

CHILDREN'S PLAY AND ITS ROLE IN EVERYDAY LIFE IN KINDERGARTEN

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Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do.

Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.

- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain*

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Abstract

In the present master thesis play of young children and its role in their everyday life in the setup of state kindergartens in Russia were explored. The reason why I have addressed to this topic is the lack of free time for play in kindergartens of Moscow due to a very busy time scheduler in kindergartens, filled with different activities organized and controlled by adults. The fieldwork that this research is based on was conducted in one of state kindergartens of Moscow in Autumn 2011. I used method of participant observation as the main research method in this study. My main informants were 25 young children between 5 and 6 years attending the kindergarten.

A theoretical framework of this study was provided by Social studies of children and childhood. Play is seen in frames of cultural analytical perspective as a part of children's culture, where children are appearing to be active agents. Children's play culture is not homogenous so different cultural changes impact children's play culture. Also in this thesis play I am seeing as part of children's everyday life.

In this study I have elaborated only on some aspects of children's play and its role in their everyday life in kindergarten: time and place for play in children's everyday life; diversity of play in kindergarten's setup; participation in play and role of adult's in play as a part of children's everyday life. Importance of children's agency in their everyday life was specially emphasized.

Study findings confirm that everyday life of children in the studied state kindergarten is very busy and filled with different activities, most of which are organized and controlled by adults. Children use any opportunity to play. Activities, organized and controlled by teachers are seen by children as a part of their everyday life, but at the same time as their duty. They not always like this activities and rather often getting tired from them. Adults (teachers) can be allowed by children to participate in children's play but children do not let them to have main initiative and control in their play. The level of adult's control can be seen as a criteria for children's choices of place to play: children prefer places where adults have less control. In play children are active agents and meaning makers so play can be seen as one of activities in which children have the opportunity to resist adult's control in kindergarten.

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List of Abbreviations

MDE – Moscow Department of education

FN – field notes

II – individual interview

Chapter 1: Introduction

In my master thesis I am aiming at studying play of preschool children in the setup of state kindergartens in Russia. E. Trifonova (2011) states that nowadays it is possible to claim that in Russian social sciences school there is lack of complete practical studies of children's play. At the same time, play, according to studies of W.C. Corsaro (2005, 2009) by itself is a part of children's everyday life. Therefore below I would like to explain the two main reasons why I have chosen to focus on children's play in the given thesis.

1.1 The relevance of the study

The first reason I have chosen play as the topic of my thesis is the lack of studies of children's play within the frames of New Sociology of childhood in Russian psychological and pedagogical school according to N. Mikhailenko and N. Korotkova (2000). This approach is rather new for Russian science. I see my research as a small contribution to the new field of studies of play within the frames of New Social studies of children and childhood in Russian context.

In Russian scientific school there are numerous social sciences studies of play, where mostly adult-centric view is the dominating one (Mikhailenko&Korotkova, 2000). I found a very small number of studies where play is seen as a part of everyday life of children and where children's own view on play is taken into consideration. As a result, I have decided to adhere to ethnographical approach. As the main theoretical basis I have chosen the approach of New Sociology of childhood (Prout &James, 1997; Qvortrup, 2002 and others). According to the given approach, childhood is understood as socially constructed, and children are seen as active participants in the construction of their own lives and in societies they live in. Therefore, in this research I follow the approach of F. Mouritsen (2002) and see play as a particular practice within children's culture, where children are active participants and main actors.

The second reason is the lack of time for play in Russian state kindergartens due to busy everyday schedule filled with different classes and organized activities. Due to my work, I have visited a number of state kindergartens in Moscow within the period of eight years. I have been observing that children's days in kindergarten are filled with more and more with classes, lessons, organized and controlled by adults activities, and as a result there is scarce time left for play.

Play disappearing from kindergartens is discussed in the works of such Russian scholars as N. Mikhailenko and N. Korotkova (2000), E. Trifonova (2011) and many others. They argue that rather often practitioners do not recognize the importance of children's play. Unfortunately it is possible to claim that children's play is under serious attack in Russian educational environment dominated by early learning standards and achievement outcomes (Trifonova, 2011; Mikhailenko & Korotkova, 2001). It is important to mention that problem of "busy" life of children in kindergartens is not really unique for Russia. It is also valid for different countries, for example for the USA (Miller&Almon, 2009).

Before starting with my master thesis (in 2009-2010) I had shortly interviewed several teachers in different state kindergartens of Moscow, which I had been visiting due to my main job. It is important to mention that my fieldwork was carried out in another kindergarten, which I had never visited before. The main question for teachers was: "What is children's play?" Most of them answered that they knew and understood very well what children's play was. They defined play as something children normally do every day. I asked them to describe what the kind of play they observed usually looks like. In some descriptions play was organized and controlled by adults activity (different folk games, "educational" games, lessons in play form, board games (Bingo and etc.)). Only few teachers described play as activity, where children were doing something themselves, and adults did not have any leading position. So my master thesis I am seeing as my small personal contribution to the field of practical studies of play in Russian social sciences, which clarifying such "slippy" term like play.

1.2 Research questions, objectives, methods, structure of the thesis

I have specified the main **research question** for my master thesis: *What is the role of play in everyday life of children in Russian state kindergarten's setup?* In order to answer this question I have to clarify the following aspects:

1. How is everyday life of children organized in Russian state kindergartens?
2. How do children play? When do children play? Who do children play with?
3. What is the role of adults in children's play in Russian state kindergartens?

In order to answer the above-mentioned questions I have done research in one of the state kindergartens in Moscow. I will focus on children's play as a part of their everyday life, role of children's play in their everyday life, diversity of children's play in kindergarten's setup. It seems important for me to look at the organization of children's everyday life in kindergarten, how much time for play they have in the setups of busy day scheduler of kindergarten.

I have chosen method of participant observation as my main research method to study children's play. The method of participant is a traditional ethnographical method. Participant observation appears to be a relevant method which can provide unique data about children's play in the typical daily life of children in the environment of a kindergarten. I conduct my research following the mosaic approach, elaborated by A. Clark (2004, 2005). Mosaic approach sees young children as competent, active, meaning makers and explorers of their environment.

In chapter 2 (background chapter) I will describe the system of day care centers in Russia, it's policies and structure and shortly introduce the reader to normal day scheduler of children (5-6 years old) in typical State kindergarten in Moscow. In the theory chapter I will describe the approach of New Sociology of childhood and the place of my research within its frames. I will present the approach to children's play as their culture (Mouritsen, 2002) and as the part of their everyday life (Corsaro, 2005, 2009) as the two leading approaches for the given thesis. Next chapter (chapter 4) is dedicated to methods. I will discuss the methodological and practical elements of my study, as well as challenges that appeared in the course of my research. In the analytical chapter (chapter 5) present and discuss the empirical data on the

children's play in kindergarten as a part of everyday life. In the discussion chapter I will relate my empirical findings to relevant theories and studies with focus on approach of New Sociology of childhood to children's play. In the concluding chapter I will summarise the findings in my thesis and present some concluding remarks.

Chapter 2: Background

2.1 Introduction

I have done my research with preschool children, attending one Moscow State kindergarten. Moscow is the largest city in Russian Federation and one of the largest in Europe. According to the Russian Census 2010 the population of Moscow is about 11,5 millions people. Moscow is a multicultural city, where people of different nationalities and religions are living together. All State kindergartens of Moscow are controlled by Department of education of Moscow city. The Department develops projects of laws and other standard legal acts of the City of Moscow, regulating relations in the sphere of education, introduces the specified projects.

In this chapter will present the system of day care centers in Russia, it's policies and structure. I will shortly introduce the reader to normal day scheduler of children (5-6 years old) in typical State kindergarten in Moscow.

2.2 Moscow city as a place to grow up

Before going to discussions of Russian educations system it is important to provide a brief information about Moscow city as environment for growing up.

Moscow city is one of ten the most populated cities in the world. According to Forbes (2011) (<http://www.forbes.ru/>) Moscow is on the first place by the number of dollar billionaires in the World. Moscow is an important traffic center: it has 5 airports, 9 railway stations and 2 ports, which are connecting Moscow to different districts of Russia and the World.

According to Russian Census 2010 around 91 % of Moscow population are Russians, 1,42 % Ukrainians, 1,38 Tatars. This is official statistic, basing on the principle of registration according to the place of living. Today it is a lot of people living in Moscow without official permanent registration so they are not included in any official information. This is becoming a problem for Moscow State authorities. So on 15 of February it was accepted the law by Parliament (Duma), which is increasing punishment for missing and breaking the registration rules.

Most of people living in Moscow without official registration belong to different nationalities then Russian. So it is possible to claim that Moscow is a multicultural multinational city.

Moscow attracts people from all the territory of post-soviet republics. In Russian Federation the income level big cities is generally higher then in smaller cities usually. At the same time as any big megapolis Moscow is a city of contrasts, where poverty is next to richness. “District” rule for admittance of children to kindergarten is working. That means that sometimes in one group of kindergarten can gather children from different “income class” families.

So growing up in Moscow means to grow up in the environment of social proximity and cultural richness. Children have possibility to meet people of different races, cultures and backgrounds. Moscow attracts families from different countries. Most of them – former members of USSR. Though there are many people from USA, Europe, South America and Asia as well. Work and business possibilities are attracting them. From such post-soviet countries as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Belarus it is a big number of unskilled labour migrants. Usually they are living on pretty low salaries and in bad living conditions. Gdaniec (2010) points that there is existing new nationality in big Russian cities – “gastarbaiters”. By gastarbaiters he means unskilled labour migrants from post-Soviet countries. Compare to them families of businessman’s and skilled workers are living in much better conditions.

In my study I have tried to take into account such a background of my participants. Especially it was important for analyze and discussions of results I have received during doing my research with children.

Successful life in a big city demands from adults being active and work hard in order to get better work, pay for expensive flat, pay for children’s education, go for vacations abroad, buy new car and so on. Moscow parents also expect a lot from their children. Good education, knowledge of different languages, extensive knowledge in different areas. Each parent wants best for his child and tries to provide all possibilities for that. So children are sent to different courses (dancing, learning foreign language, singing and etc.) after kindergarten (in the evening) and also on weekends. That means that the life of children is becoming very busy. Very often no spare time is left for “free” activity, which parents are very often seeing as useless.

2.3 *Russian educational system and kindergartens*

In this section I will provide a brief description of system of preschool education in Russian Federation. As it was mentioned already in the introduction chapter my field work took part in one of state kindergartens of Moscow. So in order to imagine the full picture of environment of such kindergarten and everyday life of children there it is necessary to have an understanding of the system of education in general.

Preschool education is not obligatory in Russia so many parents are choosing not to send their children to kindergartens. The key word to understand system of preschool education is words “education”. J. Bennet (cited in Dahlberg, 2009) is marking out two categories of pedagogical practices and traditions across Europe: the pre-primary tradition and the social pedagogic tradition. In Russian education system pre-primary tradition is prevailing today. In pre-primary approach the focus on cognitive goals and readiness for school is an important aim (Dahlberg, 2009).

Preschool education in Russia is understood as support of intellectual development, development of personality and physical development of children in the age from 2 months till 7 years (MDE, 2011). Such support ideally should mean a provision conditions for development of a child. I have worked for 9 years in the education system of Russia and to my experience preschool education in Russia is mostly about teaching and forming of children’s abilities and skills.

Moscow department of education is providing for kindergartens educations programs, which make children’s everyday life busy with different activities and classes. It is obligatory for kindergartens to follow demands of these education programs. Periodically every kindergarten has to provide written report about their work and send it to bureaucrats in Department of education. Writing such a report is taking a lot of time and requiring good skills in writing which some of practitioners do not have. Lack of time is also a great problems for teachers since they are not getting extra time for writing such reports.

Below presented typical day scheduler of children (5-6 years old) in State kindergartens of Moscow (Table 1). The original document is on Russian. I have taken day scheduler in Lomonosov kindergarten (http://www.lomongarten.ru/articles_5.html) as a typical example.

Table 1. Example of official day scheduler in State kindergartens of Moscow

08.00 – 08.30	intake of children and examination (for illnesses) of children, free time
08.30 – 09.00	preparation for breakfast (all children or some of them together with teachers set the tables)
09.00 – 09.50	preparation for classes (handing of books, pencils and so on), classes (spelling, mathematics, reading and etc.)
09.50 – 10.10	second breakfast or snack (usually juice and fruits)
10.10 – 10.50	developmental games (leaded by teacher), classes
10.50 – 12.00	preparation for outside walk (dressing up), outside walk (plays, observations)
12.00 – 12.20	returning from outside walk (dressing up), free time
12.20 – 13.00	preparation for dinner, dinner
13.00 – 14.50	preparation for sleeping (removing clothes, taking out beds), sleeping
14.50 – 15.00	waking up, air and water “procedures”

15.00 – 15.20	preparation for lunch (afternoon meal) and meal
15.20 – 17.00	classes, or developmental games (activities, usually organized by teachers), or spare time (for playing)
17.00 – 17.30	preparation for supper, supper
17.30 – 18.30	preparation for outside walk, outside walk
18.30 – 19.00	leaving

As it is possible to see from the table daily life of children in kindergarten is full of different events, organized and controlled by teachers. Their life is becoming very busy and no free time, during which they can choose what they want to do, is left. Important to notice that not only education programs are making children's everyday life busy. In the next section I will discuss that.

2.4 Preparations for school life

As it was said before there is a high request for providing good and different education already in kindergartens from parents. They want their children to get as much knowledge as possible in different areas. Due to my professional work in kindergartens I often heard from parents that they wish it will be more classes in kindergarten for their children. Several times I tried to argue that free time, when children can do what they want is also very important for their development. Some of parents were not agree with me totally and saw free time and time to lose time for their children.

The main reason why parents are seeing education and classes in kindergarten as such an important thing is a need for preparation for school. After kindergartens at the age of 7 children are going to school. Some schools differs in different specializations already from the first class (mathematics, literature, art. language and etc.). Even most of schools belong to

State they can still differ in quality of education. It depends on a headmaster and teachers. Good headmaster of school is trying to employ the best teachers and to keep them for a long time, without letting them leave. Sometimes to keep a good teacher working in school is becoming a hard task for administration. First of all because of low salaries in State schools, territorial position and so on. Often teachers are leaving for better salary (in private school, for example), better position (more closer to home). So the situation when school is missing teacher in this or that subject or have to employ just almost anyone is rather often.

Of course parents want their children to attend best schools. But usually such privileged schools have preliminary examinations. In order to pass it a child has to read, write, have some knowledge in mathematics, preferably in foreign language. If a child fails such test then parents have to send him to other school in the area they live, where education in some subjects can be worse or even miss (if teacher is missing, for example). So parents demanding from kindergartens to prepare their children for these school tests.

Chapter 3: Theoretical perspectives

3.1 Introduction

In my master thesis I am aiming at studying play as part of children's everyday life. In psychological and pedagogical studies traditional approach to children's play as individual phenomenon is prevailing. As an example in Russian psychological school I could mention studies of L. Vygotsky (1966, 2004), S. Novoselova (1989). Within the frames of this research I consider play primarily as a part of children culture.

Sociology of childhood, which my research is based on, sees play from the point of view of children's culture. Peter and Iona Opie (cited in Kehily & Barnes, 2003) were one of the first in the United Kingdom who brought up the idea that children's play culture exists and can be studied on its own. Today we can name several studies where children's play is seen as a part of children's culture and their everyday life: studies of F. Mouritsen (2002), M. Kallala (2006) and others.

New sociology of childhood sees an idea of childhood as a social construction. J. Qvortrup in his article (2002) states that Social studies of children and childhood maintain the following features: 1) a structural rather than an individual perspective; 2) importance of children's agency in society; 3) looking at children's general conditions.

I will first provide a brief introduction to the approach of Sociology of childhood and frame my research within it. I will specifically concentrate on the idea of children's play culture. In this study I consider play as part of children's peer culture, as a part of their everyday life within the peer group in kindergarten. I will then present a description of phenomenon of peer groups and peer culture, as presented in Social studies of children and childhood.

My participants spend time in the environment of kindergarten and families. Teachers and parents always present next to them in everyday life and play a particular role in their play culture. That is why, for my opinion, to understand and analyze the role of adults in children's play it is important to highlight concepts of childhood and adulthood in Social studies of

children and childhood.. Mass media also influence children's play culture, and in this chapter I will introduce a short description of the phenomenon of mass media.

It is important to note that play is a complex and contradictory concept in science about children and childhood (Novoselova, 1989). In this chapter of my thesis I will discuss challenges of understanding and studying children's play.

