"…We Honestly Just Got Sick of Doing Working Together." Spatial Negotiation of Adult-Child Thrown togetherness During Lockdown

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"…WE HONESTLY JUST GOT SICK OF DOING WORKING TOGETHER." SPATIAL NEGOTIATION OF ADULT-CHILD THROWN TOGETHERNESS DURING LOCKDOWN

ABSTRACT   Following a pre-pandemic decline in
family time at home, the Royal Institute of British
Architects called for multi-functional living spaces to
become the new family social hub, where familial
togetherness materializes. However, a deeper
understanding of the family home as a socio-spatial
system, shaped by the negotiation of values, is
required to inform housing design. This article draws
on the concept of throwntogetherness to explore the

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family home during COVID-19 lockdown as a conflictual site of value discrepancies. Qualitative analysis of 45 in-depth interviews unpacks adult-child throwntogetherness as a state of negotiation between adults, children, and the spaces and values (care, companionship, control, privacy, play) upon which the family home is built. The study identifies the spatial strategies (Connectedness, Compartmentalization, Containment, and Together-space) used to reconfigure domestic space to negotiate lockdown throwntogetherness. The findings contribute new spatial understandings of adult-child togetherness, with important implications for open-plan housing design, questioning pre-pandemic assumptions.

KEYWORDS: familial togetherness, Covid-19, lockdown, family home, adult-child throwntogetherness

SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS OF FAMILIAL TOGETHERNESS: LESSONS FROM LOCKDOWN

Familial togetherness makes a house into a family home (Dowling and Power 2012; James 2013), as a result of adults and children choosing to spend time together (Miller 1995). Following a decline in the time that British families spent together, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA 2015) called for multi-functional living spaces to become the new domestic social hub, where familial togetherness materializes. However, an updated and more nuanced perspective on togetherness, as well as a deeper understanding of the family home as a socio-spatial system are required to adequately inform housing design. As Jacobs and Smith (2008) note, housing, and home inform each other in a constant state of flux (see also Sibley and Lowe 1992; Sibley 1995). This flux reflects the family home as an often "conflictual space" in which "value discrepancies" are negotiated, mediated, and stabilized (Riggins 1994: 139) according to hierarchical family relations (Sibley 1995; Dowling 2008). The challenges of being together at home were exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdown when adults and children were "thrown together" for unprecedented periods of time and engaged in sustained socio-spatial negotiations surrounding their needs. Whilst Malatesta *et al*. (2023: 8) argue that the lockdown has created a "re-signification" of the family domestic space, the meaning of this re-signification has yet to fully emerge.

During the UK's COVID-19 lockdown, family time together increased (Clarke *et al.* 2021; Davies *et al.* 2021; Pallan *et al.* 2021). Partly due to new domestic activities (primarily home working and schooling), togetherness appeared both as a source of comfort and conflict. Tensions and conflict increased, affecting mental health, productivity,

and well-being (Barnardo's 2020; Cubitt 2020; Louis *et al.* 2022). Difficulties were exacerbated in situations of limited resources and physical space (Hanley 2020). Many home-workers lacked dedicated workspace (Parry *et al.* 2021), and noise and interruptions while working became the most common source of family conflict (Marks *et al.* 2020). However, resilience often came from adaptations to domestic space and its use, allowing different individual needs to co-exist (Parnell et al. 2022).

Although the pandemic brought the home into sharp focus (Clair and Hughes 2019; Clair 2020; Marco *et al.* 2022), with families' lockdown experiences widely shared (Hamilton and Wood 2020; The Scottish Youth Parliament *et al*. 2020; Understanding Society 2020; TACT 2021), research has yet to synthesize adult and child accounts of lockdown in relation to domestic space. It is imperative to learn from family domestic life during the COVID-19 lockdown, to better understand spatial forms of familial resilience, and to identify those domestic contexts that put family well-being at risk. This is essential considering that changed patterns of space use during the pandemic potentially mark a shift in householder expectations and in domestic space itself (Clair and Hughes 2019; Andrew, Cattan, *et al.* 2020; Andrew, Sevilla, *et al.* 2020).

