the 'real' public space and the Internet (Holloway and Valentine, 2001). As she recognized her limited ability to control every aspect of her children's environment, she defined her role as helping them to judge the meanings of such unavoidable objects. Still, parental control over the use of the Internet is usually implemented by the parents' invasion of their children's privacy, be it room space or cyberspace. The method of control seems related to the parents' gender: fathers manipulate the computers, which is usually unnoticed, and mothers police access to the Internet, which can be and often is noted. Overall, the mothers more than the fathers tended to be concerned with the children's safety while using the Internet.

As a gate to cyberspace the computer symbolizes the father's professional world and distinguishes the lifestyle of these high-tech children, while marginalizing them from the adults' life-world: it equips them with technological means and knowledge not common among their friends. But unlike their friends they had less computer knowledge than their fathers, and this sustained the traditional adults-children hiera-rchy. Computers also helped these children to reach their generally absent fathers, and allowed the parents to supervise them. One of the greatest concerns related to children's enthusiasm for computers is that they lose connection with the 'real' world outside the home. This is discussed next.

The Locale and Beyond

With the computer orientation of these high-tech families, the interviewers asked the children and their mothers to compare the amount of time the children spent outside the home with that spent by their friends. The assessment that no significant differences could be noticed was unanimous. However, with respect to

places that the children visit, differences were observed. The children distinguished between places visited on a daily or weekly basis and those visited only occasionally. The high-tech children frequently visited places that their friends usually did not: a certain sports club and a certain afternoon class. The first was located close to the high-tech park across the main road, and the second was held inside the park, but detached from their fathers' offices. Both activities were part of the family benefits provided by high-tech employers.[3]

> Yotam: Because of dad's work I go to *this* sports club [his emphasis], usually with my mom and my brother. Only Ilan [a local friend] can go with us because his father works in the park too. We play with children whose dad work in the park [whom we know] and whom we meet at the afternoon class. But our friends from here [the neighborhood] aren't with us, and they can't meet our friends from there.

Ben, who also took part in these activities, emphasized the distinctiveness and the adult hegemony embedded in this network.

> I love the sport club and the afternoon class, and the children I meet there. But I miss my other friends [from the neighborhood]. I wish we could be together more often. Also they all go to the local [sport] club where they have fun together, but I have to go with mom. I wish we could all play together.

In fact, Yotam and Ben told how the fathers' workplace benefits constructed a distinct social environment for them and how it cuts across their social network. The advantage of a local network is illuminated from a different perspective.

> Shelly: My mother decides when we go to the swimming pool. Sometimes I ask her to invite Or [another high-tech daughter] but she doesn't want it because she isn't a friend of Or's mom. So, I e-mail Or and she asks her mother to go, but sometimes she says no. I know Or from the afternoon class where the ride is no problem [organized by the high-tech park], but if we want to do more things together we have to ask our moms. I often give up, and go with Talya [another high-tech daughter from the neighborhood] and we can do things together. Talya is OK but I like Or more.

These children reveal their frustration at being integrated into a social network that did not match their skills for spatial mobility, and curtailed their independence as it could be exercised in the neighborhood. The sociability of the network built around the fathers' colleagues and their families is undermined by the 'friction of distance' embodied by this network. It emphasizes the children's inability to merge their two social networks and it tends to erode their natural, local affiliation.

In addition to the sports club and the afternoon class eighteen children thought they visited restaurants more often than their friend did.

> Nili: My friends don't eat out as much as we do. When dad calls to say he
> wants to eat with us, we go out because there is not enough [cooked] food at
> home. I like restaurants, but not too much, especially if they're for grown-ups
> [not fast food]. I do like restaurant eating when we're on vacation or abroad.
> I love to eat at home on regular days and I love to eat with dad, but it's odd
> that when he wants to be with us we ought to go out and eat with people we
> don't know.

Nili implied that the home routine took it for granted that fathers were not
present, and when they unexpectedly were, the intimacy of a family meal at home,
was replaced by eating out, celebrated as a special event. Their ambivalent feelings
toward the sports club, the afternoon class and eating in restaurants marked their
distinctiveness and 'otherness' as children in high-tech families.

The distinctive lifestyle of these children also appears in their complaints about
where they did not go: the movies and the beach.