3.2 *Social studies of children and childhood*

As it was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I keep to the approach of Sociology of childhood. This approach was developed by such scholars as A. Prout and A. James (1997), J. Qvortrup (2002) and others. Over the past decade this approach has become a recognized area of researches and analysis of children and childhood. I will later provide a brief discussion of main ideas, stated by Social studies of children and childhood, which may be relevant to my study.

Childhood studies brought the idea to reconsider the status of children and childhood (Tisdall, 2012). Childhood is seen as socially constructed and as a social construct itself. It has been argued that before childhood had been wrongly seen as natural, universal construct (Goldson, 2004). Childhood had been defined as the absence of adulthood and, at the same time, social construction of childhood was dependent on the construction of adulthood. Sociology of childhood sees childhood as variable of social analysis (Prout & James, 1997). Ethnography is recognized as a particularly useful methodology for the research of childhood (Prout & James, 1997). A. James (2009) pointed out that childhood is fragmented by different social variables: such as class, gender, ethnicity and health status.

J. Qvortrup (2002) suggested a structural approach, where childhood is understood as a social phenomenon, as structure and as an integrated part of society. Talking about the new vision of childhood in modern society, he attached a great importance to the following features: 1) structural rather than individual perspective; 2) importance of children's agency in society; 3) importance to look for children's general conditions (Qvortrup, 2002; 45). J. Qvortrup (2009) also states that is not possible to understand childhood "periodically". So in structural terms childhood has no temporal beginning or end (Qvortrup, 2009). He offers to view it as a permanent form in society. It is important that these two notions of childhood (as a period and as a permanent form) coexist side by side (Qvortrup, 2009).

According to scholars of Sociology of childhood (James & Prout, 1997; Qvortrup, 2009 and others) children must be seen as active participants in the construction of their own lives and in societies, which they live in. Children are seen not only as passive subjects of social structures and different social processes, but they started to be recognized by Sociology of childhood as capable social actors and participants.

A. James and A.L. James (2004) argue that children are social agents. As social agents they shape their social roles (as individuals and as a collectivity). They point out that children themselves can create new social roles that alter the social space of childhood to be inherited by the next generation (James & James, 2004). So it is possible to claim that children are objects and subjects within childhood as social space. A. James and A.L. James (2004) note that children are structurally and culturally determined. Hence in any given society it is that unique combination of political, economic, social and cultural forces that constitute the cultural politics of childhood (James&James, 2004).

Structural perspective on childhood and children can lead to the main problem of social theory (Nilsen, 2010) which is how to understand the relationship between human beings and “society”? Social studies of children and childhood strive to solve this dichotomy by suggesting to concentrate on children’s social activities rather than on structure of childhood in general. In other words, to concentrate on what children actually do rather than on what they have to do (Speier, 1973).

J. Qvortrup (2002) maintains that children are real participants in society. Children are active partners in the society since they influence and are influenced by parents, teachers, and other adults they are in immediate contact with (Qvortrup, 2002: 58). Childhood, according to Qvortrup, structurally interacts with other sectors and segments of society.

Another scholar of New Sociology of childhood, C. Hardman (1973) states that children should be studied in their own right and should be treated as agentic social actors. Statement of the importance of children’s agency present in J. Qvortrup’s (2002) studies. As it was said in the introduction chapter, I aim at conducting research with children rather than about children. In my research I am focusing on the role of children’s play in their everyday life. So for the given research children are the best source of information about their everyday life. It seems very important for me to study on children’s agency and actor perspective in more detail within the frames of this research.

3.2.1 Importance of children's agency

As it was said, New Sociology of childhood recognizes the importance of children's agency in society. Childhood, as it was said above, is seen as socially constructed and children as active social agents. Children are seen rather as human beings in their own rights and not as "incomplete" adults. Social researches of childhood and children reconsidered this point of view. H. Hendrick (2000) in his analysis of the history of Western childhood research argues that the way researcher sees childhood dictates the ways he/she conducts research of childhood.

There had been a number of researches within approach of New Sociology of childhood where children are seen as active agents and "meaning-makers". Sociology of childhood criticizes the individualistic perspectives on children and the view of children as passive objects. As alternative to New sociology of childhood, an actor perspective in the research of children was suggested (Nilsen, 1990).

For a long period of time research of children has been conducted from an adult-centric point of view. It is possible to claim that today adult-centric view prevails in psychology and pedagogy. Children fairly often become passive objects of a research, and they are not given any say in a research. Any paper about children, done by an adult scientist, always analyzes the relationship between the two categories of adulthood and childhood. In order to do actor-oriented child research, New Sociology of children and childhood recommends to reject the adult-centric view on children (Speier, 1976).

It is possible to find interesting ideas about relationships between the categories of adulthood and childhood in J. Qvortrup's work. He argues that relationships between children and adults are regulated through power and interests, and not only philosophically (Qvortrup, 2002: 54). He states that the main reason why children can be treated in another way than adults is not that they are not active, but that they are not active in the same way adults are active (Qvortrup, 2002).

In her study R. Nilsen (1990) clarifies what is an actor perspective in the research of children. According to her, that means to regard children as "whole" and "complete" human beings. That means that researcher must listen to children's voices and recognize children's perspectives as valuable and important, same as his own. In actor-oriented child research

children usually participate in the process of research at each stage: defining research questions, planning research, carrying out fieldwork, interpreting and so on (West, 1995; Kellet et al., 2004, cited in M. Woodhead, 2009).

Sociology of childhood recommends research methods for doing research with children: participant observation and ethnography. These methods promote children's voices in research and make it possible to avoid adult-centric position of a researcher.

As an example of research with children, where ethnography was used as the main method, I could mention a research done at Norwegian day-care centers by R.D. Nilsen (2005). Another example is the work of W. Corsaro (2005), which I would like to discuss briefly in this section. He has conducted research of preschool children (of 3-6 years) in the US and Italy. As main research method he used the method of ethnographic observation of children at play. Using ethnography as the main method made possible for him to provide a detailed analysis of children as active meaning makers. W. Corsaro (2005) states that children participate in different playing games, like peekaboo, together with their parents from the early age and that makes them social actors from the very beginning (Corsaro, 2005). Children's perspectives were taken into account, and children became main informants and participants in the research.

Study of children's play as a part of everyday life in my research also requires getting their own perspectives. In my opinion, listening to children's own ideas about their playing can help to understand how meaningful and important can play experience be for children. With the help of the chosen research methods, I intend to hear "children's voices" in my research. There will be a detailed discussion of this matter in the methodological chapter of the given thesis.

3.2.2 Expecting theoretical contribution of the study

To conclude this section (in which I tried to briefly describe the place of the chosen research approach within Social studies of children and childhood) it is important to dwell on the possible theoretical value in the research of children in Russia.

Sociology of childhood has not become widely known in Russian scientific studies of children and childhood as in European countries. Most of the existing research of children and childhood in Russian science is done within the frames of classical psychological approach to

play. Play is understood as individual activity, in which child develops and socializes. Among such studies we can mention studies of S. Novoselova (1989), N. Mikhailenko and N. Korotkova (1990) and some others. Therefore, my master thesis I see as a small contribution to the new field of studies of play within the frames of New Social studies of children and childhood in the Russian context.

I will now proceed to the description of the phenomenon of play, child cultures and children's play culture.

3.3 *Child culture*

By child culture, following F. Mouritsen (2002), I will understand the culture produced by, and/or about children. The concept of child culture is connected with the concepts of childhood and children of New Sociology of childhood, which were discussed in the previous section (3.2). F. Mouritsen (2002) states that child culture is as old as childhood. He maintains that child culture is a concept with more than one meaning.

To understand better the meaning of the child culture concept it is important, in my opinion, to elaborate briefly on the concept of culture in general. The concept of culture has many meanings and understandings, depending on the theoretical approach of the scientist. The concept of culture is one of the most widely used notions in sociology (Giddens, 1997). A. Giddens (1997) proposed one of the possible definitions of culture. According to Giddens, culture consists of the values the members of particular group hold, the norms they follow, and the material goods they create (Giddens, 1997: 31).

Understanding of culture has been changed in the course of the evolution of philosophy. C. Jenks (1993: 11) in his work summarizes the accounts of the genesis of the concept of culture:

1. Culture as cerebral or cognitive category: culture becomes intelligible as a general state of mind.
2. Culture as a more embodied and collective category: culture invokes a state of intellectual and/or moral development in society.

3. Culture as a descriptive and concrete category; culture viewed as the collective body of arts and intellectual work within any one society; this is an everyday language usage of the term “culture”.
4. Culture as a social category; culture regarded as the whole way of life of a people: this is the pluralist and potentially democratic sense of the concept that has come to be the zone of concern within sociology and anthropology and latterly, within a more localized sense, cultural studies.

Interpretation of culture as a social category appears as the most relevant for for the given research. Therefore I intend to adhere to this understanding of culture, when talking about child culture in this section of the given work.

The view of children and childhood and the ways in which they are understood and organized are the basic factors in a society (Mouritsen, 2002). And the same is true when it comes to child culture and the cultural expressions of children. Children’s lives as such, and the life of children with adults, their activities and networks, are all child culture in the sense of the broad concept of culture, and anything can be regarded, described and interpreted as cultural expression (Mouritsen, 2002).

Hence a logical question: do school or preschool educations belong to child culture as well? The answer to this question it is possible to find in the work of F. Mouritsen (2002). He argues that child culture was engineered, produced and developed as a parallel to school education and in a kind of division of labor with it. Child culture is in turn the crucial conditions for children’s reformulation of the cultural products (Mouritsen, 2002). The informal forms of play culture (and everyday life) are the basis for what children acquire in the educational system, including school.

There is another question that arises in connection with this discussion: who can be members of particular child culture? Do children of the same age belong to the same child culture? In her work R.D. Nilsen states that age itself cannot be a definition for membership in child culture (Nilsen, 1990b). So child culture can be understood according to shared form with shared knowledge and attitudes (Nilsen, 1990b).

As it was stated above, by child culture I understand culture produced by, and/or about children. So are there different types of child cultures? F. Mouritsen (2002: 16) distinguishes the three main types of child culture:

1. culture produced for children by adults (literature, media, movies, toys and etc.);
2. culture with children, where adults and children together make use of various cultural technics and media (leisure activities, informal projects);
3. children's culture – culture that children produce in their own networks.

To begin with, I will briefly discuss culture produced for children by adults since it influences a lot the third type of child culture, which this research is focused on. The second type of child culture (culture with children) is not in the focus of my interests in this study, so I will not elaborate on it in. The third type – children's culture – is referred by F. Mouritsen (2002) as play culture. I will devote more attention to the play culture in order to answer the main question of this research: What is the role of play in everyday life of children in Russian State kindergarten's setup?

3.3.1 Culture produced for children by adults

It is possible to claim that today children and childhood is in the main focus of different cultural industries (mass media, commercial toymakers and producers of child clothes, accessories and so on). In my opinion, one of the main reasons for that is the possibility of good finance income. Any parent knows the situation when child demands to buy a new toy in a shop. Producers create colorful well-advertised toys, which attract attention of a child very easily. TV programs for children there are filled with various commercials of different products for children.

There is an opinion that entertainment, provided by mass media for children today, replace active involvement and self-expression in children's play (Mouritsen, 2002). At the same time, mass media are present in children's play and their everyday life all the time. F. Mouritsen (2002) states that the media are today a necessary basis for the children's play culture.

Today television plays a great role in constructing children's culture. However, it is possible to say that television plays dual role in children's lives. S. Kline (2002) claims that television both stimulated and competed with play. On the one hand, children get new information and

foundation for play. On the other hand, television inevitably draws children away from other leisure activities. S. Kline (2002) points out that children like television because it makes it possible for them to evoke a great emotional involvement with characters, strong identification with the heroes and direct connection with their own play worlds. Children use this television experience in their games.

Children's toy is one of the classic child culture media and it can be a great representation of child culture by itself. Before market-oriented production, F. Mouritsen (2002) points out, toys existed not only for children's joy and for stimulation of their play. They had a great function in disciplining and controlling. This harmony broke when commercial mass production started to develop and grow. New toys, F. Mouritsen (2002) states, became more experience and entertaining oriented.

G. Cross (2002: 124) notes that industry of commercial toymakers increasingly specialized in producing an ever-changing flow of play figures and games linked to fictional narrative disseminated through children's media. Today in toy shops in Russia or Norway, for example, it is possible to find many toys, created by inspiration of different children's TV programs, cartoons, movies, books.

On the one hand, produced toys may offer fantasies that express children's needs and wants rather than impose adults nostalgia, values, and expectations from the young (Cross, 2002). On the other hand, G. Cross (2002) mentions, "ready-made" toys reduce children's quest for autonomy and self-expression to playing out the constantly changing scripts that commercial interests incorporate in toys. "Ready-made" toys do not include any new potential so children usually lose interest to it very fast and demand more new toys.

3.3.2 Children's play culture

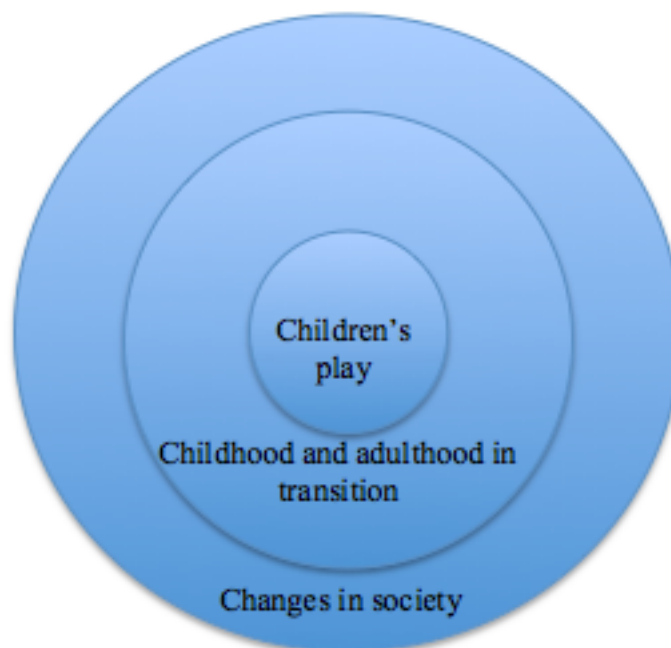
In this section I will provide a brief description of a cultural analytical perspective on children's play culture. F. Mouritsen (2002) understands children's culture as aesthetic symbolic forms of expression in child culture – the expressions of culture that children produce in their own networks. Children's culture belongs only to children, and adults does not play active role in it.

According to F. Mouritsen (2002), play culture develops through informal social networks, through traditional transmission from child to child (and in some cases from adult to child). It

is fundamentally dependent on the children's participation and activity and is predicated on their acquisition of skills. This culture, F. Mouritsen (2002) states, does not exist in a fixed form, but comes into existence through the children's production in situations, through their everyday life. That is why play can be understood as an expression of the life that the children live (Mouritsen, 2002).

It is possible to find a similar idea in the work of G. Brougere (1987), who states that children's play culture is not hermetic, but it is open to all the external elements which contribute to play, such as aptitudes and capabilities, culture and social background. To illustrate this idea below I will introduce scheme Figure 1, created and developed by M. Kalia (2006).

Figure 1 Cultural impact on children's play culture



The diagram above illustrates how different cultural changes impact children's play culture. It is important that children's culture is not homogenous. F. Mouritsen (2002) points out such differences of play culture as age, gender, social and geographical backgrounds, historical framework.

Society (changes in it, its structure, relationships within it) impact children's play culture. For example, adult's culture can have big influence on children's play culture. During my

professional work (for several years) in one of Moscow kindergartens I observed many games among children, which represented adults' relationships in family, at work, in public transport. They were usually some small "scenes" from adult life, including dialogues and small actions. Very often it was possible to observe how political events in adult society (represented in news on TV) become the topic of the new games for children.

W. Corsaro (2009) states that participation in the game is a central part of childhood and children's meaning making, emotional sharing, language use and creativity in children's everyday life. Adults, living next to children (such as teachers, parents, grandparents and etc.) can influence children's play culture and their everyday life. Such influence can be positive or negative. For example, in some cases, described in the work of Russian authors N. Mikhailenko and N. Korotkova (2000), adults can interrupt or even prevent children from playing by suggesting (straightly or not) other different activities. Such activities are usually organized and controlled by adults themselves. Especially when adults try to teach children how to play (usually teachers in kindergarten). That can lead to the situations when children stop playing by themselves (Mikhailenko, Korotkova, 2000).