Drawing from Massey's (2005) concept of throwntogetherness, this article focuses on adult-child throwntogetherness in domestic space. Used to describe the family home (Aitken 2009; Luzia 2011) as a site of conflicting individual values and expectations (Luzia 2011: 300), "throwntogetherness" helps understand the state of families who found themselves co-existing 24/7 in a confined space (see Marco *et al.* 2022)[1]:

> The creation of a family home through negotiating various states of disorder that are generated when adults and children are "thrown together" as a family in an existing home space (Luzia 2011: 298).

The article therefore aims to understand how the family home was shaped through the socio-spatial negotiation of the "throwntogetherness" generated by the COVID-19 lockdown. A focus on the value discrepancies between adult and child expands the implications of togetherness for domestic space beyond harmony-based family ideals.

FAMILIAL TOGETHERNESS: THE FAMILY HOME AS CONFLICTUAL SITE

"Familial togetherness" is seen to sustain home making (Dowling and Power 2012: 608), therefore bearing spatial implications for housing design (Miller 1986). Nevertheless, we lack an understanding of how

togetherness is spatially enacted in the contemporary family home. The RIBA's (2015) call for multi-functional living spaces to become the new family social hub—the space where familial togetherness materializes—is a legacy of the modern representation of home. Modern architects introduced the open plan to the home as an "undifferentiated, common space" (Munro and Madigan 1991: 123; Attfield 2002; Dowling 2008) for joint use by parents and children (Watson 1986). This family ideal was articulated in the 1950s as "togetherness," meaning adults and children spending the time "not claimed by wage labor or school" to "enjoy one another's company and share leisure pursuits" (Miller 1995: 394). However, family ideals change through history. It was only with industrialization, urbanization, and the construction of childhood as a distinct life stage, that work and schooling were moved outside the dwelling; thus the child returned to the home (Aries 1962; Heywood 2013), allowing familial togetherness to materialize within one family in one house (see Hareven 1991). Housing design changed accordingly, with private and public areas distinguished through activity-specific rooms (Saunders and Williams 1988). Familial togetherness, in Victorian terms, confined children to the rear of the house (Munro and Madigan 1991; Cieraad 2013), which pervaded inter-war housing until the 1950s.

Although togetherness often materializes as playing in the living room (Stevenson and Prout 2013) and coming together for meal times or watching television (Madigan and Munro 1999; James 2013), adults and children may have different (conflicting) needs and understandings of togetherness (Green 2015). Children value the home as the "locus for the social relations which comprise the family" (Christensen *et al*. 2000: 125), despite the fact that, as Luzia (2011: 303) puts it "the home is primarily conceptualized as an adult geography, predominantly structured, controlled, and ordered materially and symbolically on adult terms, scales, and values" (see also Saunders and Williams 1988; Sibley 1995; Jones 2000). The co-existence of adult and child values within the family as socio-spatial system raises questions about the strategies used to negotiate these values in the space of the home.

Familial togetherness is often intertwined with family values (play, care, control, companionship, and privacy). Although togetherness in the form of play is seen to increase companionship (Wang *et al.* 2018), playing in the living room is also explored as a source of mess and tensions in adult-child relations (Cieraad 2013; Michelan and Baptista Correia 2013; Stevenson and Prout 2013). Such tensions are mediated because play and companionship are seen to support children's development (Parke 1978). Studies also explore care—providing the space and safety to develop—as enacted through "care-consumption and caregiving" (Dyck *et al.* 2005: 181) or "childminding" (Blunt and Dowling 2006) practices.

