Domestic Geographies of Parental and Infant (Co-) becomings: home-space, night-time

breastfeeding, and parent-infant sleep

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Abstract

This paper explores how understandings of parental and infant personhood are negotiated in and through the space of the home. We argue that through spatial practices of creating, using (and *not* using) nurseries, understandings of parental and infant personhood are both made and unmade. Analysis is based on a rich body of ethnographic research undertaken between 2006 and 2009 with eighteen middle-class breastfeeding families and their communities in the United States, which we analyze through lenses of new materialist and Deleuzian theory. We begin by considering some of the ways homes are modified by parents-to-be prior to birth, positing these changes as an effort to call-forth both particular kinds of embodied inter-relations between parents and babies, as well as infant-subjects that possess the specific capacity to sleep independently from a young age. We then argue that lived night-time practice post-birth often confounds planned bodily, affective and somatic geographies, driven by agentic infants themselves who express their own strong preferences about staying near their parents' bodies to both sleep and breastfeed. Our

research reveals parents negotiating how and where they sleep in collaboration with their new infants, often settling on spatial arrangements that do not reflect either expert advice or their own plans pre-birth. This work advances scholarship in and beyond geography by furthering understanding of the intimate spaces of early parenting (including nighttime domestic geographies) about which little is currently known, thus extending scholarship across fields of childrens' geographies, geographies of parenting, geographies of the home, geographies of the night, and geographies of sleep.

Introduction

This paper explores the intimate geographies of early parenting. Through an analysis of home-making practices drawn from a two-year ethnographic study focusing on eighteen middle-class families and their communities in the Midwestern United States, we argue that engagements with home-space both serves as a means by which people come to know themselves as parents, and a medium through which understandings about infant personhood are worked out.   Conceptually, this research advances existing work in geography by deepening our understanding of the role of the more-than-human in spatial practice; the distributed agencies of early parenting (including the agency of infants); and the role of spatial practice within processes of becoming.

   In addition to our conceptual innovations this paper also extends existing understanding about the intimate geographies of parenting and geography scholarship on the home as socio-material space by providing insight into parenthood as a lived practice within the space of the home. Over eighty percent of adults in the United States will become parents at some point in their lives.[i] By examining the role of spatial practice within the home in processes of becoming a parent in the contemporary United States this analysis contributes to geographic scholarship on parenting, the family, children's geographies and geographies of the home. Moreover, since much of the work of early parenting takes place at night, this work both extends understandings of night-time space, a field which currently focuses almost entirely on space *outside* the home (Chatterton & Hollands 2003; Jayne et al 2006; Latham 2003); as well as responding to Kraftl and Horton's call for the investigation of geographies of sleep (Kraftl and Horton 2008).

Drawing on conceptual work from the new materialism, anthropological theories of personhood and Deleuzian theory; we approach parenting as a becoming that takes place through both human and non-human forces, including: parents, infants, matter, discourses about parenting, familial and social networks, technology and other forces. Drawing together methodological approaches and disciplinary concerns from both geography and anthropology, our analysis draws on a robust base of ethnographic research that centered on participant observation with eighteen families (eighteen first-time breastfeeding mothers, their partners and their families), living in and near a small city in the Upper-Midwest between 2006 and 2009. Owing to the depth of immersion in participants' lives, this classic anthropological method delivers a rich, nuanced and intimate understanding of the role of home-space in early parenting in the contemporary United States. However, the ways people come to know themselves as parents are culturally, geographically and temporally specific, as well as striated by race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity and other factors. Accordingly, our findings reflect how relatively privileged middle-class families negotiate early parenting in the context of evolving cultural expectations. Since middle-class values are often presented as normative or aspirational standards both within the United States and increasingly globally, however, these values can have broader implications in shaping expectations and official guidance for where and how parents and infants "should" interact with one another at night (Tomori 2015).

Our paper is organized as follows: first, we show how this analysis builds on existing scholarship on parenting and the role of the home in projects of becoming. This review will be summarial rather than comprehensive, focusing on work bearing most closely on this paper. Next we outline our conceptual framework and describe our methods. We then

discuss our findings. We first explore some of the ways parents-to-be modify their homes

prior to the birth of a first child, focusing on practices of demarcating and arranging areas

within the home for particular kinds of bodywork and emotion work. We argue that these

forms of modifying space both provide parents-to-be with a means to bring parenthood into

the realm of the knowable, while calling forth an understanding of infant personhood

marked by an expectation of the ability to sleep on one's own, materialized by the

transformation of a room in the house to "the nursery". We then turn to focus on what

happens after the baby arrives. Here we argue that lived practice post-birth often un-

bounds and confounds the bodily, affective and somatic geographies and understandings of

personhood that were imagined by parents pre-birth. We suggest that post-birth, parents

often come to new decisions about "who belongs where" in the home, and that these

decisions are shaped by infants' preferences and feeding method (particularly the bodily

requirements of breastfeeding). Our research shows actual (micro-) geographies of

sleeping arrangements in early parenthood to reflect a higher degree of embodied co-

presence which go against the grain of both mainstream parenting advice and parents' own

plans for separate sleep.