In my field work, which I will elaborate later on, I received several examples when adults also interrupted children's play. At the same time, I observed situations when adult plays a positive role in children's play by being good play partners for them. One of my research questions in this master thesis is about the role of adults in children's play in State kindergartens of Moscow as social arena. That is why, before proceeding to the discussion of the phenomenon of children's play, I will describe how relationships between children and adults are viewed among modern researchers of children and childhood.

3.3.3 Adults and children: interrelations

For a long time researchers did not distinguish between the concept of childhood and the concept of adulthood. Childhood has been seen as absence of adulthood (Goldson, 2004). Children were seen as small incomplete adults. P. Aries (1973) argued that childhood as a particular stage of development process did not exist in medieval times for example.

Today concepts of childhood and adulthood have been changed. Now adulthood and childhood are understood and exist separately from each other. So it is possible to say that childhood and adulthood today are viewed on their own rights. New Sociology of childhood,

as it was said before, considers childhood as socially constructed. The same can be said about adulthood.

At the same time adult culture still has great influence on children's everyday life. A. James and A.L. James (2004) elaborate in their study how children's behavior and their childhood social experiences are shaped and controlled by adults across the four key social arenas of their everyday lives: at schools, in families, in relation to their health and in respect of the criminal justice system in contemporary British society. They found out that adults always try to control children because of different reasons: safety, discipline, education and etc. It is maintained that in their dealings with children, adults rather often take refuge in such models of the "child" and "childhood" which are negating children's agency (James&James, 2004). Modern scholars of New Sociology of Childhood (for example, in United Kingdom) view children as active agents in society, which requires different forms of ideological control and social interventions (James&James, 2004).

Unfortunately, the situation in the Russian Federation today is different. It is possible to claim that nowadays in most of the works in Russian psychological, sociological and pedagogical schools children are more often seen as objects of education, development and its amplification and so on. Adults are recognized as helpers, controllers of this development. More detailed approach to children's play in Russian psychological school will be discussed below (section 3.4).

At the same time, as A. James and A.L. James (2004) state, children will often seek the possibility to do what they really want and the way they want. Even when it is goes against what they have been told to or taught. As P. Else (2009) points out, children's relationship with adults provides both opportunities and limitations for children's agency. Adults provide new information and practical opportunities (as toys, products of mass media and etc.) for children. Adults try to control children because of safety or for others reasons. This issue has been discussed earlier, in section 3.3.2.

Parenthood becomes a project for adults (Mouritsen, 2002). M. Kalliala claims that parents today are less certain than in the past and more permissive (2006). Parents today emphasize social skills and individual competencies and, at the same time, they tend to move the responsibility for child away from the family (increasing the role of professional and specialists). In general, M. Kalliala (2006) says, adults today want to give more freedom to

the children than they used to, but, a society burdened with environmental threats and other dangers sets new boundaries for children.

During my work as psychologist in one of Moscow kindergartens I talked with many parents. Some of them asked me what they had to do together with children at home. Do they need to read or learn numbers with them? Or do they need to play? If they need to play then how should they do it?

S. Kline (2002) claims, that board games are the only toys that can be played with parents. While fantasy games and pretending are mostly plays alone or with same sex peers. From my point of view, this can be disputed. I can refer to my own experience of playing with my grandfather. We played with him, creating different fantasy stories without using particular toys. Chairs could be mountains, area under table cave and etc.

In this connection I would like to address my analytic data, which will be presented later in this thesis. I would like to mention the answer to the question “What children were doing after dinner today?” which I received from one of teachers. The answer was: “They’ve done nothing. They were just playing”. So any activity of children, which is not organized and controlled by adults (teachers) can be seen by them as something not important and useless. As a result, adults very can often think, that children and young people’s play are not important because it looks frivolous and irrational, “just playing” (P. Else, 2009).

P. Else (2009) states that children don’t need adult permission to play –they just do it. A child or a young person needs to engage at some level with the playing activity or it is not play (Else, 2009). However the choices that adults make do have very significant impacts on children’s opportunities to play. Adults main role to help children play should be in the creation of spaces and opportunities so children can engage with the world as free a way as possible, is argued by P. Else (2009).

In my research I have done participant observations of children’s play in kindergarten. In my opinion, play is one of the most discrepant terms in the research of childhood and children. How to be sure if observed activity is play? What can be the criteria of what is play and what is not a play? In order to discuss these questions below I will provide the analysis of challenges which I faced when conducting researching to understand children’s play.

3.4 *Challenges of studying and understanding play*

Play and children's play culture is the main focus of this research. In my opinion, it is important to elaborate on concept of children's play and challenges of its research.

Play is one of the most diverse terms in the works on children and childhood. Nowadays we can claim that there is no general theory or way of understanding play among scholars (Trifonova, 2011). At the same time, play is a very popular topic for researchers. For example, in Russia every year (for the last several years) a number of books, studies and articles about play has appeared.

The understanding of the same game may turn out very differently depending on the angle (Mouritsen, 2002). Below I will provide a brief introduction to different ways of understanding and interpreting play among scholars and discuss existing challenges of studying children's play.

A-C. Evaldsson (2009) states that studies of play were traditionally focused on the role children's play activities have in the development of their cognitive, language and social skills. In general, researches of play developed from the focus what children play is to how players actively contribute to the organization of play (Evaldsson, 2009). In this case we should mention studies of L. Vygotsky (1966, 2004) and J. Piaget (1999). Another group of scholars consider play not only an activity where child develops their different skills (cognitive, social), but also an activity where child explores the world around them, experimenting with it, experiences different emotions in the process of action and thus emotionally develops. This approach can be found in the works of S. Novoselova (1989), D. Elkonin (1999), N. Mikhailenko & N. Korotkova (2000).

Scholars working within the frames of the above mentioned approaches to play understand and interpret play of children (of different age groups) differently. In my opinion, the possible reason for that is that in these approaches to play adult centric view is dominating and children's own perspectives are not taken into account. The approach of Social studies of children and childhood to children's play, that I have chosen for the given research, differs from the described above "adult centric" approaches. First of all, scholars of New Sociology of childhood recommend avoiding adult centric view when studying childhood and children. I

will later provide several examples of studies of children's play culture made within the frames of Social Studies of children and childhood.

We should begin with the works of W.A. Corsaro. He sees children as experts of their own play culture (Corsaro, 1985). That is why to study and understand play means to take into account children's own views of their play. We find same idea in the works of F. Mouritsen. He states that play is something in its own right with the consequences this has for understanding (Mouritsen, 2002). It is something different from "the useful" that is oriented towards reality. It is something different from a tool of education, or a vehicle of development. That it then has many useful side-effects, for example in the form of competencies, is another matter (Mouritsen, 2002).

Therefore play is an activity, where children are experts and this activity differs from different "useful" activities. Play is also something that children want to do. They play when they want to play and stop when they want to stop, depending on their own mood. P. Else (2009) sees children's desire and needs as crucial to what they do and how they play. She also mentions that children are influenced by friends and family, by legislation in the wider community and through the media by celebrities. Play helps children and young people to "learnlearn" through experience, not by being told by someone else (Else, 2009).

As I have mentioned before, in this work I view play as children's culture rather than an individual form of children's activity. The concept of children's play culture is connected with the concept of peer cultures and peer groups, proposed and developed by W.A. Corsaro (2005). In section 3.5 I will shortly describe the two concepts which, in my opinion, are important for this research: peer culture and peer group.

3.5 *Peer groups and peer culture*

First of all, I would like to specify the definitions of the terms peer group and peer culture within the context of this work. Play and peers are a fundamental mechanism of learning and development in human evolution (Frønes, 2009). I use the term peers following W.C. Corsaro (2005) – referring to that group of kids who spend time together on an everyday basis. Peer group is a group of equals, defined in terms of either social status or age (James&James, 2008). By peer culture W.C. Corsaro and D. Eder (1990) understand a stable set of activities

or routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers.

A-C. Evaldsson (2009) argues that play can be seen as particular social process within which children actively reorganize their present peer and peer-sibling culture and future lives. Children collectively appropriate features of adult world to create innovative play routines in their peer cultures.

W.C. Corsaro (2005, 2009) conducted a detailed ethnographic research with preschool children, where he studied peer groups and peer culture. He used term “process of interpretive reproduction” to study children’s everyday life and their participation in society (Corsaro, 2005).

W.C. Corsaro (2009) points out that children can be members of several peer groups. For example, one child can be a member of peer group in kindergarten and peer group in yard of the house she/he lives and where he/she spends a lot of time playing with other children. Children collectively produce their peer cultures. At the same time, children produce a series of local peer cultures that become a part of, and contribute to, the wider cultures of other kids and adults within which they are embedded (Corsaro, 2005). In order to do that, they creatively appropriate information from adult culture. Thus we can suppose that, at the same time, children always participate in and are a part of two cultures – children’s and adults’. W. Corsaro (2009) allocates two central themes of children’s peer cultures: gaining control of their lives and sharing that control with each other.

Studies of W.C. Corsaro were one of the first qualitative ethnographical studies of play in its own rights, where children were seen as experts in their own play culture. Traditionally researchers considered play as the imitation of adults models (Corsaro, 2005). W.C. Corsaro (2005) argued that children do not simply imitate adult models in their play. Rather they continually elaborate and embellish adult models to address their own concerns. He states that in their play, in peer cultures children develop a sense of collective community and a desire to share and participate in different activities of everyday life with a potential for exceeding and transgressing the limits of knowledge transmitted to them by adults (Corsaro, 2005).

Thus we can conclude by saying that children participate through play in peer culture and peer groups in the process of everyday life. Play by itself is a part of children’s everyday life,

like it was shown in the studies of W.C. Corsaro (2005, 2009). That is why the given research of children's play and its role in everyday life of children should take into account the concepts of peer culture and peer groups.

3.6 *Conclusions*

In this chapter (chapter 3) I briefly elaborated on the approach of New Sociology of childhood as the main approach of this research. I paid particular attention to the concept of children's agency, stated in Social Studies and children and childhood, since it is very relevant for my study, and especially to its methodological approach.

Since children's play is the focus of my study it was important to discuss the concept of child culture and children's play culture as a part of it, basing on studies of F. Mouritsen (2002), M. Kalilala (2006) and others. Two types of child culture – culture produced for children by adults and children's play culture, were discussed. Adults and their culture have a big influence on children and their everyday life. It is also applicable to children's play culture. Thereupon concepts of adulthood and childhood were discussed in section 3.3.3.

Play is one of the most interesting and, at the same time, difficult for understanding concepts in the studies of children and childhood. I discussed in section 3.4 different possible challenges of studying and understanding play.

In the last section (3.5) I have elaborated on the concepts of peer culture and peer groups, based on studies W.C. Corsaro. Children's play is a part of everyday life, through which children can participate in peer culture and different peer groups.

In the given work I recognize children's play as their culture and part of their everyday life. I follow the approach of New Sociology of childhood and see children as active meaning makers and main agents in their own culture.

Chapter 4: Methods

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the methodological and practical elements of my study, as well as challenges that appeared in the course of my research. Requirements of new Russian society, latest reforms in the social sphere (education, medicine and etc.), fast development of juvenile justice (the new sphere for Russia) are making children's perspectives very important. There is a need for child-friendly research methods and techniques, which can help adults to hear "voices of children".

The aim of my research is to study children's play as part of their everyday life. That means to see and analyze play from children's perspectives. In my research I applied qualitative field study methods, these being participant observation and interview. I also took into account participatory methods, proposed by Mosaic Approach such as drawings and guided tours (Clark, 2005).

I see the given research as a contribution to invention and development of child-friendly research methods in Russia. Therefore, this chapter is important not only for this research itself and it also has its own value as my contribution to the field of researches children and childhood in Russia in general. In the given chapter I will provide a short description of some challenges, which I had to face when conducting the research with children in Russia.

I will later provide detailed discussion of relevance of using the chosen methods in connection with the chosen object and research question of the given study, the process of gaining access to participants, my role as researcher, research ethics and other aspects regarding methodology.

4.2 Access to the field and ethical issues

In my research I am following main principles and requirements of ethic in research, listed below. It is based on the principle of ethnographic research proposed by M. Hammersley and

P. Atkinson (2007), S. Fraser, V. Lewis and others (2004), O. Paul (2010). I would name the following principles as most important in our case:

1. principle of voluntary participation;
2. the requirement of informed consent;
3. requirement that researchers do not put participants in a situation where they might be at risk of harm as a result of their participation (principle of participant safety);
4. principle of confidentiality, principle of anonymity.

My participants were young children between 5 and 6 years who attend a state kindergarten in Moscow. In total there were 25 participants: 10 girls and 15 boys. See [appendices](#) for the full list of children's names along with their nicknames. Very young age of participants required from me as researcher proper and delicate approach in order to provide research ethic observance. Important ethical issues and gaining access to the field will be discussed later in the paper. However, I believe it might be necessary to begin by giving the description of the facility (in our case, a kindergarten) where the research took place.

4.2.1 The kindergarten conditions

The kindergarten where my research took part is located in the Central district of Moscow city. As it was said earlier (chapter 2) the kindergarten belongs to the State (or to Moscow department of education). Places in State kindergartens in Moscow are distributed according to the district. The Central district of Moscow is considered to be one of the most prestigious and expensive districts of Moscow. Prices for flats in this area are really high so only people with great income can afford to live and to own flat in this area. So mostly people moving in and buying (or renting) flats in this area are fairly rich. At the same time there are quite many people living in this area, who inherited flats from their relatives and their income can be lower. But lately more and more people have to move away to cheaper districts because they cannot afford to pay taxes for such flats. That is why it is possible to assume that children, attending kindergartens in the Central district and their families differ in the income level from the families of children attending kindergartens in less expensive districts of Moscow.

Parents of my participants usually were rather busy at work people. Many of them hire nurses for their children. I didn't see some of the parents coming to the kindergarten at all. Nurse would bring a child in the morning and pick them up in the evening. Parents also provided

great financial support to kindergarten by buying expensive toys, helping arranging parties (hiring professional actors, buying gifts for children and so on). I can argue that environment and setup of the kindergarten, where my research took place was quite unique. I will later describe the way in which this unique character affected my research.

4.2.2 Gatekeepers

First of all it was necessary to get access by making agreement with gatekeepers. In my study firstly, access to kindergarten and children was granted by agreement from headmaster of the kindergarten. She has the full juridical responsibility for all children while they stay on the territory of the kindergarten. However, already at this stage of my fieldwork when getting access to the field I was faced with a challenge: is the headmaster the only gatekeeper I need to agree with in order to do my fieldwork? As M. Hammersley and P. Atkinson (2007) argue, identifying the relevant gatekeepers is not always easy. Normally a headmaster in kindergarten is just a manager who is mostly responsible for administrative decisions. Moreover, it is very rare when headmaster actually works directly with children. The headmaster of the kindergarten where my fieldwork took place also did not in practice work with my participants.

That is exactly the reason why it became necessary for me to get another gatekeeper, who actually has access to children and know each of them well enough. In my opinion such relevant gatekeepers could be teachers, who worked in the group of children in kindergarten where I conducted my fieldwork. There were two of them. The first teacher usually was at work in the first part of a day (from 08.00 am till 02.00 pm) and then her colleague replaced her (from 02.00 pm until all children were taken home by parents). Both of them had different personalities and different styles of working. They provided daily access to the group and helped me organize my observation. At the same time there was a certain risk my fieldwork in the kindergarten because teachers could misunderstand the aims of my research and as well as their role as gatekeepers. I will describe some of these challenges below.

M. Hammersley and P. Atkinson (2007) also argue that relationships of a researcher with gatekeepers can have important consequences on the subsequent course of the research. At the same time they state that even the friendliest and most co-operative of gatekeepers shape development of the research. Though if unfortunately a researcher could not establish productive working relationships with a gatekeeper then the entry can be blocked. Therefore,

it was important for me to establish good working connection with the teachers and the headmaster. I explained to them the purposes and the aims of my research, my position as a student researcher, clarified where and how I will use the data and results. The headmaster did not seem really interested in the details of my research. The only thing that seemed important to her that my research does not disturb educational process and everyday routine of her kindergarten and that it is safe for children. She told me that I did not really need to get any permission from teachers since she had given hers. According to the rules of kindergarten a headmaster can order teachers to do or not to do something. I argued that it is very important for me to get permission from teachers and inform them about my research. The headmaster did not mind.

The teachers appeared to be much more interested in the details of my research. One of teachers was especially interested. She was older than her colleague and had been working in this kindergarten for 30 years. She tried to help me in every possible way. In some cases these attempts to help caused minor problems which I will later describe in this chapter when giving examples.