Control is often seen as a prerequisite of care. Forsberg and Strandell (2007) note that children use control over space and time to construct a home, whereas adults see "control, in terms of adult supervision" as care and security (405). Whilst children need to control and occupy space (Miller 1986), space and its allocation are often under adult control (Shamgar-Handelman and Belkin 1984; Jones 2000), although subject to negotiation by children (Sibley and Lowe 1992; Sibley 1995; Gallacher 2005). The need to control space and encounters (Sebba and Churchman 1983) is read as a translation of privacy needs. Privacy from other family members has structured the UK home since Victorian times (Hepworth 1999) and is still an aspect of home "to be valued" (Allan and Crow 1989: 4), despite alone time often being used as punishment for children (Christensen et al. 2000).

Explorations of togetherness through *values*, *activities*, or *time* have been well-researched. However, if togetherness is to inform housing design, a theorization of home as socio-spatial system (Saunders and Williams 1988) is instrumental, permitting a deeper understanding of the family home as "conflictual space" in which "value discrepancies" between individuals are negotiated, mediated and stabilized (Riggins 1994: 139). This article's focus on the *spatial* enactment and negotiation of values in the family home addresses the lack of attention to the spatiality of togetherness, taking the literature in new directions.

METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS

The findings in this article are drawn from the At Home with Children: Learning from Lockdown research project, which sought lessons from families' lockdown experiences and explored how they could inform the design, refurbishment, re-imagining, and use of family homes to accommodate changing needs. The project had four phases, starting with a large-scale, quantitative survey and ending with a smaller-scale sample of households in design-based focus groups. This article discusses the findings of phase two: semi-structured interviews with families.

Interviews were conducted online between September and December 2021 with 45 different families (85 adults and 73 children) living across England and Scotland.[2] At the time of the interviews, the UK government had enforced three national lockdowns.[3] Each family was interviewed separately and represented a single household who had spent at least one lockdown together in their home. Each interview centered around family members' reflections on their experiences of their home during lockdown and lasted for up to one hour. To prompt these reflections and facilitate dialogue, families were invited to share photographs of home spaces that were important, difficult, or changed during the lockdown.[4] A semi-structured interview guide was used to encourage all household members to share their experiences. The last 15 min were available for discussion separately with children to allow

them to express themselves. Age-specific booklets were provided for participants to write in after the interview ended.[5]

Adults' ages ranged from 29 to 73 years (average age of 40.2 years). Children's ages ranged from 2 to 17 years (average age of 7.5 years). Eight families were single adult households, 35 families included two adults, one included three adults and one included four adults. Twenty-three families had one child, 16 had two children, and six had three children. 76% of families recorded their ethnicity as white or white British. Forty-four adults worked from home during the lockdown. Three families had no access to outdoor space, one family had a private balcony, five families had access to a shared garden/yard, and 36 families had access to a private garden/yard.

Following interview transcription, content and thematic analyses were conducted drawing on Deterding and Waters' approach (2021), using the software package N-Vivo to support the process of identifying themes and patterns in families' experiences. In what follows, analysis and interpretation centers on participants' verbal accounts, Code names depend on whether the participant is adult (A) or child[6] (C), followed by their age (in years) and the gender they identify with (M = male, F = female, NB = non-binary).

ADULT-CHILD THROWNTOGETHERNESS AS SPATIAL NEGOTIATION OF VALUES

Families' accounts of the lockdown reflected contrasting experiences and understandings of togetherness among adults and children, thus bringing to the fore the co-existence of two different geographies. As a result, adult-child interactions often brought tensions that were nego-tiated in space. Families explored a series of spatial strategies to mediate the conflicts arising from adult-child throwntogetherness, a state that extends the harmony-based concept of familial togetherness by exposing individual conflicting values.

CONNECTEDNESS

While lockdown home literature describes the need for connectedness as the "connection between indoors and outdoors, connection with nature (view and light) and connection with family and friends in new 'digital' ways" (Marco *et al.* 2022: 181), these interview findings instead reveal connectedness as a spatial strategy used to mediate between needs of proximity and separation. This strategy is evidenced through the examples below and discussed according to the conflicting values illustrated.