Geographies of Parenting and the Home

The last twenty-five years have seen the publication of a great number of works on the

spatial experiences of parents across a range of cultural contexts and it is beyond the scope

of this paper to offer a comprehensive review of this field. Prominent geography research

looking at the U.S. case has included analyses of mothers' journeys to work (England 1993);

the provision of childcare (England 1996); and the spaces and experiences of fatherhood

(Aitken 1998); while scholarship beyond geography has generated an interpretation of

parenthood as a practice (rather than a naturalised identity) (Ruddick 1980). Scholarship

has identified the emergence of the discourse of "intensive" mothering, i.e. the pressure to

mother in time- and emotion-intensive ways (alongside wage-labour); gain "expertise" by

reading parenting guides; and shield babies and children from all forms of risk (Hays 1996;

Miller 2005).   This orientation formed an important part of the background discourse of

what it was to be a "good mother" at the time of this study. Scholarship has further

explored how experiences of motherhood are striated by race, class, gender and sexual

orientation (Gabb 2005; Holloway 1998; Taylor 2009); experiences of raising trans-gender

children; and the work of mothers from minority backgrounds in the United States

(including black, latina, muslim and lesbian mothers) to challenge discrimination (O'Reilly

2010). Studies have also addressed the intersection of parenting with globalization such as

through the struggles (and forms of resistance) involved in parenting at a distance for

Filipino nannies working in Canada (Pratt 2012); and the trans-cultural experiences of

childhoods lived between New York and Sudan (Katz 2005). Literature has drawn out the

"political economy of parenting" by attending to how class shapes mothers' attitudes about

commoditized care (Holloway 1998); and the politics of parenting education for differently-

classed mothers in the context of neoliberalism (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014).

Work has highlighted the effects of austerity budgeting and the retraction of early

childhood services in the UK (Jupp 2016); together with the ways parenting has changed in

response to mothers' increasing engagement in the wage-workforce under neoliberalism

(Boyer 2018; Crompton 2006; McDowell et al 2006). This scholarship has examined

automobiles as a parenting tool (Dowling 2000; Waitt and Harada 2016); the rise of

"paranoid" parenting (Pain 2006); the relations between risk, play and embodiment (Talbot

2013); and the merging of play, extra-curricular activities and institutionalization (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014). Research has also shined light on socio-spatial experiences of breastfeeding, exploring the difficulties of breastfeeding as a social experience in Australia (Longhurst 2013) and the United Kingdom (Boyer 2012 and 2018), as well as the relationship between infant sleep and breastfeeding in the United States (Tomori 2015).

Scholarship has explored the difficulties of fathers in trying to participate in mothers' groups in the United States (Aitken 2000) and, more recently, the rise of more involved modes of fathering that challenge traditional forms of hegemonic masculinity (Gorman-Murray 2008). It has highlighted the importance of social media in projects of identity-work for mothers in the United Kingdom and Australia (Madge and O'Connor 2005; Longhurst 2008, 2011); and the sense of life-worlds shrinking amongst lesbian parents in Australia (Luzia 2010). Holt (2013) has explored the agency of babies themselves, while Boyer and Spinney have highlighted the role of prams and built form in parenting assemblages for new mothers in London (Boyer and Spinney 2016).   Of particular relevance to this paper, Luzia (2010, 2011); Dowling (2000) and Jacobs and Smith (2008) have highlighted how maternal identities are constructed in and through the space of the home, together with the fact that domestic orders can change radically after the birth of a child (Luzia 2010, 2011).

Together, this scholarship has generated new insights into the meanings, practices and spatialities of motherhood and fatherhood as an embodied experience; yet, we suggest it also has important limitations. We extend existing knowledge about cultures and spaces of parenting in four ways: we extend geography scholarship on parenting practice in the United States; we consider the practices of mothers and fathers together; we advance

conceptual work on the role of home-space in processes of parental and infant becomings; and we extend understandings of parenting in the context of night-time space.

Like scholarship on parenting, work on home-space and practices of home-making have also proliferated in recent years. Home has been analyzed as a key site of carework while also being a site of ongoing gender divisions of labor, which can be oppressive to women (Dyck 1990; England 1996; McDowell et al 2006). Geography scholarship has interrogated how home-space intersects with birth (Mansfield 2008; Fannin 2003); the importance of home as a site of emotional labor (Dowling 2008; Jacobs and Smith, 2008; Massey 2001 & 2005; Rose 2003); and how home can function as a space of violence and oppression, as well as security and rootedness (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Martin and Mohanty 1986).

Reflecting the material turn (Tolia-Kelly 2004)[ii], scholarship has highlighted the importance of home furnishings in expressing identity, showing how home-furnishings can mark particular kinds of aspirations and serve to connect home-space to the wider world (Clarke 2004; Miller 2001; Reimer and Leslie 2004; Tolia-Kelly 2004). Gorman-Murray (2006, 2008) has highlighted how home furnishings can signify relationships and ways men use home space to express different forms of masculinity. In a related vein, Wood and Beck (1994) show how rules about home space are used to call forth particular kinds of familial relations; while Dowling (2000) describe how the inclusion and exclusion of children from different parts of the home relates to different visions of family life, together with how parents' ideas of what homes should look like can clash with lived realities of family life (Dowling 2008). After Blunt and Dowling, we approach homes as a synthesis of the material and the imaginative (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 22), and employ their notion of

"homemaking" to refer to the practices of "cultivating, nurture and preservation of home" (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 5). Our work extends scholarship on the way home-objects serve as a link to distant family and cultural heritages, (Daniels 2001; Tolia-Kelly 2004), and the management of family photographs as maternal identity-work (Rose 2003). Together this work illustrates how, after Iris Young, homes "reflect in matter the events and values of (one's) life" (Young 2005, 30), while underscoring how both homes and the identities of those inhabiting them are in a state of continual (co-)becoming. In this sense, homes can be seen to function as a site for the "continuous unfolding of ourselves" (Van Lennep 1987, 211), while themselves becoming-otherwise.