My participants were attending different lessons (individually or in smaller group) in the kindergarten. For example swimming lessons (in small groups), lessons of dancing, music, art lessons (in small groups) or individual lessons with speech therapist. These lessons were done by different teachers – pedagogues-specialists. To be able to present on their lessons and do my fieldwork I had agree with them. Some of the teachers were glad to allow me to present, but some of them were not so enthusiastic about them. So I have decided not to follow my participants on these lessons and not include it into my data.

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children, it is recommended that children be informed, involved and consulted about all activities that affect their lives. Informed consent must guarantee autonomy or independence (Fraser & et al., 2004) for young informants. In my opinion it was also necessary to inform parents of my participants. Section 4.2.3 will describe the process of getting informed consent of gatekeepers (teachers and headmaster of kindergarten), children and their parents.

4.2.3 Informed consent of parents

In order to conduct my research with children I received a written consent from their parents. Since it was rather hard to meet the parents of each child I had to create a information letter (see appendices), which I sent by e-mail to all parents (e-mail addresses were provided by the headmaster). I have received consent of all parents. Verbal consents were also received from the headmaster and the teachers. There was no need to get informed consent of them in written form since they were only three people - hence their spoken agreement sufficed.

According to demands of the Russian law, in order to conduct a research with children it is enough to get fully informed consent of one of the two parents or from a person in charge/ their guardian (such as a headmaster) in a day care center (a kindergarten). Theretheless, it was voluntary participation of each child that was very important to me. I tried to do my best not to make my participants feel being coerced into participating in the research. My participants were very young. But still it was very important for me to get informed consent of children in order to do qualitative right-based research.

4.2.4 Informed consent of children

Very young age of my participants turned out to be another challenge for the research. Five or six-year-old children normally do not have enough reading and writing skills to be able to give informed consent in a written form. At this age most children still cannot write and read properly as they have not started to attending school yet. According to S. Fraser (Fraser & et al., 2004), in order to obtain a valid consent from children, children should be explained clear distinction between the frames of the research and other interventions, as well as consequences of their participation, etc.

As a result I made a decision to provide informed consent of children verbally. I explained to each child individually that I was going to conduct a research. In order to do it I needed their friends' help. I told them that I was going to conduct an experiment and observe what children usually do in kindergarten: their likes and dislikes, their kindergarten routine, interesting events during the day and etc. Children started asking me why I was working on this research and what 'research' meant. I realized that preschool children did not really understand the concept of research and collecting data for it. I had to give them more understandable and clearer explanation.

4.2.5 Explanation given to children

For my young participants I created another version of the reasons why I was conducting this work. I explained to them that I was planning to write a book about the life of children in kindergartens in our country (the Russian Federation). I told them that I was planning to travel to Norway and to visit kindergarten there. In that kindergarten I was planning to meet children just like them. I also explained that it might be interesting for Norwegian children to read a book about the life of children in a faraway Russia. I also mentioned to my participants that I was thinking of translating this book for Norwegian children. Of course such explanation was fictional. In my opinion, such explanation seemed quite a reasonable one for my young participants. At least I did not receive any further questions from them, and they seemed to be quite satisfied with the explanation.

In order to explain to my participants why I need their help I told them that since I was an adult I had forgotten what it was like to be a child. I said that I had totally forgotten what I had been doing as a child when attending a kindergarten. That is why I need them to help me and maybe to remind me what it is to be a child and to go to kindergarten. My first goal to achieve was to build up a good trusted relationship with my participants. Based on studies of W. Corsaro (2003), it was important that they do not see me as a “normal” adult, similar to their teachers or parents. I wanted them to see me as their friend and a partner, whom they can trust and who treats them as equals.

As a result I have received a verbal informed consent from each child. I had a private conversation with each of them which resulted in getting their consent to participate. Examples of such individual conversations are presented in appendices (transcribed from the field notes). As it can be seen from the dialogue I gave my participants the right and chance to quit the research process any moment they wanted.

4.2.6 Ethical issues

Confidentiality is another key factor that had to be taken into consideration within the frames of this research. In the course of work on the research it became clear to me that adults possess big authority for children in Russian kindergartens. Though in families it might be different. From their first days in kindergarten children are used to following adults' instructions and to being disciplined. Teachers' opinion is usually “universal and objective”

for children. That can be explained by the fact that groups in kindergartens are usually very big (up to 25 or even more). Normally there is only one teacher (sometimes together with assistant, but not always) for all 25 children. The reason for such poor situation is the low salary of staff in kindergarten. It happens quite often that one teacher receives two salaries: their own and one of an assistant. That is why they have to work for two. In order to do their job a teacher must instill strict discipline in a group. Only few teachers can find another (than total control and discipline) method to look after such big number of small children alone. Such situation created really great ethical issue for my research.

It happened so that one of the two teachers working with children who participated in the research tried to take control over the research process. It was obvious that she really wanted to help me. She asked me to explain to her “honestly” what I need her children to do in order to do good and “qualitative” research and get results I want. Later, I found out that she was asking several of children about what I was talking with them about. She proposed to have “preparation” with children for each “session”, where she will explain to them what they have to do and what they have not to do today. I can explain such wish to help by the high “methodological” and “educational” requirements, stated by in educational programs for children (created mostly by bureaucrats) which teachers has to follow all the time. Each semester a teacher is to provide a written report about work they accomplished during month and plan for the next semester. Teachers usually do not have enough time and enough skill to do it properly. Therefore they tend to use some “templates” in order to create such a report. Unfortunately, according to the headmaster of the kindergarten, controlling authorities are usually quite satisfied with it, as they don’t really express any interest in the work of teachers.

I had to explain to the teacher that I don’t need any preparations for my research. I maintained that “pure” data was very important to me, and I was not interested in any “correct” or “false” results. It is possible to claim that in the beginning power relationships between children and their teachers set a barrier to involving children in the research process.

Similar ethical issues are discussed in the book of M. Hammersley and P. Atkinson (2007), which I would like to mention here. They argue that whether or not they grant entry to the setting, gatekeepers will generally be concerned as to the picture of the organization or community, where research is taking part, and they will have practical interests in seeing themselves and their colleagues presented in a favorable light. M. Hammersley and

P. Atkinson (2007) state that gatekeepers may attempt to exercise some degree of surveillance and control, either by blocking off certain lines of inquiry, or by shepherding the fieldworker in one direction to another.

In order to provide confidentiality and security of my participants I had to make sure that all information related to them was kept safe, and I was the only person who had access to it. All data (my field notes, real names of children and etc.) I kept in special box with the lock at my place. All files related to the study were kept on my personal laptop, protected with passwords. In the text of my master thesis, as I mentioned already, I used nicknames instead of real names of my participants (see appendices). I changed the real number the kindergarten where my research took place to kindergarten No. 1. Here I need to mention that it is very typical that State kindergartens in Moscow don't have any names (like, for example in Norway), but they have numbers.

The given section (4.2) represents most of problems I had to face during my fieldwork and preparations to it regarding getting access to the field and research ethics. Next section (4.3) will provide more concrete and detailed description of the process of my fieldwork and collecting data for my research, describe research methods and tools I used and challenges I faced on the way.

4.3 *Fieldwork*

I had rather limited time for collecting data. First of all, I had to start much later than I planned. Usually all kindergartens in Russia do not work in summer. Only few "on duty" kindergartens remain open. On the first day of September kindergartens open their doors for children again. I was planning to start with my fieldwork at least during the second week of September but it never happened. During the first three weeks all staff of kindergarten was extremely busy starting new academic year: receiving new children, meetings their parents, having organizational meetings of staff, etc. As a result neither teachers nor the headmaster had time for me. After all I started my fieldwork on 25th of September 2011. I spent about 6 weeks collecting data in the kindergarten. I also used one extra week in December 2011. During each of these 7 weeks (in total) for my fieldwork in the kindergarten I used only three days: I used two days to make a transcript and to work on the first brief analysis of my field notes.

The main research tool I used was the method of participant observation. In addition, to fulfill data of participant observation I used some additional tools, such as individual drawing, fragments of methods of individual interview and guided tours.

I will later discuss each of methods I used in greater detail and describe my experience of working with these tools within the frames of this research.

4.3.1 Participant observation

In order to study children's play and its role in the everyday life from their own perspectives I based on the approach of new sociology of childhood (Prout & James, 1997; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998). I have chosen participant observation as the most relevant method to study play as children's culture. Method of participant observation is a traditional ethnographical method, recommended by New Sociology of childhood and Mosaic approach is a tool to study children's everyday life and activities (Clark, 2004). Method of participant observation can provide qualitative data. Participant observation is a universal child-friendly method, which makes it possible for children of different age to be participants, co-researchers and informants at the same time.

Here I would like to present one more time main research question of my study: *What is the role of play in everyday life of children in Russian state kindergarten's setup?* In order to answer the main question in my research I developed clarifying questions to focus my observation which you can find below:

- How is everyday life of children organized in Russian state kindergartens?
- How do children play? When do children play? Who do children play with?
- What is the role of adults in children's play in Russian state kindergartens?

I used the above-mentioned "guiding" questions as a tool to structure the process of observation. In addition to this list, I used the information which was given to me by my participants themselves before I started my observation. As I have mentioned already, I had an opportunity to have private conversations with each participant when obtaining an inform consent of them. For example, it was information about places they usually play in kindergarten, about their friends, so when observing the group I tried to position myself close to those places and areas, pointed by children. Several children mentioned to me that they do

not like to play with one particular boy (German) because “he was making a mess and did not know how to play the right way”, and I tried to pay attention to this aspect as well.

Following the method of participant observation as main research method helped me to study children’s play in the natural environment and setup of normal everyday life. M. Woodhead (2000) gives several arguments for conducting research with children. He argues that it is not possible to understand children’s lives with the help of laboratory measurement and statistical analysis (Woodhead & Faulkner , 2000). Ideal participant observation is a long-term process during which a single researcher lives as a part of a community and – as far as possible – shares in its daily activities (Ennew & et al., 2009). As I have mentioned before I had a certain time limit so I did not have an opportunity to enjoy a long process of observation.

In the beginning I was planning to use video recording, which I could analyse later. Then I decided not to do it and use field notes instead. In my opinion, field notes will let me to have “wider” view and to observe more at the same time than to have a view limited by a camera objective. I would like to turn to the description of the process of making field notes as well as the challenges I had to face.

4.3.2 Field notes

Making field notes was my main (and only) method of data logging. It is important to mention that using only field notes as method of data recording can turn out to be a challenge. A lot of information can be lost and not written down on time. I used shorthand in order to make as many notes as possible (stenographic method). After each observation day I transcribed all my field notes (on the same day). It was the best way to preserve as much data as possible. In order to do proper field notes I tried to answer three questions: How to write down? What to write down? When to write down? These questions were proposed by M. Hammersley & P. Atkinson (2007) as guided tool for conducting research by using the method of participant observation.

How to write down? I based on checklists for guiding field notes proposed by J. Spradley (1980, in Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and studies of W Corsaro (1985). I created a special table for making my field notes. Example of such table with data presented below (Table 2).

Table 2. Example of field notes from the data

## of observation	Day and time	Where? (space)	Participants	Field notes	Situation description	Comments
1	28.11.2011 10.12-10.43	Group room, playing zone	Amina, Vova, Sasha	<p>A-V&S: We should hurry because we need to create dinner before our guests are arriving.</p> <p>V-A: They will be late fore sure. As usual! (sighing).</p> <p>A-V: No! I know they will be in time.</p> <p>S-A: Mummy, mummy, I'll cut some vegetables for the salad! (taking some plastic vegetables, putting them on the plate and starting to cut it with plastic knife).</p> <p>A-S: You are doing it the wrong way, sweetie! These vegetables should be in whole pieces, like this! (showing).</p> <p>V-A&S: I'll better go to play with boys! (quieting the play).</p>	Children are siting on the carpet in the playing zone, near the plastic kitchen. They are manipulati ng with objects of the kitchen set.	

Such table helped me to make more structural notes and to be more productive and spend less time writing down information.

What to write down? I was registration in my table event (what is going on), participants (children, sometimes adults), dialogues of children (with each other and with adults), place (where an event took part), time of the day and date. All this information helped me analyse data later.

When to write down? Group of kindergarten where my observation took part consisted of 25 children which is why it was not always possible to observe all activities of all children at the same time. I always had to make a difficult choice what to observe and what to write down. Unfortunately it was not possible to pay attention to everything what was going on. I would try to choose an activity that would be more interesting and relevant for research.

As it was said earlier, in addition to the method of observation I used such participatory methods as interview, drawing and guided tours. These methods served as productive tools for getting and studying children's perspective.

4.3.3 Guided tours

Guided tours with children are recommended as participatory technique to extend the ways adults listen to young children (Clark, 2004, 2005; Clark&Moss, 2011). Young children may use drawings and photography in order to record and document tours they are making.

Use of guided tours was the way to really "hear" children's voices in my research. I asked my participants to make tour of the kindergarten and their group room particular. I asked children to show me around places where they usually play. It was important for me that children did it willingly and with pleasure. I suggested they divide into three groups (about 7-8 children), and each group would make a tour for me.

I did not have possibility to take photos since I did not get permission from teachers for that. Due to the very young age of my participants it was not so easy to use drawings and map-making during the tour. So I decided to ask children just to tell me about me about their kindergarten, describe what and where they usually do, what they like to do and so on. In order to document tours made by my participants I used the method of field notes.

4.3.4 Drawings

Drawings that children make for you can be seen as a way of children's meaning making and representation of their reality (Wright, 2010). I used individual drawings as one more additional method in my work in order to provide children's voices in the research.

S. Wright states (2010) that in drawing meaning-making can be either verbal or non-verbal, or both, because it involves a wide range of representational texts that can be communicated in diverse ways. Therefore, we can see drawing as a multilingual method which allows even very young children to represent their thoughts and view of the world in the way they want and can.

In my research I asked each of my young participants to draw a picture of what he/she usually do at kindergarten. This was done before I started my observation in the group. During the

process of drawing some children explained to me what they were drawing, who were people in their pictures and so on. I also asked them more detailed questions about their pictures after they had finished drawing. I have recorded their answers in my field notes.

4.3.5 Individual interviews

Individual interview was also an additional method in my study. This method helped me to increase value of children's perspectives in my research. I used qualitative interview. The focus of the study – children's own perspectives – demands using of qualitative methods, which make it possible for adults to study children's own perspectives.

I did not plan to use qualitative interview as a separate method. I interviewed my participants in the process of getting informed consent of them and in the process of individual drawings. So it is better to talk about just individual conversations than interviews. I also interviewed some children during the process of observation in the group. Some children came over to me while I was making my field notes and observing and then we chatted. However, I can claim that even such periodically unstructured interviews brought more data of my observation.

I had personal conversations also with some parents (who voluntarily wanted to speak with me). As I have mentioned earlier, normally parents were very busy and did not have time and wish to talk for very long time. But some of them (four parents: three mothers and one father) were more interested and curious about my research and about my staying there. They asked me to give more information about my research. I provided them more detailed information about the research and at the same time I used this opportunity to ask them about their children at kindergarten and their behaviour at home. I asked them what their children usually did at home (if they played or not). This information was also quite useful for me in the process of data analysis.

4.4 *Summing up*

In conclusion it is important to maintain one more time that tried to do qualitative research with young children. The main focus of my research was children's play and its role in their everyday life from their perspectives. It was very important to hear children's voices and study their perspectives of play as their culture and as everyday activity.

I chose to provide a child's rights based research which was achieved (in my opinion) by following the requirements of research ethics (for qualitative research with children developed by scholars of Social studies of children and childhood). Ethical side of my research was discussed in this chapter. I used classical qualitative method of ethnography, recommended by Mosaic approach known as participant observation. This was the main method of my research.

The process of analyzing data of my research had taken much longer time than expected. I made a lot of findings and discoveries which I had to sort out in order to answer my main research question. So I had to concentrate only on the most relevant aspects of the results, which were more relevant for my research.

Chapter 5: Results of the study

5.1 Introduction

In my master thesis I aim at researching play of preschool children in kindergartens of Moscow. First of all, I would like to remind that my main research question is What is the role of play in everyday life of children in Russian state kindergarten's setup? So in this chapter I will present and discuss the empirical data on the children's play in kindergarten as a part of everyday life.

