



Childhood, Medicine and the Planning of British and French Colonial Cities

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Though often considered marginal to colonial urban planning, this paper shows that children, like hill stations, lay at the epicenter of the cultural politics of colonial urbanism after the bacteriological turn. As the contest between European commercial and administrative elites, native landowners and others over space intensified, ideals of childhood became entangled with moral judgments about planning and urban policies. This paper explores the ways in which discourses of childhood became intertwined with those of health, sanitation and the built environment and informed planning practices in British and French colonial cultures, by discussing the development of colonial hill stations. As declining mortality rates, improving sanitation and competition between new laboratory-based approaches to disease transmission and older environmental interpretations of endangerment weakened claims for the white colonizer as profoundly vulnerable in the 'tropical' milieu and complicated efforts by sections of colonial communities to marshal scientific theory behind justifications for segregation, ruling elites mobilized justificatory discourses to which childhood was integral. Ideals of childhood were invoked in planning and urban policies launched at the highest level of the colonial state as elites negotiated access to space, defined the limits of hygienic modernity and strove to perpetuate their own rule.

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