Care vs. privacy
Connectedness emerged as a way to mediate one's need for separation and privacy with another's need for proximity and closeness to be cared for or supported. Care, frequently discussed alongside domestic space

(Bowlby *et al.* 1997; Power and Mee 2020) intensified in the family home during lockdown. In contrast to the unsafe outside, the family home emerged as a safe haven (Harden 2000; Gezici Yalçın and Düzen 2022) where care materialized as care for children's well-being and mental health, child-minding, home-schooling, and keeping entertained. These forms of care translate spatially as a need for proximity. Often, tensions arose from the need for proximity to care, while retaining privacy and quiet for home-working and home-schooling:

> A36F: When C10F needed help, when she's got a lot of work to do, like if she sat next to me, it's difficult because she distracts me, asking questions or chattering on or, you know, one thing or another…

Consequently, achieving privacy—often discussed as visual and acoustic separation (Sebba and Churchman 1983)—involved spatial negotiation to overcome the challenges of the open plan, such as the kitchen-diner:

> A51F: So we put a desk here for C8M to have some space somewhere that wasn't the dining room […], somewhere that he could concentrate. Because otherwise when he was doing schoolwork. I was trying to cook supper and then it all became a bit loud and noisy, and it wasn't great.

Often, the need for proximity to the adult whilst respecting the adult's privacy resulted in children working in unusual places:

> A41F: This is my office. I had to be near enough to them that if anything did happen I could just like break my call and go out…
> […] So they were – like A50M said – in the hallway.

While spatial boundedness of compartmentalized housing design was often considered important to separate activities and minimize challenges, such as noise and interruptions, some participants preferred the connectedness of the open plan because it facilitated supervision while working.

Connectedness was also sought by adults who recognized their own need to be alone, while remaining anxious about childminding. Often parents of toddlers or babies mentioned spaces with easy access and visual connection to their children for their alone time:

> R: What made that place [alleyway] so good for alone time?
> A40F – I guess 'cause it was obviously quick – it's weird, but obviously I cannot leave my children unattended. But however that was fine, they're in a safe place in the living room […] so it

was a case of I'm just there, I can see them, just need a moment to breathe...

Play vs. care
Although play emerged as an activity that children engaged in by themselves, throwntogetherness around play was driven either by companionship (when the child needed to be around adults) or by care (when the adult needed to supervise and entertain the child). Spatial connectedness appeared as a facilitator because the adult's needs often affected where the play took place. Whilst connectedness between inside and outside allowed children to play in and out under supervision, parents restricted play in spaces with no visual connection:

A41F: Because it's this space of like 'dump' that separates our house from the garden [...] 'cause if that was an open space you [to A41M] could have seen the children playing in the garden [...]. But [it was] because we had this black hole of light that you wouldn't be able to keep an eye on them. So yeah, we didn't really use [the garden] at all.

Companionship vs. privacy
Although intimacy and companionship have been portrayed as a characteristic of good parenting—a way to support children's upbringing and make home (Dowling and Power 2012)—the findings show companionship as a value primarily ascribed to by children. While proximity was the adult's way to keep younger children safe, companionship manifested in both younger and older children's need to be around adults and engage in various activities with, or near, them. In particular, younger children playing independently tended to prefer the living spaces when other family members were around. Spatial connectedness was sometimes a way to deal with the lockdown's overwhelming feelings. In one case, the adults worked in the child's bedroom to alleviate the child's stress:

A49F: [...] just couldn't concentrate unless someone was sat there. [...] So dad and I spent time sitting here doing work so that C10F felt like she'd got company, could concentrate on work and we could answer questions ... so this became an office space.