As I discussed earlier, in chapter Four, participant observation was my main research method. With the help of the given method, the collected data in my research was supposed to answer the questions, which follow the main research question:

1. How is everyday life of children organized by adults in Russian state kindergartens?
2. How do children play? When do children play? Who do children play with?
3. What is the role of adults in children's play in Russian State kindergartens?

The main research question I have chosen for my research is a very broad one so to get the full answer on it more detailed and extensive research is required, and which is hardly possible within the frames of this master thesis, in my opinion. Therefore, I have decided to narrow it and elaborate only on some, for my opinion important aspects of the research topic.

Firstly, in the following chapter I will discuss which place play takes in everyday life of children in the context of time. I will analyze the data and answer following questions: 1) How is everyday life of children organized by adults in Russian state kindergartens? 2) When do children play?

Secondly, I will discuss how my participants are using kindergarten's environment for play and also discuss different types of their play. This will reveal the answer to the following question: How do children play? Thirdly, I will elaborate on the role of adults in children's play to answer questions of the role of adults in children's play in Russian state kindergartens and the question of who children play with.

Generally in the process of analysis of the research data I concentrated mostly on the importance of children's agency and confrontation between adults' control and children's resistance. I have elaborated on the importance of children's agency in Social Studies of children and childhood in the theory chapter. Therefore it is possible reformulate the main research question to 'What is the role of play in everyday life of children in Russian state kindergartens in the context of children's agency?'

5.2 *Setups of kindergarten No. 1*

Before we proceed with the analysis of the data of my research I would like to describe the kindergarten's setups, where my fieldwork took part. During the observation I work in the group room (of kindergarten's group C), in the bedroom of group C and on the playground outside. Below I will describe each of three these kindergarten's areas separately.

5.2.1 Group room

Each group in the kindergarten No. 1 had its own separate group room. The group room of my participants was around 60 square meters. It was divided into two areas: playing area and working area.

In the playing area there were shelves with different toys and books, a big carpet, different toy furniture, Lego, toy railway with a moving remote control train and different buildings, toys (dolls, plush toys, wooden toys and etc.), boxes with different table games, logical games and so on. Children usually spent their leisure time in this playing area.

In the working area there were desks, shelves with books and different studying materials (teaching materials, paper, pencils, pens, plasticine, glue and so on), a writing board. Desks were placed in the rows like in a traditional school classroom. Each desk was shared by two children. Each child was assigned (by the teacher) to a particular desk. In this area all classes took part. Children also sat there during the meal and when playing different types of table games. See the photo of the working area in the group room below (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Working area of the group room in kindergarten No. 1



The main rule for children when they are in the group room – it were not allowed to leave group room without the special permission of a teacher. It was not allowed to run around the group room either. The main reason for that were the safety requirements. The group room is not really big, and it is full of different furniture, so if children run around the room, they could fall down or drop down some furniture. There are safety instructions (general for all state kindergartens in Moscow), which teachers of the group C had to follow.

A small kitchen and toilet rooms were adjacent to the group room.

5.2.2 Bedroom

Bedroom was about 30 square meters and had beds. Each child had his/her own bed. Before going to bed children were supposed to put on pajamas or sleeping night gowns. Bedroom was connected with wardrobe, where children would leave their clothes and dress up for outside walk. See the photo of the bedroom on the picture below (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Bedroom of kindergarten No. 1



During sleeping time children were not allowed to leave their beds, and every child had to try to sleep. That was controlled by a teacher who was sitting in the bedroom during sleeping time.

5.2.3 Outside playground

Each group in kindergarten No. 1 was assigned to its own playground in the yard. The yard of the kindergarten was surrounded with high fence with gates, which were always locked and could be opened only by security guard for the safety reasons. Playgrounds of each group had the conditional boundary (row of trees of bushes). See the picture of the yard in the kindergarten No. 1 on the picture below (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Yard of kindergarten No. 1



Playground of the group C was about 70 square meters. In the corner there was an open veranda with the roof (for rainy weather) and some benches. There were different buildings for children's different activities: a wooden playhouse, a wooden slide, a metal staircase for climbing, swings and so on.

On the outside playground there were less limitations and control by adults for my participants. It was allowed to run, so children could play active games. Children had an opportunity to communicate with children from other groups of kindergarten No. 1 (on the neighboring playgrounds) and play together with them.

5.3 Organization of children's everyday life in kindergarten No. 1

This section provides a picture of everyday life organization in kindergarten No. 1 and is aimed to answer the question: How is everyday life of children organized in Russian state kindergartens? I will analyze daily schedule in the group of kindergarten, where my research took part. I will also analyze different activities of children during the usual day in kindergarten, their ability to choose activities during the day without adults' control, and the amount of spare (free) time.

Data presented in this section is provided by analysis of conversations with my gatekeepers (the teachers and the headmaster of kindergarten #1), individual interviews with children (my participants) and the observation process.

The headmaster of kindergarten No. 1 gave me the official time day schedule for the group C (the group of kindergarten, where my research has taken place). This was a standard, daily schedule for the children of the age 5-6 years, attending state kindergartens in Moscow. It was officially approved by the Department of education of Moscow.

Below, in the Table 3, one can find a daily schedule for the group C, attended by my participants. An official daily schedule differed a little from the actual everyday schedule since it might be adjusted to the concrete setup (number of children in group, outside weather and etc.). Children also might take control (when there is such an opportunity) and adjust their day schedule themselves.

To compose the actual schedule I used the information from the official schedule, data of participant observation, conducted in the group C and analysis of individual interviews with my participants.

Table 3. Daily scheduler in the group C in kindergarten No. 1

Period of time	Activity
08.00 – 08.30	Children’s arrival to the kindergarten, intake of children by teachers
08.30 – 09.00	Setting up tables for breakfast by a child on duty, breakfast
09.00 – 10.00	Classes (mathematics, reading or spelling)
09.50 – 10.10	Break between classes, free time for children
10.10 – 10.50	Classes, developmental games (organized by teachers)

10.50 – 11.00	Dressing up for a walk outside
11.00 – 12.00	Walk (in the yard of kindergarten)
12.00 – 12.20	Returning from outside walk, free time
12.20 – 13.00	Setting up table for breakfast by a child on duty for dinner, dinner
13.00 – 14.50	Sleeping time (all children have to be in beds and sleep during this time period)
14.50 – 15.00	Waking up, dressing up
15.00 – 15.20	Setting up table for evening food (lunch) by a child on duty, evening food
15.20 – 17.00	Free time (sometimes short classes or individual children's meeting with speech therapist or senior-teacher of the kindergarten)
17.00 – 19.00	Outside walk (depending on the weather conditions), leaving as parents come to take their children home

Time scheduler presented in the table above is rather schematic. It illustrates actions and routines of my participants during the normal day in kindergarten. It is important to mention here that real everyday life of children might not be the same as the schedule. I will discuss it later in this chapter.

My participants would normally arrive to kindergarten quite early in the morning. They are usually accompanied by one of parents or by a nanny (babysitter). As it was mentioned in chapter 4 most of the children, participated in my study have families with good level of

income. So rather often such families hire a nurse. The kindergarten normally closes at 19.00. So by that time parents (or nurses) are supposed to pick up all children.

A usual day in kindergarten No. 1 is rather busy and filled with different type of activities. In the table above I have presented most of the activities of children during a normal day, which was possible to set in the time schedule. I would like to clarify here that the list of children's activities presented in the Table 3 could be continued with more different activities, not listed in the presented table. For example, individual lessons and lessons in small group with pedagogues-specialists could be different during the day, depending on occupation level of teachers, number of children presented in the group and so on.

In kindergarten No. 1 besides regular teachers (2 for each group) there are six pedagogues-specialists working: a speech therapist, a swimming instructor, a teacher of music, a sport instructor, a teacher of rhythmic, a teacher of art. Pedagogues-specialists usually take one or several children for small group/individual lessons. Such lessons usually take part outside the group room, in special quarters of kindergarten (gym, swimming pool, art studio and etc.). Below, in the following section, I will describe these lessons and the participation of children in the group C in more detail (section 5.3.6).

5.3.1 Classes

Different classes (mathematics, reading, art and etc.) usually take about 140-160 minutes every day, as a rule without proper breaks. Short technical breaks take place for changing equipment between classes (books, paper, pencils and etc.). I heard from several of my child participants in the process of individual conversation that they usually get very tired after classes. During my observation I also noticed that children can become very tired because of long classes. This can be illustrated by the following example.

30 minutes class of mathematics is just over. All children are tidying their desks after the class (paper, pencils and pens are supposed to be placed in special containers so the teacher can tidy it away).

Irina addressing to Natasha (yawning and rubbing her eyes): *I am so tired. I am so tired that I can't tidy my desk. Can you help me?* Natasha is taking Irina's paper, pencils and rubber together with her own and put it to the container. After that she returns to Irina and telling: *I am also very tired. I do not like mathematic at all.* (FN 2011, Group room, Day 5).

This short dialogue between two girls (who were, according to the data of participant observation, friends) could be seen as an attempt of Irina to manipulate her friend, Natasha to make her do something instead of her. But at the same time I have observed that both girls were really tired: rubbing eyes, yawning, moving around very slow (with slow, lazy movements).

I specially asked some of my participants in individual interviews about classes they usually had and some of my participants talked about classes by themselves. For example, I asked Gosha what he likes to do in kindergarten after he had completed his drawing. He said that in general he likes classes of reading, but all classes are usually so long, that he wants to sleep after it all the time.

During my observation I noticed that some of my participants were really struggling to sit in front of their desk during long class. Teacher did not allow them to stand up and walk around during classes. All children had to sit still on their chairs. To stand up they had to ask for permission of the teacher.

5.3.2 Outside walk

In Russian kindergartens the decision about outside walk is usually made by teachers. The decision is based on the current weather conditions. If it is very rainy or very cold children usually stay in the group room for these hours.

In the group of kindergarten # 1, where my observation took place, there was the same practice. Instead of outside walk children stayed in the group room and normally received an opportunity to do what they want. Though, sometimes teacher organized different activities: classes, group games (for example different types of table group games) or reading (teacher was reading for children all children, who were sitting in the circle around her).

During outside walk children stayed in inside yard of kindergarten. Most time during outside walk children were allowed to do what they want. So time of outside walk can be also seen as free time for my participants, during which they had an opportunity to choose freely what they want to do themselves. Children's activities during outside walk differed from inside activities. On the outside playground there was much more space for mobile activities: running, jumping, etc.

Normally children played games outside, which they never played inside: hide-and-peek, tag, “a cat and a mouse”. All these games are active group games. Later, in the section 5.4 I will elaborate on different types of children’s play in my research in more detail.

5.3.3 Sleep

Sleep is obligatory according to the requirements of Department of Education of Moscow in all kindergarten in Moscow. That is why my participants had to go to bed for almost two hours during the day. The period of time, when children are supposed to sleep, is often called “a silent hour” in Russia.

There were several (3-4) children among my participants who pretty often didn’t sleep during “the silent hour”. But still they had to stay in bed with all others. They were not allowed to stay out of the bed for these two hours. In the process of my fieldwork I observed several times when in the bedroom those children who didn’t sleep broke the rules by sneaking out from beds and playing. Most often they were playing together, finding new ways to use space of the bedroom.

Once I was sitting in the bedroom during the “silent hour”. The teacher left for a coffee break and asked me to replace her and watch after children, while they were sleeping (since I was there anyway, as she explained). I must admit that it was a great opportunity for me to observe children without her presence and her discipline control. By that time I managed, as it seemed to me, to get a good and trust contact with my participants so they did not see me as a “replacement” of their teacher, who is there to control and educate them. I guess that in teacher’s presence children would not behave like they did.

Zakhar and Vova have beds next to each other. They both are not sleeping. Zakhar, addressing Vova: *Lets play the ocean. You see how many reefs are around* (pointing on other beds, where all other children are sleeping). *Let’s dive!* Both boys slide down on floor and starting to crawl around the bedroom, between and under beds. In 10 minutes Igor, who was also awake, joins them. I pretended that I am not noticing what they are doing. The play continues for the next 25 minutes. **FN, 2011, Bedroom, Day 17.**

These children used an opportunity to play when they didn’t have any control from the teachers. They looked really excited: they were really excited with the game they played and at the same time it was clear that they were enjoying to do something usually prohibited (to

leave beds during the “silent hour”). They were breaking rules, created by adults and getting for a short time control on their life by freely choosing activity they liked.

In his studies W. Corsaro also addressed to the topic of children’s resistance to and challenging of adult rules and authority. Though for that he used the term secondary adjustment (Corsaro, 2005, 2009). I prefer to use the term resistance. W. Corsaro (2005, 2009) stated that resistance to and challenging of adult rules and authority are one of the main themes in peer cultures. He claims that children start to resist adult culture from the very early age and continue to do it later (Corsaro, 2005).

5.3.4 A child on duty

In Table 3, presented above, the term “a child on duty” is mentioned several times. In this section I would like to clarify this term. One can say that duties are a part of children everyday life in kindergarten.

In the group C every day one child (or sometimes two children) is assigned to be on duty. That means that they have a duty to help teacher to put plates, spoons, knives, bread and etc. on tables (for all children) before breakfast, dinner and evening food. They usually had a task to check hands (if they are washed or not) of each child in the group before every meal.

Besides each child in the group had some duties during an average day in kindergarten. For example, to tidy his/her own desk after class or to put away clothes into the wardrobe after returning from a walk.

5.3.5 Free time

According to the table, children have around 140 minutes every day of free time. By free time I understand time free from any activities which are organized and controlled by the adults (teachers) and during which children have an opportunity to choose any activity they want. I have to mention that in the presented above Table 3 only free time was marked, which was usually free for all children of the group. Detailed analysis of the observation data has shown that my participants usually used every free second to do what they want to do now and here.

Therefore I can claim, that time for play during the day might be different for each of my participants. During my fieldwork and after analysis of the data I came to the conclusion that

in most cases my participants used their free time as time for play. Below I will discuss free time as time when children have possibility to play.

5.3.6 Lessons

As it was explained earlier, during the day a part of the group could be taken by pedagogues-specialist for individual or group lessons. For example, there is a swimming pool in the kindergarten and twice a week children are supposed to have lessons of swimming there with the instructor. Swimming pool has place for no more than 10 children at the same time. That is why a swimming instructor had to pick only half (sometimes a third) part of the group for her class. The same had to be done the dancing teacher, the music teacher, the teacher of art.

Speech therapist and psychologist usually had individual meetings with children. They would arrive to the group (where I was doing my observation) and picked the child she wanted and take him/her to individual lesson. It usually didn't happen when children were having a particular class according to the official schedule, and free time of children was used for that purpose.

Lessons of drawing, swimming, dancing and individual lessons with speech therapist or psychologist are not included into the official time schedule, given to me by the headmaster. I did not include these activities to my approximate schedule, presented in the Table 3, but I included it to analysis of time, expended by children with this or that activity, which I will discuss later.

5.3.7 Distribution of activities during the day

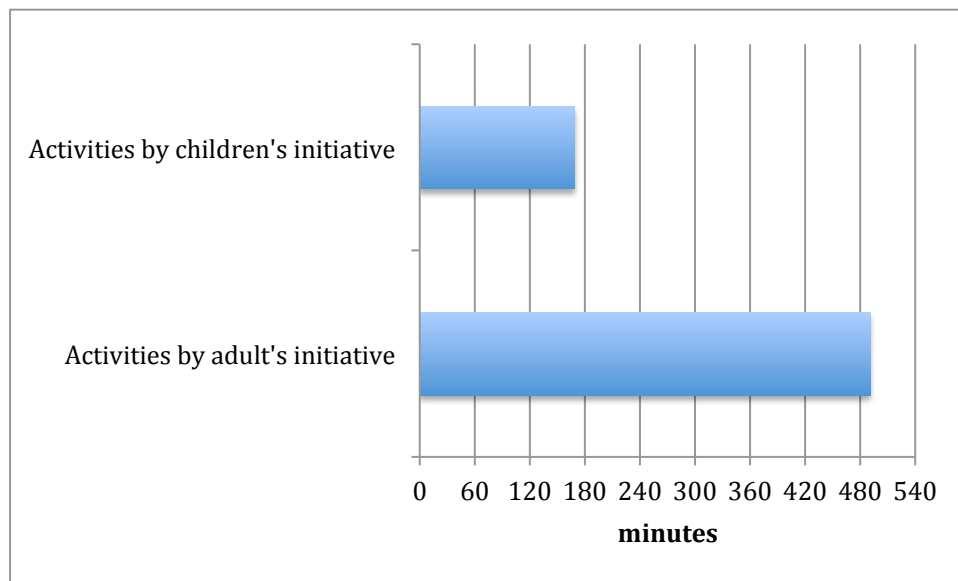
As I already mentioned in this section (5.3), a typical day in kindergarten was rather busy for my participants. I singled out the main types of children activities during the day in kindergarten: sleep, leisure activities, classes, lessons, eating. Most of them I have discussed above. To summarize, below I will present short definition (for this research) of each (Table 4).