Building on this work, we consider how spatial practice within the home relates to evolving understandings of personhood for new parents and infants. First, we explore how home-space is modified prior to birth, and consider how parents and babies inhabit spaces within the home after the birth. We focus on the interplay of matter, affects and bodies in human and material parental co-becomings, considering the work of couples together in preparing the home for a baby. This work fills a gap in scholarship, since, despite the work of Gorman-Murray there yet remains "a paucity of research on masculinity and the home" (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 112).[iii] We recognize the gender binisms which have long coded unwaged work that takes place in the home as feminized and devalued, and the myriad ways these conceptual frameworks continue to structure lived experience across many cultures in areas such as early childcare leave, the ongoing wage gap, and the feminization of spaces of early childcare. Yet we are also interested in aspects of parenting practice that are not fully captured by this dualism.   While gender binaries persist, parenting is now experienced as a partially or wholly collaborative enterprise by an increasing number of

families, and therefore we suggest that there are advantages to an approach that recognizes some of parenthood's collaborative aspects. Approaching home-working as a gender-mutual enterprise --rather than denying extant gender inequalites-- might serve as a step toward challenging the conceptual (and sometimes spatial) binaries which underpin them.

Conceptual Framework and Methods

We conceptualize the relationships between materiality and parental becomings by reading Mauss' classic work on matter, personhood, and the embodied everyday practices that go into forming the lifeworld (Mauss 1954) through contemporary conceptual work in the new materialism, feminist materialism (Alaimo and Hekman 2008; Braidotti 2002; Coole and Frost 2010) and Deleuzian theory (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Mauss wrote extensively about the enmeshment of persons and things in his famous essay "The Gift", stating that understandings of personhood and group affiliation are founded in part through material exchanges (Mauss 1954). This work was taken up by later scholars (cf. Strathern 1988; Kaufman and Morgan 2005), some of whom highlighted the importance of houses in the formation of personhood and kinship (cf. Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Leinaweaver 2009; Sahlins 2013). Building on this, the new materialism similarly highlights the role of matter in the production of social worlds, while stressing the on-going influence of race, gender, class and other systems of social division to shape experience and produce inequality and discrimination.

Drawing on post-humanism, the new materialism endeavours to un-seat the centrality of human subjects as the primary ontological concern, focusing instead on how living and non-living things co-make one another. The new materialism attends to the

relations between matter, bodies, affects and discourses, highlighting the politics of how these forces inter-relate (Alaimo and Hekman 2008). After Braidotti, Deluze and others, new materialist approaches typically posit social bodies as always *becoming;* that is to say in a state of constant (if sometimes gradual) metamorphosis, while also recognizing the myriad ways social milieux and intra-corporeal relations also transform over time (Braidotti 2002; Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

The new materialism and the "material turn" more broadly have had a major impact on geographic scholarship over the last ten years (Tolia-Kelly 2013). Some of the fields where this engagement has flourished have been: theorising nature-cultures and the anthropocene (Braun 2015; Lorimer 2012; Whatmore 2006); the ways urban form "acts back" (Latham and McCormack 2004; Simpson 2013); the ability of technologies (such as phones) to create atmospheres (Ash 2013); and the varied agencies of food (Cook 2004; Slocum 2008) and waste (Gregson and Crang 2010) to act on the world. [iv] We extend geography's engagement with the new materialism by using this body of theory to approach the multiple agencies at play in the spatial practices of early parenting. Following Braidotti (2002) we approach parenthood as a becoming or metamorphosis that is actualized through myriad engagements between human and non-human others, space and place, affects, technologies, and normative understandings about "good" and "bad" parenting. After Karen Barad we view parental personhood as a product of intra-actions between bodies and matter in which neither side of this relationship are ontologically prior, and both are changed by the encounter (Barad 2008, 132-135). Moreover, we approach parenting as both changeable over time and spatially and culturally variable, as well as being shaped by sexual orientation, life-stage, class, race/ethnicity and other factors.

This paper responds both to Herbert's call for human geographers to make more extensive use of ethnography as a means for understanding life-worlds, and Dowling's more recent observation about the limits of interview-based methods (Dowling et al 2016; Hebert 2000). Following Amin and Thrift (2016) we employ ethnography as a way to approach everyday socio-spatial practice. Following Thieme (2017) we primarily employ thick description as a way to represent multi-year ethnographic fieldwork rather than quotes from participants. This paper is based on an ethnographic study carried out by Tomori with analysis and writing by both Tomori and Boyer.[v] The study entailed two years of immersive fieldwork in and near a small Midwestern city between 2006 and 2008 with the central 18 families in the study and others in the community with additional follow-up research in 2009. The fieldwork consisted of: 1) extensive observations of childbirth education, infant care and breastfeeding courses at two childbirth education centers; 2) participant observation and informal discussion with 18 families all of whom planned to breastfeed (noting that three fathers had work or study obligations which prohibited them from participating in study interviews); 3) observations at a local hospital; 4) attending community events related to birth and breastfeeding; 5) training as a postpartum doula; and 6) extensive additional research about and with the community, birth, breastfeeding, infant sleep, and media representations of these topics.

Participants were recruited during their second or third trimester from the childbirth education courses. Tomori's long-term presence at childbirth education courses and the large number of sessions involved in these courses (sometimes 9 or more), enabled a significant amount of interaction with participants prior to the beginning of their formal involvement in the study. Research sessions included an initial visit to participants' homes

prior to their babies' birth (if possible) with additional meetings a few weeks postpartum, and at three, six, nine, and twelve months.[vi] Most observations occurred in participants' homes as they attended to their regular tasks, but some also took place in cafes, at participants' workplaces, or on strolls around the neighborhood. Research involved participating in whatever activities participants were engaged in, and as such included helping with cooking, getting water, changing diapers, holding babies, etc. and often sharing a meal. Since the study aimed to explore the sociocultural context of breastfeeding with special attention to family sleep practices, nighttime practices in the home were a key focus of discussion. These ethnographic methods constitute a much-needed expansion on existing knowledge on night-time geographies, which has to date focused almost solely on space outside the home (Chatterton and Hollands 2003; Jayne et al 2006; Latham 2003).