However, working or home-schooling together caused tensions, making it difficult to balance companionship against privacy. Whilst the open plan character of rooms – such as the kitchen diner – facilitated connectedness, it also brought challenges derived from noise:

A41F: what I would say about the kitchen... I think lockdown was a horrible time, wasn't it? [...]

C12F: Like there were days when it was more noisy, there are some days where it's more quiet and I think in the end, we honestly just got sick of doing working together.

COMPARTMENTALIZATION

Compartmentalization allowed families to maintain some control over space under lockdown conditions. In contrast to Marco *et al*.'s (2022) findings, compartmentalization provided more than alone time, as it also allowed separation between (paid)work and non-work life or between children's and adults' spaces. It also permitted containment of perceived mess from children's activities. One way to compartmentalize and designate rooms involved prioritizing activities. Spacious rooms that could accommodate desks and IT equipment often supported home-working, allowing privacy—largely understood as quiet (Saunders and Williams 1988)—but left-over spaces also took on new and defined functions.

Control vs. play

Although play's appropriation of leftover spaces into a child's space has already been described (Korosec-Serfaty 1985), here play's expansion toward leftover spaces was also driven by the adult's desire to draw boundaries between play and other activities taking place in designated areas:

A41M: It's a really tiny area. These are the stairs going up to the bedroom. So we just put this carpet down and this is the chest and it's got games and books and things in it. […] And it's […] where I played games with C6F after her work or before bed.

Privacy vs. control

With most families reporting limited space to accommodate work, home-schooling, and time-alone, the need for private, quiet areas pushed families toward a variety of spaces not designed for these activities. Adults working in common spaces, such as the kitchen, re-configured the character of these areas, turning them into private spaces closed off to others during work. In these cases, compartmentalization—as opposed to time zoning—allowed adults to separate work and life while minimizing the (often disruptive) need to pack away:

R: And where did you pack them [work equipment] off when it was lunchtime?

A37F: Lunchtime we didn't, we ate… me and A37M ate sitting on the sofa in the lounge and C6F's little school desk became a table for her to eat at. […] [It] was not ideal, but we ate outside sometimes.

Adult control over space allowed compartmentalization of spaces for private use both inside and outside the home—such as garages, conservatories, and other outbuildings. Offering "control over access" (Kidd and Evans 2011: 760), control over space and encounters (Sebba and Churchman 1983), a playroom, a wardrobe, and the family van were subject to compartmentalization to allow home-working:

A49F: We had quite a big van with a pop-up table and three or four seats where we could work. It was cold and could be hot. Yeah, it wasn't ideal. The Wi-Fi was very weak. But at least it was a space separated from the house and it was parked on the drive.

Similar to Green's (2011) findings, some older children described carving out special places outside the house to get away from conflict. Finding withdrawal space appeared to be a vital resource to negotiate the frictions resulting from being together:

C11F: My nicest place in the new house… We've got a barn and there's a trampoline inside of it. C9F and C5M do not go on it […] which just kind of separates me from being inside all the time and having to listen to arguments all the time.

Boundaries around family life and adult-child zoning (Blunt and Dowling 2006) emerged as disturbed and reconfigured by compartmentalization. While the adult is often the one who sets boundaries (Saunders and Williams 1988; Sibley 1995; Jones 2000; Luzia 2011) and the child the one who transgresses them (Sibley and Lowe 1992; Sibley 1995; Gallacher 2005), during lockdown, both adults and children set and negotiated boundaries. Adults often designated home-schooling spaces in open-plan areas, even when older children preferred to work in the privacy of their bedrooms:

R: why didn't you home-school in your bedroom?

[…]

A48F: That was my decision really…

C10F: Yeah, and I didn't also really want to spend the whole day in my bedroom.

A48F: Didn't want her studying in what should be a relaxing space.

However, others recognized the "freedom from surveillance" (Saunders and Williams 1988: 88) of a child's bedroom as a way to support well-being:

A46F: I would say that her bedroom was very much health space. […] so if she needed help with homework she will come into here rather than us going there and it was very much the space she would go when she wanted peace and quiet.