Table 4. Children’s activities during the day in kindergarten

<i>Sleep</i>	Time that children spend sleeping, plus time spent for preparation for sleep (taking off clothes and getting into beds).
<i>Leisure</i>	Time that children spend for activities by their own initiative during their free.
<i>Classes</i>	Time occupied by different classes (mathematics, reading, drawing). Classes are included into daily official schedule of the kindergarten No. 1.
<i>Lessons</i>	Time, spent by children in different lessons in smaller groups (for example swimming, dancing) or individually with specialists of the kindergarten (speech therapist and psychologist).
<i>Eating</i>	Time, spent by children in different lessons in smaller groups (for example swimming, dancing) or individually with specialists of the kindergarten (speech therapist and psychologist).

Thus in the given research by leisure activities I only understand play time for children. I noticed that when during the day children had an opportunity to choose what to do they chose to play. Besides play was the only activity initiated by children I could observe during my fieldwork. All other activities were initiated by adults. Simple statistics makes it obvious that the amount of time taken during the day by activities by adults’ initiative exceeds over the activities by children’s initiative (play). Below (Figure 5) I have presented diagram which shows that.

Figure 5 Distribution of activities by adult's and children's initiative during the day



I would like to remind that my participants spent up to 11 hours (660 minutes) everyday in the kindergarten. Of course that could vary depending on when children arrived to the kindergarten and when they were picked up by their parents (or nurses). Calculation presented above (Figure 5) is based on maximum time during the day, which could be spent by children in the kindergarten (11 hours).

Leisure time with opportunity for children to initiate play take a little more than 25 % of all time spent in kindergartens during the day. 75 % of this time is occupied by different activities organized and controlled by adults. That means that the activities by adults' initiative are mainly prevailing.

In the next section I will elaborate in greater detail on the amount of time, which children can use for play and it's distribution during the day in kindergarten.

5.4 Distribution of children's play during the day in kindergarten

In this section I am planning to answer the following question of those that I have aimed to answer in my research: When do children play? Discussion of time to play in the setup of kindergarten have been started in the previous

During the interview I asked my participants what they liked to do in kindergarten. In addition I asked them to draw what they usually did in the kindergarten.

It was rather surprising for me that most of my participants drew different type of activities, with which they were occupied in kindergarten (mathematics class, reading class, art class and etc.) than play. I expected to receive more drawings with play as the main activity in kindergarten for my participants. In fact only 8 children out of 23 (those, whom were asked to draw picture) pictured play on their drawings as something they usually do in the kindergarten.

Below I would like to present one of conversation I had with the boy called German in the process of drawing.

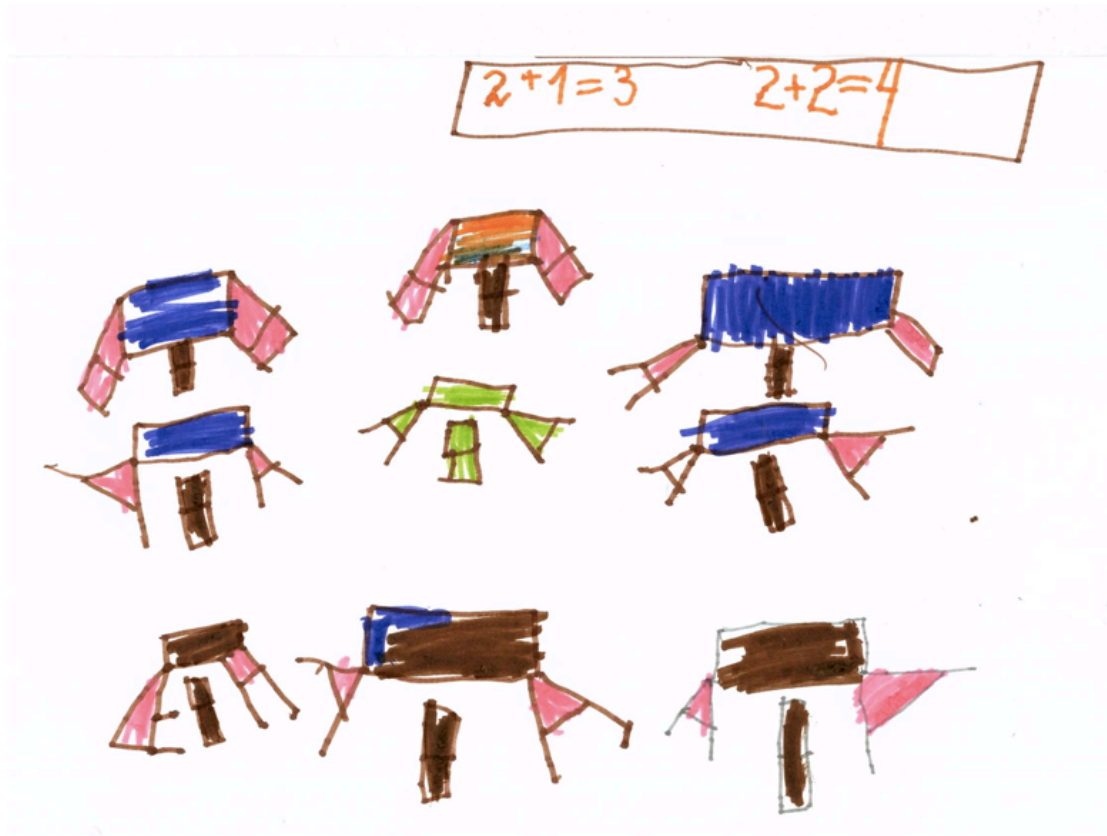
German sat down next to me and telling after he was asked to draw a picture for me: *Yes, I can do it. I can draw many pictures for you if you wish.* He is starting to draw, looking very enthusiastic and exited. He is drawing very fast and with confidence.

German points to the wall: *There is my drawing, handing on the exhibition. If the picture is bad – it can't be put there!* He is continuing to draw: *This is Danila. He has curly hair. We are sitting at our desks. We have plasticine. Here you go! One picture is ready. Now I will draw another one for you!* Drawing next picture: *And here are me and Danila again. I am sharing one desk with him, you know. This is a carpet. In fact it is not like this, I am just fantasizing. We are sitting at mathematics class.* German is drawing the group room with desks and children sitting. He is handing to me both drawings and informing that he is done.

I asked German, what he and Danila like to do together when they are in their group room. German answered: *We like to play, of course. Ok, I will draw the last picture for you!* He is drawing one more picture: *We are playing with Danila. But it is not only me and him. Also Maksim, Zahar and Amina and Natasha, of course.* **II, 2011.**

On first two drawings German chose to picture classes – art class and mathematics class. On Figure 6 below one can see one of the drawings I received from German.

Figure 6. Drawing of working area of the group room



The group room, as it was described before, is divided into two sections: play section (with different toys, big carpet and so on) and a dinner/class section (with desks, chairs, writing board and booking shelves). It is interesting to note that most the drawings had class section pictured. Children themselves listed different classes as their usual occupation in the kindergarten. But, when I asked them what they like to do – the typical answer was that they liked to play.

In the example of individual conversation above with German above drew and described classes as his typical activities in the kindergarten. When I asked what he and his friend Danila like to do together, the answer was that they like to play.

In the previous section (5.3), it was discussed that children use their free time (which is free from classes and other organized things) as time for play. During the observation in the group C I saw that play took place quite often: during any break when my participants had an opportunity to play between classes, sleep, meals.

Outside walk, according to the data of my observation, was a great time and opportunity for children to play. I can name at least two reasons for that. First of all, outside playground was much bigger and gave more opportunity for various types of game (for example active games with running). The second reason is that outside my participants felt less restricted by adults.

In the next section of this chapter I will continue with analysis of children's play and its role in children's everyday life.

5.5 *Children's play in kindergarten No. 1*

This section is aimed to answer another question: How do children play? Here I will provide a brief analysis of children's play, which I observed during my fieldwork in kindergarten No. 1. I intend to present different types of children's play, discuss what places, toys and different tools they were using.

5.5.1 Places for play

First of all, in this section I would like to present different places where in the kindergarten my participants usually played during the day. Information presented below is based on participant observation, individual interviews with children and guided tours.

I asked some of my participants in the process of individual interviews where they usually play in the kindergarten. Most of the children told me that they usually played with toys in the playing corner of the group room. Playing corner of the group room was created and planned (by adults) for play in the kindergarten No. 1.

In addition I asked my participants to create a guided tour around the group room for me. During these tours I asked some of my participants to show me where they usually play. I was shown some "secret" places for play by several children. For example, it was corner between cupboards or area between rows of beds in the bedroom. Playing area in the group room was not obviously defined by my participants as "secret". Using method of guided tour as an additional method allowed me to see how important "secret" places of the kindergarten can be for my participants.

In the process of observation I noticed that my participants could use almost any place inside the group room or outside playing ground for play. Their bedroom, wardrobe, toilet and even a small kitchen (inside the group room) could be used by children as a place to play.

There is an example from my observation of three girls playing in the *toilet*.

Olga, Galina and Aleksandra stand near the sinks in the toilet room Olga holds four plastic cubes in her hands. Galina opens water in one of the sinks: *To cook something first we need to boil water*. Aleksandra pushes an imaginary button under the sink: *Now it is hitting*. Olga puts all four plastic cubes into the water. Galina uses wooden stick to stir water with cubes in it. Olga runs to the play area in the group room and brings a plastic toy glass. She pours something from the glass into the sink with the plastic cubes: *We need to add some salt! 50 grams*.

Olga takes out cubes from the sink: *O.K., now it's ready*. Addressing Galina: *You can go and serve it to our customers in the restaurant hall*. **FN, 2001. Group room, Day 9.**

Play could have been continued, but the teacher, who discovered that these three girls were doing something in the bathroom, interrupted it. She asked them to come back to the group room and join some other children with the game of dominoes.

Play took part during the free time in the group. So all children were in the group room and had an opportunity to choose themselves that they wanted to do. Most of the children were busy playing at the moment but I chose to concentrate on observing of Olga's, Galina's and Aleksandra's play.

Sink was used by these three girls as pan. It was possible to fill sink with water by using the plug. That is what my participants did. Cubes replaced some imaginary food for the players. In my opinion girls were playing restaurant.

I observed my participants playing in the toilet two more times in the course of my fieldwork. Teachers didn't really prohibit to play in the toilet but, as you may see in the above-mentioned example, they could interrupt play and ask children to return to the group room.

Though in most of the cases I observed play in the playing area of the group room or in the outside playground. I would like to remind that inside the group room (in the playing ground) children were not allowed to play noisy or active games. Below I will present few more examples of children's play, which I observed during my fieldwork.

An example below demonstrates my participants' play which I observed on the *playground outside*.

Rustam and Ruben are outside together with the rest of the group. They are sitting on the top of metal staircase. Rustam addresses Ruben to sitting next to him: *We reached the top of the mountain. Now we need to get down before it gets dark. I saw on TV that it is very dangerous to stay in the darkness in the mountains.* Ruben: *Is it because of Yeti? I heard on TV that they are very dangerous, especially during the night!* Both boys begin climbing down from the staircase very slowly. Rustam, addressing Ruben again: *Do not step on that stone. It might be dangerous and you can fall down to the abyss!* Ruben: *There is no abyss there. It is not true. I cannot see any abyss.* Ruben jumps down from the staircase and runs to the wooden veranda: *Here, we are in camp. We are safe!* **FN, 2011, Playground outside, Day 3.**

This observation was done during the walk, on the group playground. The play of two boys is very active. They were climbing the stairs, running and jumping. The play started on the metal staircase and continued in the wooden veranda. The influence of mass media on the children's play is clear here. Boys were referring to the TV programs and using their knowledge throughout the play. In my opinion, this is a very good of example positive and enriching influence of adults culture and culture created for children (Mass Media) on the children's play. Rustam and Ruben applied appropriate features of adult world (profession explorer or traveler, active tourism, mountain climbing) to create innovative play routines in their peer culture.

Ruben and Rustam were very excited (they didn't pay much attention to me, standing next to them and doing my field notes). It was one of the first days of my fieldwork in the group C and children hadn't got used to my presence yet.

As I have already mentioned earlier, my participants' play that I observed inside *the group room* differed from play in the outside playground. Below I will present one example of play of the same children (Rustam and Ruben), which took part in the playing area of the group room.

Rustam and Ruben are constructing something from Lego on the big table, in the play area of the group room. They stand in front of the table. Rustam, addressing Ruben: *We need to have a driver for this spaceship. I can drive spaceship myself!* Ruben: *No, of course you cannot. Do not lie!* Ruben takes a figure of man (from Lego) and puts it in the spaceship: *Here we go! Now we*

have a driver. Rustam: I can drive myself. Ok. This pilot can also drive. FN, 2011, Group room, Day 7.

Above I presented only a short example of play inside the group room. During all play children were staying still next to the table with Lego. They didn't run around or jump (it to compare with presented earlier play on the outside playground). But they were very excited about the process. It seemed for me during the observation process that they were really having a lot of fun.

I would like to move on from the presentation of play in different places to analysing different types of children's play, I observed during my fieldwork. I will describe in greater detail detailed how my participants played, taking into account this section on how they were using the space of kindergarten.

5.5.2 Different types of children's play

To structure the received data of the participant observation and to allocate different types of play of my participants I applied B. Hughes's systematization (1996, cited in Else, 2009, p. 45). In my research it was important for me to analyze the diversity of children's play, which I observed during my fieldwork in order to trace the role of the play in everyday life of children and answer the main research question.

I observed the following types of play: dramatic play (play which dramatizes events when the child is not a direct participator in the story); fantasy play (play, which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur); imaginative play (play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply); role play (play exploring ways of communication, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature); symbolic play (using symbols in play to represent other "real" objects/ this play supports children's control, gradual exploration and increased understanding, without the risk of being out of their depth). Below I will discuss each of these types of play I have observed and present some examples.

Dramatic play. The concept of dramatic play is very well developed in modern Russian psychological school. I would like to elaborate more on the concept of the dramatic play in Russian psychological school before I present example of the dramatic play from my fieldwork.

According to E. Trifonova (2011), a child usually plays dramatic games alone. He/she usually uses toys, which he gives different roles and most often does not include himself/herself into play scene, remaining “outside”. During the play a child acts on behalf of each toy-character and at the same time directing a general “story” of his play.

I would like to present an example of dramatic play from my data. It took part in the playing area of the group room. In the process of the play a child was using toy kitchen furniture, toy dishes and kitchen tools, dolls (Barbie, Skipper and Stacie).

Olga is sitting on the carpet in the playing corner of the group room, next to the toy kitchen furniture. She holds a Barbie doll in her arms, there are two more dolls (Skipper and Stacie) lying on the floor next to her. She manipulates the Barbie doll: Barbie enters the kitchen, walks to the electrical oven, puts pan on the oven and starts stirring something with plastic spoon . Then suddenly the pan falls down on the floor. Barbie lifts it up from the floor and puts it back to the oven. She walks to the sink, takes a cup, which stands next to it and pours some water. Then she pours water into the pan and starts stirring.

Two other dolls (Skipper and Stacie) come into the kitchen: *Hello, Barbie. We are here!* (Olga is speaking in behalf of one of the dolls). Barbie greets the other two dolls and invites them to come in and sit down. Skipper: *What have you cooked for us, Barbie? We are very hungry.* Barbie puts some plates on the table, in front of Stacie and Skipper: *Here, this is very delicious food here!* **FN, 2011, Group room, Day 10.**

I was observing this play of Olga for 20 minutes, when she and half of the group were staying in the group room. Swimming instructor took another half of the group to the swimming pool. Above I have presented only a part of field notes I have made while observing Olga playing.

During the play she moved around dolls: they were walking, manipulating with different tools in the toy kitchen, sitting, standing, eating and so on. Olga also created dialogs between them, using different voice for each doll. At the same time she didn't include herself into the action in the play and stayed somehow outside it, on the position of director. Sometimes she just manipulated the toys in silence and then suddenly continued the dialogue between her actors aloud. I observed several of other examples of dramatic plays of my participants in the course of my fieldwork. Rather often all the play took place in total silence so I could only visually observe some actions, presented by a child. But it was clear that most of the dialogues and action in the process of play took place inside the child's head. It was usually a solo play,

when only one child participated in a play. I have noticed that some children preferred to play like that more often than others.