A typical day in the field included a visit to a family that lasted a few hours, an informational meeting or observation with an expert, and/or attendance at a childbirth education session. Observations were arranged according to the needs and comfort levels of each family and field notes were recorded in a fieldwork diary.[vii] Several families became very comfortable with Tomori's presence and were willing to have her spend considerable time with them on multiple participation observation visits throughout the course of the fieldwork period. As such this research is powerfully marked by *co-presence* between researchers and participants. By observing "what bodies do" within (and beyond) the home through these research sessions, (and indeed participating in those doings), this method delivered a richness that would not have been possible from other methods. After Lenz-Taguchi we approached the research encounter as a defractive one, in which not only is knowledge produced collaboratively through researchers and participants but researchers

are themselves changed by the research encounter (Lenz-Taguchi 2012).   Our analysis is shaped by our respective disciplinary backgrounds in geography and anthropology, our backgrounds as white heterosexual Americans (Tomori has a bicultural background as an Eastern European immigrant) with professional jobs, and the fact that we are both mothers and have first-hand experience of both breastfeeding and infant sleep.

Participant characteristics are detailed in (Tomori 2015). Briefly, most were Euro-American, heterosexual, college-educated, held white-collar jobs[viii], and all eventually owned their own homes. All breastfed their babies for at least six months and nearly all continued to at least one year, reflecting the middle-class study sample and the fact that at the time of this study breastfeeding was the recommended form of infant feeding in the United States (and globally, as it remains today). At the time of this study about a third of U.S. infants were breastfed to six months, and about a fifth to twelve months (CDC 2007, McDowell et al 2008). Since then rates have increased with over half of U.S. infants breastfeeding to six months and about a third to a year (CDC 2016). Additionally, several mothers and three fathers took significant time off work after the birth. Some of these breaks (and failed negotiations over suitable part-time arrangements) ultimately led to mothers leaving employment to care for children. Only one father went on to be a primary carer. These decisions were strongly structured by the absence of statutory paid parental leave in the United States.[ix] Most lived in a small, relatively affluent university city, or in a neighboring less-affluent small city, and a few in nearby suburbs, all of which were within commuting distance of a larger industrial city. Although average home prices in the study area were markedly below than of the United States as whole at the time of this study (258,000$ as compared to 310,000$)[x] , this sample was both whiter and more socially

privileged the region as whole. This privileged status enabled participants to mobilize

resources and pursue breastfeeding according to (re-) emerging cultural expectations.

Home-making and parental becomings

This section explores some of the workings-with the home that can take place prior

the birth of a first child. The families in this study spent a significant amount of time

preparing for the arrival of their first baby, including childbirth education courses;

purchasing and making items for the baby; and making changes to their homes prior to the

birth. As the literature shows, these preparations can be extensive, and can mark a

significant change in both priorities and personal finances especially for younger and lower-

income parents (Thompson et al 2011, 206).   The acquisition of baby things both makes the

baby "feel real" (Layne 2004), while also demonstrating adherence to discourses of "good"

mothering through the purchase of items designed to reduce risk to the baby.   As

conversations with participants revealed, the home was intertwined with procreation and

the imagined future child or children even prior to conception. Participants discussed

thinking about children when they purchased their homes, with the minimum number of

bedrooms reflecting the couple's own bedroom plus a bedroom for each future child (and

the idea of moving to a larger home as the family grew larger). The location of the home

was also carefully considered, in terms of affordability, quality of the school district and

amount of green space nearby. This resonates with literature showing that homes in the

United States intertwine cultural and economic value, and that owning a home is an

important cultural ideal in the United States (Han 2013). As such, homes (and

neighborhoods) are viewed as playing an important role in producing a certain kind of child

and certain kind of childhood.

Each participant family believed their home needed to be modified in order to accommodate a baby, and during informal conversations at childbirth education courses and meetings with families, participants discussed the various ways their homes were going to be changed.   These changes typically concentrated on the creation of a nursery, which, as Thompson et al note, has in many cultures become a key event marking the transition to parenthood (Thompson et al 2011, 227).   Nursery-making constitutes a U.S. cultural expectation and also aligned with expert medical advice, since at the time of this study sleeping in the same bed with an infant, or bedsharing, [xi] was not recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) due to safety concerns, and most medical advice emphasized getting babies to sleep through the night in their own rooms within the first few months (Tomori 2015). Although recommendations have changed to encourage room-sharing for the first year (AAP 2016), as of 2018 bedsharing remains strongly discouraged. Reflecting the space-rich settings and the largely middle-class backgrounds of the participants, most participant families were able to dedicate a whole room to a nursery, usually re-purposing a room used as an office or craft-room (though in the few cases, families set aside part of a room for this purpose). We will now turn to consider some of the cultural, symbolic and ontological work nurseries do.