CONTAINMENT

Spatial containment allowed families to create safe spaces in the home, where children could be on their own without parental concern. At the same time, the containment of perceived play-related mess alleviated tensions and conflict between adults and children. Therefore, spatial containment materialized primarily around safety, play, and the control of the mess associated with play.

Play vs. care

All families described organizing a variety of play activities indoors and outdoors to spend time together and keep children happy and occupied, even if this involved, in a few cases, lowering safety standards and allowing play in new areas:

A47F: We went through it and said 'do what you wanna do, be happy as long as we were all happy' obviously.

Generally, adults' perceptions of safe/unsafe spaces ruled the use of space by children and contained unsafe areas by restricting access to younger children:

R: So, the children didn't really go to the kitchen during lockdown?

A42F: No because […] if you open the oven door and they ran and they fell over that they would be falling over an oven door.'

Although most of the indoor space was considered safe, play often took place around adult activities to allow supervision, especially of younger children. Spatial containment included rearranging different rooms, like the kitchen or the adult office, into a "play space":

A39F: So, our kitchen area, it's kind of a kitchen breakfast room. We took the dining table out… […] is actually C7M's play space. […] when A39M is cooking or I'm doing washing up or whatever C7M will be in there playing with his toys and stuff. […]. We've kept it separate – relaxing in his bedroom and play in his play space.

A39M: Because C7M much prefers to be around other people than on his own.

Often, the home's outdoor space posed worries for adults if a lack of containment prevented peace of mind:

A40F: He could easily get onto the front... Onto the road. It wasn't safe for him to be on the front garden even with the two of us.

However, alongside the adult's need to care for the child, spatial containment of play was also driven by adult control.

Play vs. control
As a common form of family togetherness before lockdown, play in the main living areas (Sibley and Lowe 1992; Sibley 1995; Gallacher 2005) has often been discussed in the literature alongside storage needs and the relevance of spatial flexibility (Stevenson and Prout 2013). Also explored in the literature is the conflict between children's freedom to play in these areas and the perceived mess created by play (Dowling 2008). Therefore, play at home is commonly understood to be in conflict with the adult's need to control children—their actions and objects (Stevenson and Prout 2013). The adults interviewed discussed the same conflict, attempting to control "mess" through the spatial containment of play in a separate room like the bedroom or playroom:

A61F: I think that used to cause a little bit of stress in the house. Because "your toys are getting everywhere", "put them away" and there was always a little bit of conflict there... Before we created the toy room...

When families lacked available space to contain play, the living room was often cluttered with play-related mess. This destabilized the notion of home as a place of order and stability (Dovey 1985) and the living room became a cradle of space negotiations between children and adults, often disrupting other activities, such as adult leisure or family time:

A49F: One of the things that we found during lockdown was, so many toys got taken out, so the floor was almost impossible to see – like it was just being used so much more in a different kind of way.

Time-zoning of the living spaces (Munro and Madigan 2006), emerged as essential for the family's well-being during lockdown when available rooms and space were limited (see also Malatesta *et al.* 2023). Time-zoning ruled the spatial containment of children's toys in living spaces during "adult time:"

A42F: As much as I love my kids, when they went to bed the toys had to go away. I'm not sitting in that lot; it drives me nuts and it was just to try and give us a sense to go from being Mummy and Daddy to A42F and A52M again. For our relationship we had to do that. […]. So, at the end of the day, the whole lot went away.

TOGETHER-SPACE

Echoing Marco *et al.*'s (2022) concept of communality, together-space refers to spaces that supported adult-child shared activities; or activities taking place in parallel between adult and child. Families described together-space as a way to alleviate some of the tensions created by limited space or rooms. The open plan character of a space (e.g. spacious and undivided) is often related to together-space.