> Eran: There are two places I'd like to go to more [with my parents]. First I'd
> like to go with mom and dad together to the cinema and eat popcorn in the
> dark. And also I'd like to go to the beach: The sports club is very close to the
> beach, but we hardly ever go there. All my friends go to the beach with their
> parents but my parents don't like going there. The cinema and the beach are
> more 'real,' more fun, than the video room and the swimming pool.

Eran, probably following his parents' line of reasoning, recognized the trade-off
between places' but unlike his parents he ranked these places independently. More
or less attractive, the restaurant, the sports club, the cinema and the seaside are lo-
cal sites beyond the mobility skills of these high-tech children. The children had to
negotiate their preferences and, as many of them testified, they often failed despite
their parents' friendly style of control. Clearly, the parents' preferences marginalized
the children with respect to family activities outdoors.

Beyond the local scale, these children mentioned two generic places they visited
more than their friends: hotels and foreign countries. These concern the children's
experiences of vacations organized by the fathers' workplaces and include co-work-
ers and their families. They also learn of these places from their fathers' stories of
their business trips.

> Maya: I visited many hotels here and abroad because of my dad's work...I
> love hotels with more than one swimming pool, with children games. The
> children from dad's work are nice, and we have a lot of fun together. When
> dad works abroad he also stays in hotels, and I know a lot about hotels from
> what he tells me. It's like I was there with him too.

Lior is more interested in places than in hotels.

> I also visited big cities. The kids from my father's work loved (the vacation in) Paris the most. This is because of Disneyland, and the Eiffel Tower. We also went to the museum. I want to go to Disneyworld but they [workplace managers] have never taken us to America. My father goes there a lot to work but without us. He tells us all about it, and I know a lot about Seattle, though I've never been there. It always rains there, even more than in London. I can tell you what dad's favorite hotel in London is, and where his office is located, and where he eats fish and chips when he doesn't have to go to eat with people from work.

Lior gives a good example of how direct and indirect environmental experiences are mixed. He visited Paris but he has never set foot in Seattle. He moves on, leaving the listener uncertain about whether or not he has visited London. Additionally, Lior also demonstrates the knowledge these children gain, particularly the typical characteristics of different places. This type of experience is fairly distinctive to high-tech children as is attested by Anat.

> I go abroad many times as Gili [a neighborhood friend] whose dad is a travel agent. But I know more than she does because my dad tells me about his own trips. [Consequently] I know a lot about many places even if I've never been there. I also know a lot about airlines and airplanes, how can you get to America via Amsterdam and spend a day or two there, or how to calculate the [local] time in New York and in Texas, and also what kind of clothes you should take when you go to Taiwan. I often talk to Gili's dad about these things. He laughs and says that Gili knows less about her father's work than I do.

What is touching in Anat's last sentence is her attempt to demonstrate to her friend's father her attachment to her own father by revealing her knowledge gained from his geographical mobility.

Even with relation to distant, exciting places children feel somewhat over-exposed.

> Uri: I think we have too many vacations abroad. Foreign places are too tiring, the language, the food, what to wear, where to go…

Another girl shows her preferences for family vacations.

> Hila: I want a vacation in Eilat, Jerusalem, or the Sea of Galilee [renowned Israeli attractions] like many of my friends. But I can't decide where I go. Even my dad can't decide where we can go.

These children are apparently obliged to go to different places, no matter how exciting, against their will, which also tells a lot about their mobility. Imrie (2000), focusing on disabled persons, claims that independent mobility is essential for a standard lifestyle, and Valentine (1996) reminds us that children are often viewed

as "incomplete, less able adults." In this case, enforced mobility and the location of daily activities beyond the children's independent reach show how they are marginalized by adults in their families and adults in their fathers' workplace. Still, the mobility of these children, restricted or obligatory, is intensive, expanding their daily activity space. What distinguishes the lifestyle of these children (and of their families) is their unconscious awareness of time-space compression (the accelerated pace of life) which is mostly the result of the fathers' intensive spatial mobility. These children in fact attribute various components of their lifestyle to their fathers' work, repeatedly using the phrase in the title of this section *'Because of dad's work.'*