During the months prior to birth, the nursery-to-be typically underwent significant changes, including moving all previous items out, painting, furnishing, and decorating. Nursery-making constituted an important part of conversations during childbirth classes and home visits, where families usually highlighted the nursery, and commented on the work, time and attention that had put into creating it. In this activity we can see some of the ways parents-to-be "did family" and "did gender" through working-with the more-than-human and changing home-space. The majority of the families spent considerable time attending

to the details of this transformation, including selecting colors, motifs and soft furnishings; comparing, purchasing and assembling furniture; gathering together clothing and putting it away in baskets or a chest; making special items such as blankets or decorations by hand; and selecting and placing heirlooms and other items. This activity functioned as a way of materializing kin-relations across space and time. The nurseries of the parents-to be were decorated with things that were important to the parents, which they hoped also would be important to the child, including items which symbolized inter-generational connections.[xii] For instance, Petra[xiii] discussed the importance of the special blanket her mother brought to her and her partner Julia, which would be used to wrap their baby. In these decorative arrays, family photos played a central role, materially representing inter-generational connections (Rose 2003). Framed photographs of the baby's parents, grandparents, and other significant family members were frequently displayed on the walls, as in Rachel's and Nathan's nursery, or on top of dressers. Some families also used the nursery to showcase artifacts that recalled relatives hailing from different cultures and/or countries, as Tolia-Kelly has also observed (Tolia-Kelly 2004). In this way nurseries enabled parents to fold previous generations together with (hoped-for) post-birth familial kinship networks, thus making a space in which past and future might meet. Additionally, nurseries were envisioned as a space for the performance of certain kinds of body- and emotion- work as well as "developmental" activities, with spaces for changing diapers, nursing in a comfortable chair (sometimes a rocking chair), playing with toys and reading books (Han 2013).

In addition to serving as a medium for body, emotion, and kin-work, nursery-making also served as a means through which to enact (gendered) conceptions of emergent parenthood. These were largely gender-typical, with the work of choosing color-schemes and decorating led by women (with varying levels of assistance and interest from men), and

the work of assembling (or making) the larger pieces of furniture being led by men within the heterosexual couples in the study. For instance, Joy and Jonathan, who both worked full time as an administrator and in the environmental field, respectively, worked on their plans to transform a room previously used for storage into a nursery. They engaged in many hours of work moving everything out of that room (with heavier lifting performed by Jonathan), selecting paint colors (led by Joy, but with Jonathan), painting the room (mostly Joy), and the assembly of the crib and changing table (Jonathan). Although they did not plan to have their baby sleep in the nursery in the first few weeks, they rushed to finish the nursery prior to the birth. While this was partly driven by the couple's desire to fully focus on their newborn, these conversations manifested a sense of urgency beyond the pragmatic. As the due date approached, Joy and Jonathan were both exhausted but also filled with anticipation and some anxiety as their evenings and weekends increasingly focused on nursery-making.

With only a supporting role in the work of growing the actual baby, many fathers found making the nursery a key way to call-forth their (impending) fatherhood, bringing their capacities, labour and sometimes tastes to the task of readying the home for a baby.[xiv] A key task in nursery-making was the selection and purchasing of a crib, which was the most prominent and most expensive piece of furniture in the nursery. The crib was usually quite large, made of wood, and usually cost several hundred dollars. Assembly of this piece of furniture was a significant and time-consuming task, since the solid wood pieces were quite heavy and the instructions complex. Among the heterosexual couples, this task was primarily undertaken by the men, sometimes with assistance from their wives. In the single same-sex couple in the study, the non-pregnant partner, Julia, an architect who had more technical skills than her partner, Petra, took on this task. This division of labor was partially

done to accommodate the physical challenges of pregnancy, but was also clearly a realm of preparation where most men in this study felt more comfortable. Some husbands (with backgrounds in math or engineering) were visibly excited about the opportunity to engage in a hands-on, sometimes technically-challenging task such as crib assembly. These forms of working-with the more-than-human provided an opportunity for fathers-to-be to actively participate in a process that often focused on (the bodies of) their female partners. Nursery-making and crib assembly provided the men a way to activate a vision of themselves as fathers, expressing love for the baby-to-be (and their ability to father) through material transformation. Through nursery-making fathers-to-be could "participate in the pregnancy", demonstrate their involvement and make the work of preparing for parenthood a more collaborative endeavour.

Nurseries and the calling-forth of infant personhood

In addition to providing a means through which to enact parenthood, we suggest that changing space within the home prior to birth also provides an important way of calling forth a certain kind of infant personhood.[xv] On the one hand the allocation of space within the home to a nursery speaks to the value placed by parents on the child-to-be, and in this sense nursery-making can be seen as an expression of love and care. Nurseries, however, are also made to give babies a separate place to sleep on their own. In this sense, nurseries suggest a particular kind of infant personhood: one that is marked by a high degree of spatial independence.

Deleuze and Guattari have cast the work of home-making as: "to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile center, to organize a limited space", and characterized home as a boundary around which "forces of chaos are kept outside as much as possible"

(Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 343).   Reading the material work of family-home making through a Deleuzian lens, the way space within the home is divided can be understood as an effort to both reduce chaos and enable particular kinds of kinship relations.   Bedrooms, doors, and locks can be seen to territorialize home-space so as to reflect particular socio-spatial (moral) orders, and materialize ideas about where things and bodies in the home should and should not be. We suggest that nurseries can be understood both as a way to try to impose order on the future experience of parenting, and of striating the home to produce an (idealized enlightenment) subject marked by autonomous action and independence (articulated in the specific capacity for independent sleep), in-line with medical recommendations regarding infant sleep. Conforming to these norms and recommendations ties into normative discourses about "good parenting".