Companionship vs. care

Adult-child activities took place in unprecedented parts of the home, such as the loft office, to make the most of the adult's break from work:

A41F:… they run gym classes at lunchtime so the whole family were welcome. So the girls would come up to the loft again and we'd be up here maybe doing some yoga or whatever that was put on by someone that I worked with… and the loft just probably became… There's a shift in activity.

However, the lockdown's surge in family time was mostly felt by an increase in use of the main living spaces. More precisely, the living room accommodated most manifestations of familial togetherness in the form of adult-child shared activities:

A45M: We would go for walks, started doing like a movie night… Like rent in some cartoon and watch it together. We would play board games like snakes and ladders, dominos, hopping baskets.

Open plan living spaces supported together-space because they allowed a variety of parallel and shared activities to take place:

A41F: […] You know, one side was for cooking and preparation and the other side we used for other… at the dining table or just family time together whether that was watching TV together or playing games.

Often, creating together-space involved moving furniture around to make more room:

A41F: No, no permanent changes. Actually, we would move things to the side so we could have more room for exercise in that room, which is not something we would have ever done before.

Consequently, a key factor in supporting together-space was furniture. In particular, the dining table continued to support family meals together—as a "persistent cultural idea" of modern home and family (Madigan and Munro 1999; Murcott 2012; James 2013)—but it was also called to accommodate home-working and home-schooling activities. Whilst a spacious dining table allowed activities to take place in parallel, reducing the need to "pack away" at the end of the day, some families described the need to "pack away" for eating, whilst others prioritized adult work over family meals, pushing eating to the sofa. The instrumental role of the dining table in facilitating together-space persisted after the lockdown concluded, evoking a "sticky association" (Ahmed 2004: 45) between the dining table and being together as a family:

A41F: The dining room table became where we spent the majority of our days. And at some point, […] I was thinking about […] how this part of the house became very sticky. You know, we weren't able to move away from it, […] But it's like now the table has become this kind of pivoting point. So, I have ambiguous feelings about this room, […] It very much is locked in my head as a space of lockdown… […] but at the same time it was also a place that the kids and I were around.

Participants often described ambiguous feelings about together-space, being the hub of family togetherness which turned into the space of throwntogetherness:

A43F: And where we would sit and watch a movie together and eat together and do a lot of things together, it became a space nobody wanted to be in because it was like the bit where everyone was always frustrated with.

Companionship vs. privacy

Together-space also allowed family members to be "alone together" and take advantage of their proximity while focusing on parallel activities. Carved out spaces within a room were often used for time alone by both children and adults:

A42M: That's the den we built behind the sofa. […] even though you were in the same room you could hear everyone. It felt like a bit of a privacy. […]

R: Is it mainly for C7F?

A42M: All of us really. I was in there at some point just reading a book. I had my headphones on just so I didn't have to see anybody even though they were literally sitting on the sofa that was behind the sofa and it was just… It's like nice extra space.

Lockdown, therefore, transformed the harmony-based idea of "togetherness" into a state of adult and child give-and-take or "throwntogetherness."

CONCLUSION

Lockdown's domesticity disrupted family roles (Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir 2021), reconfiguring familial togetherness and adult-child dynamics. Massey's (2005) concept of "throwntogetherness" allows us to conceptualize the family home as a socio-spatial system where people, objects, and values are constantly negotiated in space. The discussion evidences the enactment of adult-child togetherness through spatial negotiations of individual (conflicting) values. The article, therefore, takes the concept of "Throwntogetherness" in a new direction through its original focus on space and becomes instrumental to understanding how prior allocations of space change as familial practices of togetherness expand beyond "cooking, eating, playing, and socializing" (RIBA 2011: 15).