I observed dramatic play primarily in the group room. However there were several occasions when I observed it on the playground outside. Children usually used dolls, small toys and some furniture equipment of the group room.

Fantasy play. During the fantasy play children rearranged the world their way, a way which is unlikely to occur. Fantasy played was the least frequent type I observed so during my fieldwork (only twice). Below I will present one of the examples.

The play took part in the playing area of the group room. It lasted for about five minutes. In the previous examples of children's play it was usually interrupted by a teacher or somebody else, when children wanted to (or sometimes had to) participate. In the example below play did stop by itself, without any visible reasons for that.

Sergei and Vova are sitting at the table with Lego. They are building from the Lego pieces something together. Sergei, addressing Vova: *Can you give me that piece (pointing), the one over there. We need to build a proper wall around the castle so the dragon could get inside.* Vova: *Where will be the king's army then? We need to have some martial elves and dwarfs there around the castle.* Sergei, addressing Vova: *They can stand around here, around and they can see very well from these small halls in the wall.* Sergei puts small human figures from the Lego set on the building. Then he takes out a small plastic figure of Batman from the pocket: *Here. The army has a commander. It should be a commander.* Vova, addressing Sergei: *This castle is on the special air pillows. It is flying in the special space world. Not the real space. But the stratosphere, it is between real space and Earth!* **FN, 2011, Group room, Day 8.**

The given play is only partially presented. The plot of the game was rather far from the reality. Dragons, dwarfs and elves are invented creatures by fantasy books and movies. A flying castle cannot be a part of the real environment either. In their fantasy they connected reality inspired by fantasy movies and space action movies. Thus, on the one hand, this play was invented by mass media production. Therefore, this play was a very original creation of fantasy of my participants.

Play continued for a very long time, about 20 minutes till Sergei's mother came to take her son home. Then they had to stop their play. When Sergei was leaving he promised Vova that they would continue their play next time, probably tomorrow.

During my fieldwork it was sometime very hard for me to define what type of children's play I was observing. For example, rather often I saw fantasy play as imaginative. I will later talk about an imaginative play in greater detail.

Imaginative play. An imaginative play is a play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply. I often observed the elements of imaginative play when collecting data. It could be included in another type of play (role-play or dramatic play, for example). I asked one of my participants (Vadim) in the process of individual interview why he said that he liked to play. The answer was that he liked to play because in play he could do whatever he wanted.

In my opinion, an opportunity to change the world around them in their imagination makes play unique activity, where children have full control of everything: the plot, the roles and so on. I will present one of the examples of imaginative play from my observations.

Gosha and Danila are sitting on the bench of veranda on the playground outside. Danila addresses Gosha: *Let's pretend that we are transformers and we can fly. Then we can fly to the moon and build a house there for Yeti, living there!* FN, 2011, **Outside playground, day 7.**

For me, in the process of the data analysis the key phrase to detect (and distinguish) imaginative play became: "Let us pretend, that ...". It is rather often implicit in fantasy and dramatic plays as well. As what Gosha said when addressing Danila in the above-mentioned example. This phrase allows to pretend that something could happen, which is not totally possible in reality. It gives children an opportunity to change the world in the story they create in the play, according to their own wishes and needs.

I would like to mention here that children always strive for changing the reality in the plot of their play. And it is valid not only for an imaginative play, mentioned above, but also for role-play, symbolic play, fantasy play, etc.

Role play. In the process of the role-play children explore the ways of relationships, and personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. It was the most popular play among my participants. I have observed role-play several times during the fieldwork. There were two to

eight children participating in one play together. Role-play could also take place on the playground outside or in the group room (or some of “secret” places).

I would like to adduce a short example of the role-play I have observed. The play had taken place in the playing area of the group room during the time period, when the walk had been canceled because of the weather conditions (it was very windy and rainy).

German, Amina, Polina and Danila are sitting on the carpet in the playing area. Amina addresses others: *I will be mother. Danila and Polina, you are my children. German – you are our kitten!* Danila: *But we need to have a father. I will be father!* Amina: *Ok, you can be a father. I agree. But then we have only one child. German will need to be our kitten.* Suddenly Amina addresses Danila: *Go, and ask Natasha to join us. I need one more child, a daughter.* Danila stands up and starts to call loudly for Natasha: *Natasha, come here, you will be our daughter.* Natasha was looking pictures in the book with different wild animals. She takes book with her and walks towards them. Natasha: *Whose daughter I am going to be?* Amina: *Me and Danila are parents and you and Polina are going to be our daughters.* Natasha agrees. German runs around them on all fours and imitating cat: *Miaow, miaow.*

Amina addresses Danila: *We are in fight with you. Because you came home very late yesterday. So I am in fight with you. Or we are in fight.* Danila: *I do not want to have any fight with you. I do not like fights.*

Polina tells her “parents”: *I am a grown-up daughter. I am 13 already, like my sister. And I do not like when you enter my room without knocking. You, father and you, mother.* **FN, 2011, Group room, Day 10.**

Play started with the role distribution by the leader, who, in my opinion, in this example was Amina. Roles are taken from the world of adults. We can see a typical family with two children, one of whom is a teenager. There is also a pet who is a member of the family.

The play was developing for quite some time, and the story continued: parents did have a fight. The fight stopped because the father (Danila) told that he agreed with his wife (Amina) and they should stop fighting. Daughter (Polina) was fighting with her father because he entered her room without knocking and because she was not allowed to go out very late in the evening.

My young participants were reproducing real relationships in the family between the two parents, between siblings and between children and their parents. I can only assume that in

this play children reproduced their own experience – real relationships in their families or families of friends, neighbors or relatives. Thus, the roles of children in the example above were fiction, but they were taken from the real experience. It is possible to call the play in the given example a family play.

Symbolic play. In a symbolic play children use symbols to represent other “real” objects. During my fieldwork I have not observed symbolic play as a separate play. I have observed elements of symbolic play included into other types of play, such as role-play or a dramatic play. Therefore, a symbolic play was a part of other plays. I will later present one small example of an element of a symbolic play in the process of dramatic play I have observed during my fieldwork.

Sophia is sitting on the bench in the playing corner of the group room. She holds a wooden stick in her hands (probably some of children brought it from outside walk). In the other hand she has a toy dog. She puts a wooden stick on the paw of the dog and starting to use stick in behalf of the dog as a fishing rod. Suddenly she catches a fish and takes it out. After that she puts the imaginary fish into an imaginary bucket (or maybe a basket). **FN, 2011, Group room, Day 4.**

In this small episode one of my participants was playing alone. I can classify this play as a dramatic play. But, at the same time, using of wooden stick as a fishing rod also makes this play symbolic.

5.6 *Participants of children’s play in kindergarten*

In this section I would like to answer more of the questions, which I have raised in my research: Who do children play with? What is the role of adults in children’s play in Russian state kindergartens? First of all, I will elaborate on the first question and then on the second.

The main question of this section regards the role of adults in children’s play. In my opinion, in order to elaborate on this question it is important to analyze who usually participates in children’s play and different ways of joining the play. Thus I will start this section by answering question: Who do children play with?

5.6.1 Participation in the play

During my fieldwork I often observed children playing in small groups (of 3-4 children, sometimes up to 5 children). In the majority of the cases there was one who was leading the

process of play: proposed the play plot, distributed roles, chose toys and other necessary objects for play. Other participants of play could follow him/her and accept the suggestions. Below I would like to present a short example from my observations.

Amina, Sasha and Igor are sitting on the edging of sand box. Amina addresses Sasha and Igor: *Let's build a house for my horse!* (taking out a pink plastic toy pony from the pocket of her jacket). Igor answers: *A big house?* Amina: *Yes!* Sasha and Igor start collecting sand in one pile together. Amina: *No, no. Igor, you can find some plastic forms because we need the fence around the house, so wolves cannot get in. Sasha, you can continue to build.* **FN, 2011, Playground outside, Day 9.**

Amina was the leader of this play. Two boys (Sasha and Igor) listened to her and followed her suggestions. They were not arguing with her or suggested anything themselves. The initiative belonged to Amina. It was her who initiated this play from the beginning, invited participants (Sasha and Igor) and gave them instruction what and how to do. Both boys were quite dependent on the leader in the play. I observed different plays where Amina was the leader several times during the period of the participant observation in group C. She could invite another child to play or reject someone.

It happened that other children could argue with Amina and insist on other solution in the process of play. Most often two other of my participants (Polina and Ruben) could argue with Amina if they were participating in one play with her. I observed several times during my fieldwork that Polina and Ruben were also in a play, when Amina did not participate.

I also have examples of my participants' play when there was no particular leader. Play was created by all participants and suggestions about the play plot, the role distributions and so on could come from everyone. I will present one of such examples of play where all participants were partners.

Maksim, Galina and Natasha are sitting together at the desks in the working area of the group room. In front of them, on the desk there is a wooden building kit for children and some small figures (of people). Maksim addresses others: *Let's pretend that there are two flying ships. Here: this and this* (taking out two wooden bars from the building set and putting it on the table). Galina: *And this table will be a sea. They are sailing in the sea. Big sea. Ocean.* Galina is taking each bar in each hand and moving them around the desk. Maksim: *They are sailing home, I think. I am the captain of this ship* (pointing on one of the wooden bars). Natasha: *Ok, and I would like to command this ship.* Galina: *Aha, then I will be the real pirate captain. Here*

is my boat (taking out one more wooden bar and putting it on the table). **FN, 2011, Group room, Day 2.**

Maksim, Galina and Natasha were cooperating their decisions and behaved like partners. Play lasted for a fairly long time (about 20 minutes). They developed it into a pirate story, probably inspired by movie “The Pirates of the Caribbean”. Later two more children joined the play (Vova and Igor). They joined the play easily and without asking other participants, if they could join. I noticed that rather often it was not so easy to join a play when it was some leader. Then, usually in order to join, a child had to ask leader if he/she could join and receive positive answer.

There is another interesting point I would like to elaborate on in this subsection concerning the way children could join play. I have noticed that some of my participants were accepted and could join any play going on in the group C. For example, Vova could easily join any play without asking if he could join or not other children, which were already participating in the play. He was accepted in the play by any other of children. Vova was very initiative in the process of play and rather often brought up new creative ideas, which allowed to develop the play plot. At the same time, I never saw him being a part of any conflict among my participants.

I noticed that German sometimes got negative answer from other children when he wanted to join the play, which already was going on. For example, Amina, who usually was the leader of the play process once did not let him join play.

Amina and Polina are sitting on the carpet of the playing area of the group room and playing with the dolls. German approaches them and asks: *Can I join?* Amina, addressing him: *No, you cannot. We are playing with the dolls. It is kind of girls game. And you like to ruin and smash everything!* **FN, 2011, Group room, day 4.**

In my opinion the key argument not to let German to join play was that he likes to ruin everything. It is also possible to assume that the reason was just the gender: boys are not supposed to play “girls” games. Before starting with my field work I had heard from some of my participants that they do not like to play with German because he always destroyed everything and that he did not know how to really play.

I got such an argument of “You do not know how to play” from some of my participants when I asked them if it was possible for me to join their play. The other argument I heard that I was an adult like their parents (or teachers). The main task for me in my research was to do participant observation in the limited time period I had. Thus my main task was to be accepted by the children at least as observer. I did not really achieve the level of trust reached by W. Corsaro in his study (Corsaro, 2003). He was accepted by his participants as “other” adult and had chance to participate in children’s play as a part of their everyday life.

I will now present the analysis of the data regarding the role of adults in children’s play and possibilities for adults to participate in children’s play.

5.6.2 Role of adults in children’s play

As I have pointed out before, in the group C there were two teachers who were working in shifts: Larisa and Lyudmila (real names are changed). Larisa was 76 years old lady with more than 50 years experience of working in the kindergarten as a teacher. Lyudmila was 52 years old, and she also had rather long working experience. They were working together in one group of kindergarten, replacing each other during the day for quite long period (more than 10 years). But, their role as adults in play of their ward (my participants) was different.

Some of my participants already in the individual interviews told me that they liked when their teacher, Larisa was playing with them. I asked Amina, if their other teacher was playing with them. Amina told: “Lyudmila is very kind. She gives fruits, reading books and playing guitar for us. But she does not know how to play”. I recorded this interview with Amina before I started with my fieldwork. During my observation among my participants I paid special attention to behavior of each of the teachers to find out why one teacher according to children plays and another does not know how to play.

Larisa due to her rather old age was not physically able to move around the group room (or outside playground) actively. That is why she would sit on the chair in the middle of the group room so she can see the working area and playing area very well. She used special folding chair, which she carried around with herself if she was moving around the group room (or outside playground).

Rather often when she was noticing that her children were enthusiastically playing she could take her chair and walk to them and sit down next to them. For example, once, when I was

sitting next to the group of playing children (they were cooking some food in the toy kitchen in the playing area of the group room) and making my field notes, Larisa sat down next to the children and told to them: “I can see that you are cooking dinner! I came to visit you. Here, I am ringing the door bell. I came for dinner. I would like to be your guest.” Below I will present some field notes I have done while observing this episode.

Rustam, Natasha and Aleksandra are sitting on the carpet and playing. They were cooking food, using a toy plastic kitchen of the playing area of the group room when Larisa addresses them. Natasha replies to Larisa: *Today we're having some fish for dinner. Do you like fish? And Rustam is making salad. And we have pizza also.* Larisa: *Oh, that's sounds very tasty. But I need to wash my hands before I eat, I think. Where I can do it?* Natasha, addressing Larisa: *I can help you with this. Here (pouring water from plastic jug). Now you can eat!* Larisa: *Oh, thank you. Now I can taste you wonderful dinner. Can you invite me to sit down to the dinner table.* Natasha: *You should wait. Dinner is not ready yet. But you can sit over there and look some magazines before. We have many interesting magazines here.* **FN, 2011, Group room, Day 7.**

Playing children (Natasha, Rustam and Aleksandra) rather easily accepted their teacher, Larisa to the play. She did not ask specially if she could join play, but asked them as if she was already participating in their play if she could be invited for the dinner they were cooking. Natasha responded to her initiative and started to describe what they are cooking. Still initiative and right to decide how the play was going to develop belonged to children. Larisa tried to ask children to invite her to the table but received a refusal from Natasha. Natasha explained that it was because dinner was not ready yet so Larisa, as guest, had to wait.

During my fieldwork I have never observed that any other teacher, working in the group C, participated like Larisa in children's play. In my opinion, Larisa was a rather strict teacher. For example, she prohibited more than Larisa. She did not allow children to run too much during the outside walk or climb very high on the metal staircase. On the other hand, she was playing guitar herself and singing for children. My participants seemed to like that very much.

I have asked Larisa once how she is able to join children's play so easily. She gave me a rather long explanation, which I will shortly present here. She explained that by requirements of educational programs teachers are given a task to enrich the play themes and making children to play in a group. So she and Lyudmila were reading books to children, telling them different stories and trying to play with them. She emphasized the fact that according to her

personal opinion the main thing was to respect children. Then, she told, children could accept a person.

At the same time during my participant observation I observed a not-so-positive example of teacher playing with children, in my opinion. One day Larisa proposed to my participants to sit down on the chairs in line (by each other) and pretend that they were in the train. She explained to them that they were going to travel. She had some ready-made play scenario on the piece of paper, which came by e-mail from the Department of Education. Probably she had a task to follow this scenario. I noticed observing children's reaction that they didn't want to play this game. My participants were following teachers' instructions in silence and without initiative. All initiative belonged to the teacher, who just told the children what to do. When Larisa stopped the play, children ran away to different corners and started doing something else, totally forgetting about the play they had just been playing.

Chapter 6: Discussions

6.1 Introduction

I have aimed to conduct research within the frames of the approach of Social studies of children and childhood. The research was ethnographical, and I targeted to gain insight into what the role of children's play in everyday life in setups of state kindergarten of Moscow city is. From my knowledge from my work as a psychologist in several kindergartens in Moscow I have expected that children do not have a lot of time for play during the day in kindergarten. Already at the stage of analyzing everyday time schedule of my participants in kindergarten No. 1 I found out that their everyday life was very busy and filled with different activities, most of which were organized and controlled by adults.

I would like to reiterate that I view children's play as a significant part of their culture and as a part of their everyday life. Therefore, play is understood as an activity, where initiative and control belongs mainly to children. Adults in children's play do not hold the main initiative and control, but they can participate in the play, if children let them do so. I will discuss the results of my research within the frames of the above-mentioned approach to children's play.