For all but one of the families in this study, the nursery was envisioned as an important space for the future baby, with the primary embodied practice being the act of sleeping in the crib by themselves. Whereas significant effort was poured into modifying the home to make the nursery, parents' bedrooms typically received only minor, temporary changes. Most parents purchased or received as gifts a bassinet or "Moses basket" that was placed near the parents' bed to serve as the baby's sleep area in the earliest weeks. However, this arrangement was envisioned as only temporary, a material "bridge" for a few weeks until the baby took up residence in "their own" room, further reflecting the view that the parental bedroom is "adult only" space (Dovey 1992). In contrast to the nursery, parental bedrooms were not highlighted during home visits.

The temporary-ness of bassinets is clear from their portability, light weight, small size and weight limit, which imposed a temporal limit on how long they could be used for

any one child. A few families selected co-sleepers, three-sided bassinets that attach to the bed frame, which came in different sizes and weight limits, allowing a bit more temporal flexibility. However, even co-sleepers were viewed as a temporary arrangement since they were meant to be detached when the child outgrew the sleep surface.   The transitoriness of bassinets and co-sleepers contrasted sharply with the *durability* of cribs; their greater weight, size, cost, and relative immobility. Indeed, as some families found out, some cribs were too large to fit through the door frame and therefore could not be moved out of the nursery without first being taken apart. Only one of the eighteen families planned for proximate sleep longer-term prior to birth (initially, they used a special container within their bed, and later the husband removed one side of a full-size crib and anchored it to their bed). All other couples planned to have their babies sleep in temporary containers for a few weeks and then transition to sleeping in their own room for the night.

In this section we have shown some of the ways "family homes" and conceptions of parental personhood are produced through one another. In the material practices of building and painting things, and changing space within the home we can see the calling-forth of parental selves and effort to exert some control over the spatial practices of early parenting. Especially for fathers-to-be, not directly engaged with the bodily work of growing the baby, nursery-making provided a way to connect to the child-to be and understandings of themselves as a parent. As we have argued, through nurseries parents endeavoured to "order and border" home-space and fix certain kinds of infant and parental personhood through particular kinds of relations with the non-human.   With only one exception, all participant families expected their baby would transition to sleep in "their" crib, in "their" nursery, thus reflecting the normative power of the independent subject as a cultural ideal. Having examined some of practices expectant parents undertook to ready

their home for the birth of a child, we will now turn to consider what happened when that child arrived.

After the birth: infant agency & domestic deterritorialization

Upon returning from the hospital, where all families had their babies (a planned home birth ended with a transfer to the hospital) many parents expressed a feeling of profound disorientation, as if their lives had been "turned upside down" with the introduction of an additional, "vividly agentic" new being to the home.[xvi]   Even some of the couples who had said that they did not really know what life with a baby would be like expressed feelings of shock and a sense of loss of control, despite efforts to prepare, order and organize selves and homes prior to birth.[xvii] Temporal, spatial and sonic orders of the pre-birth home were destabilized. Night, previously a time of stillness, quietude and recuperation became a time of motion, interaction, and sometimes prodigious noise, echoing Gelder and Jacob's work on the home made uncanny (Gelder and Jacobs 1998). Things did not happen as expected, nor *where* expected, with some couples expressing a sense of "everything happening everywhere" despite efforts to locate certain kinds of activities and body-work in particular areas of the home.   Diaper changes happened on living room floors, sleep happened on parents' bodies, and relationships to day and night were -- for some participants -- totally destabilized. Many participants reported experiencing early parenthood as chaotic in a way that clashed with pre-birth expectations and normative discourses about parental control and expertise.

As Luzia (2011) also found in her work[xviii], plans for sleep often contradicted new realities. A key issue was the discovery that babies seemed reluctant to sleep in the containers designated for them. Instead of sleeping in their bassinets or co-sleepers, babies

typically fell asleep on their parents' bodies, usually while or after breastfeeding. After falling asleep at the breast, if put down, babies would often wake up again. Parents found that infant feeding and sleep guidance was at odds with one another. On the one hand, they were taught that they needed to respond to their infants' signals for breastfeeding; on the other hand, they were advised to put their babies to sleep separately in a crib. Yet once awake, their babies would often only be soothed by breastfeeding again, initiating another round of breastfeeding, falling asleep, being put down, and waking. In other words, as several participants noted, babies did not "like" or "want to" sleep on their own. Instead, they wanted to breastfeed and sleep on or near their parents' bodies. In combination with the challenges of learning to breastfeed, this unexpected situation produced additional stress.

To manage this, all but one family responded by bringing their baby into bed with them despite original plans not to do so. Although some of this initially was down to accidentally falling asleep with the baby while breastfeeding in bed, several couples made a conscious decision to bring their baby into bed with them after finding the babies' cries upon waking distressing, and the fatigue of having to sit up or get out of bed each time the baby woke in the night. Parents often noted the contrast between their plans and their new-found arrangements. For instance, Bridget mentioned that while "I would like her to sleep in the beautiful crib that we bought her", their baby never slept there. For mothers who had Cesarean sections maintaining separate sleep was particularly challenging as they could not lift the baby into bed with them or place the baby back into the bassinet, and therefore needed their partners to do so. This added another layer of coordination and led to two exhausted parents at the end of the night.