During the lockdown, throwntogetherness was mediated through four types of spatial strategy: Connectedness, Compartmentalization, Containment, and Together-space. *Connectedness* and *Containment* both related to the need to supervise and keep children safe. Spatial Connectedness allowed adult-child interactions while safeguarding privacy and quiet, thus supporting both adults' and children's work and time alone needs, seen to minimize conflict and thereby often also addressing mental well-being. Families used spatial *Compartmentalization* to designate distinct areas and minimize interruptions. Finally, *Together-space* nurtured child-adult shared and parallel interactions with easier management of activities in space.

However, these spatial strategies speak of a family home in constant flux, often demanding flexible spaces, easily adaptable to changing needs. Changing the function of rooms or areas for a specific time, or for the duration of the lockdown, was the most common adaptation employed by families (Parnell et al. 2022). Moving furniture, "packing away" working stations, adequate storage, and adaptable flooring supported new activity-spaces, making more room when required, and creating the much needed work-life distinction. At the same time, adaptability emerged not only as *flexibility* of space but also as having

spatial *choices* to accommodate activities, as conditions were changed through the course of a day or week.

Whilst the findings presented here resonate with Marco *et al*.'s (2022) discussion of Communality (togetherness), Individuality (privacy), and Adaptability shaping the lockdown home more broadly, this study has focused on the complex needs and spatial negotiations of families with children. By exploring such complexity, this article reveals the spatial strategies and adaptations that mediated adult-child throwntogetherness during the lockdown. The findings caution against simplistic understandings of *Together-space* and *Connectedness* and suggest that prioritization of these spatial strategies should not be at the expense of retaining the opportunity for spatial *Compartmentalization* and *Containment.* By drawing on the study of intensified adult-child dynamics in domestic space catalyzed by lockdown, this study, therefore, makes an important contribution to the understanding of togetherness in the family home. By revealing a more nuanced spatial understanding of adult-child interactions in the contemporary home, this article expands understandings of family togetherness beyond ideals of domestic harmony grounded in (shared) activities, time, and values. A new understanding of the spatial strategies through which togetherness is enacted in the home has implications for housing design (Kanon et al. 2022). An essential implication involves considering open plan design alongside a sufficient provision of compartmentalized spaces, to accommodate the complex realities of conflicting individual needs as exacerbated by new domestic activities (such as working and schooling from home). Ultimately, a nuanced spatial understanding of adult-child togetherness in the home will inform the debate surrounding the appropriate design of family housing and the pre-pandemic aspiration for "multifunctional living space" (RIBA 2015), providing potential approaches to mediating value discrepancies, conflicts, and resulting tension among adults and children.

NOTES

1. Marco *et al*. (2022) similarly describe the lockdown home in terms of Massey's concept of "Throwntogetherness," but with a wider view of households beyond families with children.
2. The study followed both Newcastle University's and Dundee University's ethics guidelines and received ethical approval from Newcastle University's Ethics Panel [Ref: 9317/2020]. Information sheets and consent forms were provided via online communication. Participants 14+ years old were sent a digital information sheet and asked to complete a secure digital consent form. A tailored version of the information sheet was designed for children under 14 years old and adults were prompted to discuss its contents with their children before providing written consent for their child's participation. Children were then asked at the start and during the interviews for their verbal

consent to take part, following the principle of ongoing consent. The interviews began with a further explanation of the project and a reiteration that all participants could withdraw from the interview at any time.

3. March to July 2020, November–December 2020 and January–February 2021. The UK government instructed citizens to stay at home and work from home if possible. Schools were closed to most children, other than those of keyworkers, and teaching was delivered online.

4. Photos were intended as means to generate richer textual data, but were not an essential requirement. Since analysis is centred on verbal accounts and there is no separate visual analysis, photos are not included in this article.

5. These final two methods were intended to offer a space for expression beyond the family power dynamic. Given safeguarding requirements for an adult to remain in the space while children were interviewed, it is likely that some children's contributions remained limited by adult 'presence' and feelings of surveillance and control.

6. That is, under 18 years.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in data.ncl at 10.25405/data.ncl.20223534.

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