I will start the discussion chapter with the reflection on how much time children's play takes in their everyday life as shown in the results of my observation. Then I will elaborate on the diversity of children's play I observed in the setups of kindergarten. I will then present the discussion of the role of play in children's everyday life. Finally, the discussion will turn to the analysis of role of adults in children's play.

Partly I have already discussed the results of my research in the previous chapter. Here I will summarize all results and discuss them in a more structured and precise manner in order to answer the main question of the given research. I will particularly elaborate on children's agency and its importance for their play. I will also pay special attention in the discussion chapter to the confrontation between adults' control and children's resistance to that.

6.2 *Time and places for play in kindergarten No. 1*

W.G. Scarlett and others (2005) argue that play does not exist by its own, in vacuum, but it always appears in a particular environment. In my research I have studied play in the environment of Russian state kindergarten, where everyday life of children is controlled by adults with the help of a daily schedule for children's activity. That means that my participants did not have an opportunity to choose what they wanted to do during their stay in the kindergarten. In my master thesis I can only elaborate on children's play and its role in the everyday life of children in the setups of one state kindergarten in Russia. Play and its role in the everyday life of children in the setup of home, for example, might be different and most probably requires a separate research.

Results of the participant observation which I conducted in the kindergarten No. 1 in the group C showed that everyday life schedule of children is very busy. Mostly it is filled with activities, as the analysis of the data showed, organized and controlled by adults (teachers): classes, lessons, food (including eating and preparation for meal), sleep.

Children recognize activities, organized and controlled by teachers, as a part of their everyday life in the kindergarten. According to the data of the given research, my participants recognize organized activities as duties they have to do in the kindergarten, and it does not matter if they really like it or not. In my opinion, since adults get big authority in the setup of state kindergarten, children are used to following their instructions.

The results of the observation and individual interviews showed that children rather often could get very tired from such activities organized. Children's tiredness from classes was shown in the data of my research. Even for some of my participants who liked mathematics classes, these classes seemed too long, so they usually got tired from it.

P. Else (2009) states that children always choose to play, and they cannot be made to play. In my study I have discovered that children used every opportunity to play when staying in the kindergarten. For that purpose they used time, free from adults' control. Time periods for play usually were spread during the day between activities organized by teachers. Some of such free time periods were very short and were possible only for some of children in the group C (for example, during the sleep time). Some of free time periods were long and were for every

child in the group. Such periods were usually given to children according to the everyday schedule, which teachers were following.

According to children's point of view, play is an activity they want and really like to do. The answer to my question about what my participants liked to do in kindergarten in the most of cases they answered that they liked to play. Classes and lessons were recognized by children as something they liked to do considerably less often. In their play, children appeared to be active agents, while during classes or lessons children mostly followed teachers' instructions. Therefore, low level of adults' control and an opportunity to be active agents might be criteria for my participants to prefer one activity to another. Out of adults' control time can be recognized as time for play (free time for play).

Level of adults' control can be also seen as criteria for choosing place to play for my participants. In the process of my fieldwork I was observing my participants' play mostly in the playing area of the group room. Playing area was organized in the group room especially for play. This contradicts what I have stated earlier in the introduction chapter of my master thesis: teachers do not recognize children's play as an important and valuable activity. At the same time, a special playing zone is organized in every state kindergarten of Moscow. This happens due to an official requirement of the Department of Education of Moscow according to which there should be a special area for playing, studying, sport activities and so on. During my fieldwork in kindergarten No. 1 the teachers did not usually try to control children's activity in the playing area. That is why playing zone belonged only to my participants, and adults were allowed to be guests there, but not main actors.

The same can be said about the playground outside. During the walk, the children, who participated in my research, were usually given much more freedom by the teachers and were allowed to choose what they wanted to do. As a result, my participants always choose to play. More than that, their "secret" places (shown by my participants to me as a secret) served for play, too. In my opinion, children called them secret in terms that these places were unknown for their teachers and that means out of their control.

6.3 *Play and it's diversity in kindergarten No. 1*

In the process of participant observation I have observed a large diversity of play of my participants. In the previous chapter I have described each type of play I had observed:

dramatic play, fantasy play, imaginative play, role-play, symbolic play. I will later discuss play and its diversity in my fieldwork in greater detail.

In my research I have aimed to observe play as an action in the process. Thus it was not possible to imprint play and define what type of play it was by taking only a quick look. Sometimes during my observation it was difficult for me to understand quickly what type of play it was and what this play was about. I needed some time for observation and patience before I was able to classify and understand what was going on in the play of my participants.

Play always builds up on children's everyday life experience. Children's everyday life experience is changing all the time and it never stays the same. Consequently, children's play changes all the time together with everyday life's experience. Such scholars as W. Corsaro (1985), G. Masselos (1994) claim that children's perspectives are never static. According to W. Corsaro (1985), children continually change their point of view by the very interaction with their environment. In my research children's play existed in the environment of kindergarten. I recognize that home environment, mass media, adults' world, society and the like also made a great impact on the play of my participants. Within the frames of my research it was not possible for me to elaborate on every possible aspect, which has any influence on my participant's play, which is why I concentrated only on the setups of kindergarten No. 1.

I have never observed the same play twice. Every time play of my participants was unique and existing in this particular moment. Sometimes started before play could be continued throughout the next "play session".

I have observed different types of play, taken part in different places of kindergarten (in the group room, on the playground outside, in some "secret" places). In the process of analysis the received data I have noticed several regularities in appearing one or another type of play and place of kindergarten, where the play takes place. For example, my participants preferred to play more active games on the playground outside since they were allowed to run there. Role-play and dramatic play usually took part inside the group room, in the playing area. The playing area of the group room was provided with different toys, tools and books, which my participant could use in their role or dramatic play. The same is true for symbolic play. Imaginative, fantasy and symbolic plays could take place in both areas – on the playground outside or in the playing area inside. In my opinion, the reason for this is that these types of

play are less dependent on the environment's setups. For example, in the process of symbolic play any object can be used by children for their needs and incorporate into the plot of the play. Imaginative and fantasy plays depend on the abilities of imagination of children's themselves and less dependent on the environment setups.

I would like to devote special attention to the role-play of my participants since role-play has a particular role and place in their everyday life. In my research I see children's play in terms of their peer groups and peer culture. W. Corsaro (2005) uses the term 'peers' referring to that group of kids who spend time together on an everyday basis. My participants attended the same group so they usually spent full day in kindergarten together. Peer culture is understood by W. Corsaro (2005) as a set of activities or routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers.

In the process of my fieldwork I discovered that children in the group C participated in the same role-play which was usually chosen to play together with their friends. Children try to gain control of their lives and, at the same time, share that control with each other (Corsaro, 2009). In play they become ally and associates. In my research the controlling (main) role in the role-play usually belonged to one leader, who gave roles to others and decided who could participate in the play. Such leader normally gave "good" (usually wanted by everyone popular roles – for example, the role of a mother or a father) roles to his/her friends, and other "bad" roles could be given to others. Creativity and good fantasy, shown by some child when choosing and developing a play plot, was also a criterion for becoming friends with this child.

6.4 Adults as a part of children's everyday life and their role in children's play

Teachers of my participants were present in their everyday life so they could be seen as a part of it. They had a duty to look after my participants, provide security and safety, educate and entertain, provide care. The main function in children's everyday life can be defined, in my opinion, as a function of control. Following G. Dahlberg (2009) we can state that settings of kindergarten can be viewed as a structure and culture of negotiation. Children resist adults' control and rules of kindergarten. Children are not helpless but they can present themselves as helpless persons in order to construct routine interactional events with adults (Speier, 1976).

My participants played only in their free time during the day, which was free from adults' control. Play became the only activity in their everyday life where their teachers did not have full control and were not part of it. Children performed their agency in the process of play. However, judging by the results of my research I cannot state that teachers (Larisa and Lyudmila) do not have any important role in children's play. As P. Else (2009) states that adult's main role to help children's play should be in the creation of spaces and opportunities so children can engage with the world freely. Both of my participant's teachers have seen as their task and duty to read book, tell interesting stories and provide for their children with a variety of toys. Larisa and Lyudmila were always open for questions from children about any topic they were interested in and they were ready to provide any help they needed. I can assume that teachers acted as some sort of guides for my participants into adult's world in the kindergarten's setup. A-C. Evaldsson (2004) states that children collectively appropriate features of adult world to create innovative play routines in their peer cultures.

At the same time teachers could not make my participants play or organize any exiting play for them. An attempt to do so did not succeeded. Such an organized play makes it "plain" and forces them to play "as planned". That is not acceptable in children's culture.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

In my master thesis I have aimed to research children's play and its role in their everyday life in the setups of state kindergarten in Moscow. As a theoretical base for my research I have chosen approach of New Sociology of childhood. In order to study children's play in the process as the main research method I have chosen method of participant observation. My main focus, following the approach of F. Mouritsen (2002) has been to explore children's play as a particular practice within children's culture, where children are active participants and main actors. So it was important for me in my master thesis also to elaborate on the displaying of children's agency in their everyday life in the setups of kindergarten.

In the introduction chapter of this research I have formulated my main research question: *What is the role of play in everyday life of children in Russian state kindergarten's setup?* I have also raised clarifying questions, which did specify the objective of the study:

1. How is everyday life of children organized in Russian State kindergartens?
2. How do children play? When do children play? Who do children play with?
3. What is the role of adults in children's play in Russian State kindergartens?

I am seeing children as an active meaning makers and main agents in their own culture. Children's play I am seeing as a part of their own culture and at the same time as a part of their everyday life. W. Corsaro (2005) states that through play children can participate in peer culture and different peer groups.

In the process of the fieldwork I have observed children's play in the setups of state kindergarten of Moscow. Play was one of possible activities in setup of kindergarten (within organized and controlled by adults activities), where children had a possibility to get full control and initiative (in different situations). Only one of two teachers sometimes was allowed by my participants to participate in play. Though the initiative in the process of play belonged to children and not to adults.

Due to the busy everyday scheduler in the kindergarten, created and controlled by adults, children do not have so much time for play during their stay in the kindergarten during the

day. Though children are using any possibility, when they are free from adult's (teachers) control to play. So free out of adult's control time can be seen as time for play.

In my master theses I came to the conclusions that play have an important role in children's everyday life in kindergarten. I would like to list here main findings of my research. They are as follows:

- I. Everyday life of children in the studied state kindergarten is very busy and filled with different activities, most of which are organized and controlled by adults. Time in kindergarten is controlled by adults. Children use any opportunity in time to play.
- II. Activities, organized and controlled by teachers are recognized by children as a part of their everyday life, but at the same time as their duty. They not always like this activities and rather often getting tired from them.
- III. Adults can be allowed by children to participate in children's play but children do not let them to have main initiative and control in their play.
- IV. The level of adult's control can be seen as a criteria for children's choices of place to play: children prefer places where adults have less control.
- V. In play children are active agents and meaning makers so play can be seen as one of activities in which children have the opportunity to resist adult's control in kindergarten.

I have mentioned in the introduction chapter that play is a very complicated term, which requires profound research. In the process of collecting data and working on the theory chapter of my master thesis I have came to the conclusion that in order to answer the main research question more research is needed. I have elaborated only on certain aspects of children's play and its role in their everyday life in kindergarten No. 1. In my opinion, this topic should be more fully explored and requires a more comprehensive research than it was possible for me to do within the frames of my master thesis.

A more profound research would require a much longer participant observation in order to receive more reliable and accurate data on children's play. In order to conduct quality observation of play as a part of children's culture a researcher should achieve a high level of children's trust and become a part of their community. In the process of my fieldwork my participants accepted me as an observer, but I did not have time and possibility to become a part of their peer culture to participate in play as their equal. Therefore, I can state that some

important aspect of children's play might have eluded from the scope of my observation and understanding in the process of observation.

Many interesting aspects of children's play and its role in their everyday life were not included into my research. For example, it could be interesting and important to study the role of play in the process of making friends and sharing control among members of one peer group. Moreover, such an aspect of children's play as solving conflicts and problems in the process of everyday life was not examined within the frames of my research.

Therefore, I see the main purpose of my research in drawing attention of scholars and practitioners in Russia to the significance of play for children. I hope that my research could possibly serve as an inspiration for scholars to research children's play as a significant part of their everyday life within the approach of New Sociology of childhood.

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Internet resources

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Appendices

List of nicknames of children that participated in the study

Boys

Girls

##	Nickname	Age
1	German	5,5
2	Danila	5
3	Misha	5,5
4	Sophiya	5
5	Amina	6
6	Polina	5
7	Sasha	6
8	Igor	6
9	Vova	6
10	Albert	6
11	Irina	5

12	Sveta	5,5
13	Sergei	6
14	Gosha	5,5
15	Aleksandra	5
16	Natasha	6
17	Boris	5,5
18	Vadim	6
19	Maksim	5
20	Galina	5
21	Zakhar	6
22	Rustam	6
23	Olga	5,5
24	Ruben	6
25	Ekaterina	5,5

Information letter for parents

(original text is on Russian language, translated by Y.E.)

Dear parents!

I am the master student in Norwegian University of Science and technology. Currently I am writing my master thesis. I am planning to do my research in the kindergarten # 1, in an older group of kindergarten, which your child (_____ first name and family name of a child) is attending.

Aim of my study is to research play of preschool children in Russian kindergartens. So I am planning to observe play of children during period of 2 months (September, October 2011) with using field notes as method of data collection. Also I am planning to do individual interviews with each child in order to fulfill my data of my observation. I may use such additional methods as individual drawings.

I am guaranteeing safety and confidentiality for your child. In the text of my research I will not use any real names or other confidential information about you or your child. I will make sure that all children are participating voluntarily. Your child and you have the right to quite from participation in the research any moment. Consent from headmaster and teachers are received.

I hereby ask you to give consent for participation of your child in my research. You and your child will have right to quite from the research process any time.

I, _____ (first name and family name), don't mind (mind) that my child (_____ first name and family name of a child) will participate in the research, conducting by Yulia Efimova in kindergarten # 1.

_____ (signature)

_____ (day and place)

If you have some questions or need some clarification about the research you can contact me by phone: 8-916-508-34-28 or e-mail: yuliaef@mail.ru.

Please send signed information letter to me on e-mail or leave it in the folder in wardrobe of the group.

Example of individual conversation with children in order to get informed consent of them

YE – Yulia Efimova

G – German

YE: My name is Yulia. What is your name?

G: My name is German.

YE: Can I ask how old you are, German?

G: I am 5 years and 6 months.

YE: So you are starting with school very soon?

G: Yes! I am going to school already. Three times every week.

YE: What are you studying there?

G: We are doing some mathematics and reading.

YE: That is great! You are grown up!

G: Yes!

YE: Do you know why I asked you to have a talk with me?

G: Yes! Natasha told me. She said she liked you.

YE: Oh, that is very nice to hear. I would like to explain to you as I did to Natasha already why I am here. I came to your kindergarten because I need your help very much. I am planning to write a book about children in kindergarten: what children are doing in kindergarten usually, how they are living, what they like and what they don't like to do, what can happen interesting during the day.

G: A book! Is it a big book?

YE: I don't know now how big this book will be because I am just working on it now. But I am planning to make it interesting for other children ...

G: What other children?

YE: Well, I am planning to travel to Norway...

G: I know how to find Norway on map!

YE: That is great. Unfortunately I do not have map now, but if you wish next time I can bring one so you can show me Norway.

G: Ok!

YE: So as I said I am going to travel to Norway. There I will meet children living there and attending to other kindergarten. I think it will be very interesting for them to read the book I am writing now. They can learn how children in far-away Russia are living.

G: We are living great!

YE: Yes! I think so to! I must say that in order to write this book I need your help a lot. You see, now I am grown up.

G: How old are you?

YE: I am 30 years old.

G: Wow, that is a lot!

YE: Yes, rather. So now I totally forgot what it is to be a child. It was so long ago when I was a child. And I also attended to kindergarten.

G: Did you attend to this kindergarten?

YE: No, but my kindergarten was similar, I think.

G: Ok!

YE: I need your help to remind me, grown up person with bad memory, what it is to be a child. So I am planning to visit you group and look what you are doing together. Also I would like to talk with each of you time to time when I need you help. Do you agree to participate?

G: Yes, I think so. I can help.

YE: I am very grateful. I think we can write this book together!

G: Yes!

YE: But if you will feel tired or just feel like you don't want to talk with me you can any time tell me.

G: Ok! I never feel tired!

YE: Good to hear! You will be a great helper to me!

G: And you help me!

YE: Anytime!