To be able to sustain breastfeeding and get some rest, families needed to re-think the spatial and material arrangements that had been made pre-birth (which meant going against cultural norms and expert advice). For some families, this meant bringing their babies into their beds periodically, but continuing to work towards maintaining a degree of spatial separation for at least for part of the night. This work involved either getting out of bed or lifting their baby out of the bassinet in order to breastfeed them, and then either sleeping in the same bed for a while, or placing them back again and soothing them to sleep. As partners were supportive of breastfeeding and largely shared parenting styles, these plans were usually made collaboratively and revealed care and support for partners' wellbeing (reflecting the study sample). For instance, Nathan noted that since breastfeeding was done by his wife, he felt it was important to carry out other nighttime care. At the same time, both Nathan and his wife, Rachel "felt it [the bassinet sleep routine] sucked. It really sucked." Nathan wondered how he would be able to cope with a routine that was "so disruptive to sleep." Despite initial safety concerns about bedsharing, sheer exhaustion and the ease of breastfeeding with bedhsaring became the main reasons why many families decided to bring their babies into bed more regularly after days or even weeks after birth.

While many families were able to establish a pattern of sleep that enabled both themselves and their babies rest in the short term, as weeks went on they encountered further challenges once their babies outgrew their first intended sleeping-space. They were then faced with the decision to either create a larger long-term sleeping space in the same room or place their babies in the nursery. As their babies grew, cultural pressure also increased to place them in their nurseries and "train" them to sleep through the night. However, this proved a major challenge since babies cried when separated from their

parents, and continued to signal their desire to breastfeed (e.g. by seeking to latch and only being soothed by breastfeeding). For many couples this led to ongoing struggles to get babies to stay in "their" rooms, into which so much care and emotion had been poured.   As their baby grew larger Petra, for instance, repeatedly shared how she and Julia felt stuck between their own and their families' expectation that they would move their baby from a portable bassinet next to their bed to the crib in the nursery. Laughing, Petra told me, "We'll find another excuse not to move him to his own room." They, like other couples in the study, delayed this move considerably from their plans. For many, babies continued to move back and forth between the parental bedroom and the nursery for weeks or even months.

For others, the new arrangement of bringing their babies into bed with them quickly became a regular pattern, one that they ultimately decided to embrace. These parents became increasingly comfortable about sleeping next to their babies in the same bed and made material changes to reflect these arrangements. For instance, Leslie and Alex decided to bring a mobile that was hanging above the crib in the nursery into their bedroom and Alex attached it to their bed's headboard. Leslie shared that their baby often woke up "cooing at" the mobile and that they enjoyed these moments together as a family. Meanwhile the containers they had planned to use for their babies became filled with other useful things. Kate, a teacher, led me upstairs during one visit to show me how her families' sleeping arrangements evolved in the weeks after their babies' birth. We both laughed when she gestured to the co-sleeper, which was now filled with a pillow, water, and a book. Eventually, some in this group discarded the temporary container all together. Tomori witnessed this progression of the location and uses of the co-sleeper in one family over the course of several months. Carol, a social worker, showed Tomori how the co-sleeper that

was initially attached to their bed (and practically never used), was first used for other objects, then detached from their bed and moved to the living room. Here it served as a storage area for items going in and out of the house (coats, diaper bags, baby carriers, etc.), before it was finally given away. Carol also found this evolution rather comical. Similarly, Rachel and Nathan laughed as they discussed giving their basket away, joking that that family will not use it either. For all of these families, the crib remained mostly unused, standing alone in the nursery.

As noted, bedsharing was not recommended at the time of this study and continues to be advised against today (AAP 2016). There is considerable debate over whether this advice is sound, or if guidance on safe bedsharing should be provided, especially considering the well-established relationship between bedsharing and breastfeeding, which is associated with significantly lower risk of sudden infant deaths (cf. Ball 2017; McKenna et al 2007; McKenna & Gettler 2016; Bovjberg et al 2018). In this study, **all but one (seventeen of eighteen couples)** intended that their baby would sleep in a separate bed from them, and all intended to transition their baby to another room within a few months. Despite this, **all but one couple ended up bringing their baby into bed with them at least some of the time.**[xix] This is significantly higher than U.S. surveys from the time of the study that found only about forty percent bedsharing in the first year (Hauck et al 2008), even accounting for the likely underreporting of bedsharing due to its stigmatization (Tomori et al 2016). The prominence of bedhsaring is likely due to our study's focus on breastfeeding parents, who repeatedly stated that they maintained bedsharing primarily in order to facilitate nighttime breastfeeding. These findings align with large U.S. and UK quantitative studies that have consistently found significantly higher rates of bedsharing among breastfeeding parents and demonstrated bedsharing's importance in facilitating and sustaining breastfeeding (Hauck et

al, 2008; Huang et al, 2013; Ball et al, 2016; Bovbjerg et al 2018). Thus, in the United States where breastfeeding rates continue to rise, our ethnographic observations have significant implications for evolving infant sleep practices and potential shifting of cultural norms around domestic spaces.

In this investigation we found parents and babies sharing space in ways that parents had not intended before birth, largely in response to signals from their babies. However, because bedsharing was not an approved practice by the AAP, several of the families in the study did not disclose the fact that they bedshared with health professionals. Despite having planned otherwise, the lived experiences of night-time breastfeeding led nearly all parents in this study to decide --with infants's input -- on sleep configurations marked by a higher-than-planned degree of bodily co-presence in the form of bedsharing. These experiences reveal some of the ways that ideas about infant (and parental) subjectivity -- made manifest through nurseries and cribs-- can be deterritorialized after birth. The planned-for baby who could sleep in its crib independently was, in most cases, replaced by real babies who were both more dependent and more agentic than parents had anticipated, and who sought physical co-presence and unhindered access to breastfeeding. This study has also shown how infant agency can have the power to unsettle parents' careful work and ideas about how kinship and young-baby subjectivity should be spatialized, and can lead to forms of infant-parent inter-embodiment and somatic arrangements not envisioned prior to birth.