HIGH-TECH CHILDREN: SPACE AND THE LIFESTYLE OF DISTINCTIVE OTHERS

This study examined the lifestyle of children in traditional families where the fathers are R&D engineers. The significance of space for their lifestyle must be understood as a twofold issue: distinctiveness and Othering. Table 2 shows the main components of this spatial impact. The fathers' occupation grants these children access to computer technology throughout the domestic space. This technology is also used to compensate for the daily separation from the fathers, and it is a focus of shared interests that facilitates father-child bonding more than a parent's job usually does. Fathers' work becomes a focus of interest also in connection with their intensive transnational mobility and the frequent family vacations abroad organized and financed by the high-tech workplaces. These and the gifts received stimulate curiosity about distant places and encourage children to acquire knowledge that goes beyond the local context, which is exceptional among most of their friends. Daily activity space is also expanded as some of the benefits offered to these children by their fathers' workplaces are located outside the neighborhood. Together with the frequent vacations with co-workers and their families, these frame an alternative social network which stretches beyond the standard activity space of upper-middle class children. The distinctiveness of these children's lifestyle is embedded in the convergence and the intensity of the spatial component.

Quite often the same characteristic suggests distinctiveness and othering simultaneously. Family benefits allocated by the fathers' employers exemplify how space helps to marginalize these children. While sport, educational activities, and the social network they form are mostly satisfying for these children, their distant location emphasizes their dependence on the willingness of adults to ferry them there. Additionally, the initiation and termination of such activities, as well as their location, are business decisions made by managers in the fathers' workplaces with little notice taken of the children's needs and wishes as a collective or as individuals. Moreover, taking part in these activities depends on a father's specific workplace and participation is denied if he moves to another. Alongside the emphasis these

distant activities place on the children's underdeveloped spatial mobility, they and other activities, such as family vacations or spur-of-the-moment eating out, compel children to move from a pleasant place (home, neighborhood) to a place which they occasionally find less attractive (restaurant, distant sport club). Similarly, cyberspace which enables children and fathers to maintain their attachment on a daily basis, is often limited, either in this very purpose—when fathers ignore the children's communication, or in other purpose—when the children's discretion seems untrustworthy.

Table 2: Spatial constituents in the lifestyle of high-tech children.

Distinction (vis-à-vis Friends)	Othering (vis-à-vis Parents)
Unvaried domestic geography of PCs (many PCs everywhere)	Fathers ignore children's calls and e-mails
PC and Internet - a pillar of child-father bonding	Controlled access to the Internet
Non-local daily activity space	Restricted mobility
Frequent vacations	Obligatory mobility
Fathers' frequent trips and gifts	
Wide geographic knowledge	

Above all, space is significant for the separation of these children from their fathers, which yields the constituents shown in the table. Considering that these children live in traditional families, they experience relatively few face-to-face interactions with their fathers. Sequences of several days with no such interactions, although the fathers are not abroad but at their workplaces only ten to twenty minutes away, are not at all rare. This situation is certainly not ideal in the children's eyes. Yet it is not considered similar to that of friends in single mothers' homes, but to that of fathers in specific occupations, such as police officers. The afternoon class and the sports club, which are located in the high-tech park itself or just across the road, do not provide the children with the opportunity to meet their fathers also on these frequent occasions. Hence, it is not the 'friction of distance' that separates these children from their fathers, but the spatial compartmentalization of activities and people; in this case, the adult fathers, not the children, are those who are compartmentalized in the high-tech workplaces. The Othering of the children does not result simply from the space intervening between them and their fathers, but mostly from the institutionalized boundary line drawn in this space. If children are on one side of this line, fathers are on the other. Traditional fatherhood is typically characterized by a man's detachment from the private sphere (Aitken, 1998, 2000). This study has offered only a glance at the geography of traditional fatherhood in this occupational group of upper middle class men, thereby suggesting a promising line for future research.

NOTES

1. See e.g., the special issues of *Space and Polity* 2003 (Vol.7, 2), and *Ethics, Place and Environment* 2001 (Vol.4, 1); and the recently launched journal *Children's Geographies*.

2. These terms are used to analyze families with behavior problems, which by no means do I claim is the situation in these high-tech families. Still, the terms are useful for analyzing how high-tech children are marginalized by their parents.

3. The afternoon class offers scholarly activity organized by some firms in the high-tech park for children over the age of six. It aims to familiarize children with the work their fathers do and equip them with enriched knowledge beyond the standards of the education system. This replicates a local tradition of afternoon classes for gifted children in science, established by the Technion (Israel Technology Institute), where most of the fathers acquired their higher education. In a study of twenty-two firms in this high-tech park, six out of nine large firms (but none of the thirteen small firms) financed such activity for the employees' children (Blumen, 2003).

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