Conclusion

This paper extends work in social and cultural geography, parenting studies, family studies, and children's geographies by highlighting the importance of home-space in the practice of

kinship and within processes of infant and parental becomings. We have argued that certain kinds of workings-with the space of the home function as ways to call-forth certain kinds of futures. We have shown how prior to birth home-space is territorialized through the creation of a dedicated space in the home for the infant in the form of nurseries, and argued that these spaces work to call forth infant-subjects with particular kinds of bodily capacities, and centrally, the capacity for independent sleep.

In turn, we have argued that what happens after birth often undoes pre-birth efforts to striate the home in terms of which bodies will go where, including where infants will sleep. Despite efforts to impose certain spatial and ontological orders on the home prior to birth, after birth these orders (and forms of subjectivity with which they are bound up) can destabilize. Parents in this study were often surprised and dismayed by the loss of control in early parenting and some attempted to work against it by trying to enforce planned-for spatial orders, placing their babies in separate containers, and later, separate rooms. However infants' resistance to these spatial regimes prompted many parents to readjust their expectations, sharing beds with their infants for all or part of the night.

This research suggests that the micro-geographies of infant sleep may not align with modifications made to the home by parents pre-birth, nor with cultural expectations, medical recommendations, nor even with how parents themselves report that they are sleeping to health professionals. It further shows how such decisions are not made unilaterally by parents, but rather with input from myriad human and non-human others: including babies with their own (often strong) ideas about where they do and do not want to be. Together, these various forces can combine to lead to sleep configurations that are marked by a much higher degree of co-presence than anticipated by parents prior to birth.

Unlike in the case we have discussed, shared mother-infant sleep and nighttime breastfeeding, is the cultural norm in most of the world (Barry & Paxson 1971; McKenna Ball and Gettler, 2007, Tomori 2018). Anthropologists McKenna and Gettler (2016) have recently coined the term "breastsleeping" to reflect the profound evolutionary, physiological, and cross-cultural connections between breastfeeding and infant sleep. The disjunction between cultural expectations and the realities of night-time breastfeeding and sleep is particularly acute in settings like the United States where breastfeeding has been making a steady come-back after many decades where formula feeding and solitary sleep (with quick elimination of nighttime feedings) were the established norm (Tomori 2015, Tomori in press). Thus this research provides insight into a particularly important moment where a bodily practice (breastfeeding) may trouble culturally-mediated boundaries about sleep between parents and children.

This research extends existing scholarship in several ways.   It shows some of the ways ideas about infant and parental personhood can be called-forth through spatio-material practice, and significantly extends our understandings of night-time geographies. It suggests a conceptualization of parenting as an expression of distributed agency, with key decisions about where and how things happen being shaped by a range of (human and non-human others) including babies themselves, thus building on the work of Holt (2013). And it hints at ways in which at least some parents are not expressing "obedience" to expert discourse as we might expect, but rather settling on their own solutions (behind closed doors).

As bell hooks has noted, home can function as "a place which enables and promotes varied and ever-changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of

seeing reality" (hooks 1991, 148 in Blunt and Dowling 2006, 20). Through this ethnography of the intimate spaces of early parenting we are able to glimpse something of how the perspectives of mothers and fathers change through spatial practice (including spatial and material negotiations) within the home. The embodied inter-relations experienced by parents and babies in this study suggest a micro-geography of parenting marked by higher-levels of co-presence than parents anticipated, as well as spatializations of sleep (bedsharing) that did not simply echo official advice or reported data. As such, we suggest this research offers not only valuable insight into the realities of the spatial experiences of new parents, but suggests these realities and patterns of infant sleeping particularly in the context of breastfeeding may not be quite what we expected.

Notes

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[i] Between seventy and eighty percent of adults in the United States, Australia, China and OECD countries become parents at some point in their lives. Rates of parenthood in the developing world including India and Africa are estimated at closer to ninety-five percent https://www.quora.com/Children-What-percentage-of-people-become-parents

[ii] See for example special issues of *Geoforum* in 2004 and *Social and Cultural Geography* in 2003.

[iii] Though see the work of Andrew Gorman-Murry 2006.

[iv] This field of material geographies is becoming a sub-field in its own right and it is beyond the scope of this essay to cover it completely. See Tolia-Kelly (2013) for a good review of this field.

[v] This study received ethical approval from the University of Michigan. Details of this study can be found in (Tomori 2015).

[vi] Observations were scheduled around participants' schedules, sickness, family travel, etc.

[vii] In accordance with anthropological conventions of immersive multi-year field projects, the number of hours spent with each family was not tracked.

[viii] Two participants were laid off, but one had found a new job by the time of the study's conclusion.

[ix] Although three states have recently adopted paid parental leave policies, no comprehensive legislation is in place at the time of this manuscript.

[x] Reflects prices as of May 2007. https://www.census.gov/construction/nrs/pdf/uspricemon.pdf Roughly the same difference in home values persists in 2017. Both accessed 21/6/17.

xi Shared sleep may occur on many different surfaces, with different safety implications. We use "bedsharing" to avoid confusion.

xii See also Thompson et al 2011, 229.

xiii All names are pseudonyms.

xiv There was variation across the group regarding the extent of the father's involvement in pre-birth preparations.

xv For an interesting perspective that argues infants are by definition not-yet-subjects see Gill-Peterson 2013.

xvi This sense of chaos and disorder echoes Luzia's findings in her work with lesbian new parents in Australia (Luzia 2011).

xvii This resonates with Miller's work on mother's experiences of early motherhood in the UK (Miller 2005).

xviii Luzia (2011) discusses one couple in her study who co-slept without planning to.

xix Ten of the eighteen couples continued to practice partial or full-time bedsharing at one year.

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