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**Participant Information Sheet – schools**

**Study Title:** Ludic Geopolitics: children’s play, war toys and re-enchantment with the British military

We would like to invite your school to take part in our research study. Before you decide we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for your school. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The study examines children’s play with military action figures. The aim is not to judge whether war play is good or bad, but to better understand how children make sense of contemporary war and conflict through their play.

**Why has my school been invited?**

The study will involve approximately 30 children, aged 6-10 years old, from Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire. These areas have been chosen as they are strong military catchment areas and within easy travelling distance of the university. The research will be based in the children’s homes, but in order to recruit children to the study we wish to conduct a short session in local schools to introduce possible participants to the research.

**Does my school have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide if you are happy to join the study. We will describe the study and go through this information sheet, and you will be able to ask questions about any aspect of the study.

**What will the school child have to do?**

We would like to run a short session (approx. one hour) with a class/separate classes of children. The dates and times of these sessions can be arranged around your school schedule. We have an activity planned but we are happy to discuss any changes you may wish to make to this activity. Our planned activity involves children using a variety of toy figures (of both genders, but including military action figures) to create a story of their own choosing. In groups, they will create a storyboard to share this narrative. All equipment will be provided and your school will be given a copy of anything the children create as part of the study. Any children expressing an interest in taking part in the wider study will be given a letter to take home to their parent/guardian requesting an initial meeting.

**What will children participating in the wider home-based study be asked to do?**

The children will be asked to participate in approximately five one-hour sessions, held in the home, ideally at two-week intervals, but arranged around family schedules. The children will be asked to photograph their toys, talk to the researcher about their action figures (this will be recorded where permitted) and film their play with their action figures. All equipment will be provided.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

We will aim to minimise the inconvenience of participation. The session has been designed to be fun. Children participating in previous studies have enjoyed taking part.

**Will the school’s participation in the study be kept confidential?**

Your school will not be identified in any final reports or publications and you will have the option to withdraw any material created in the school-based sessions. Any data collected will be stored securely on Dr. Tara Woodyer’s university computer hardware, and backed up to an encrypted hard drive also kept in a secure location at the university. Only the five researchers working directly on the project will have access to identifiable data. These researchers are Dr. Tara Woodyer and Dr. Diana Martin (University of Portsmouth), Dr. Sean Carter and Dr. Philip Kirby (University of Exeter), and Prof. Klaus Dodds (Royal Holloway). At the end of the study, the collected data will be archived with the Economic and Social Data Service, which is part of the UK Data Service. This is a database resource used by researchers, teachers and policy makers. There is no obligation for you to agree to your school’s data being included in this.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have concerns about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher, who will do their best to answer your questions. You can contact Dr. Tara Woodyer (lead researcher) on 023 9284 2510 or at tara.woodyer@port.ac.uk. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can contact the head of the university’s Geography department, Dr. Simon Leonard, on 023 9284 2501 or at simon.leaonard@port.ac.uk.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

We intend to publish the results of this study in academic journals, reports for professional organisations and a book. We also intend to include data from this study in a website run by Tara Woodyer, which includes audio-visual material from her previous studies. Your school will not be identified in any report/publication.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research is sponsored by the University of Portsmouth (in collaboration with the University of Exeter and Royal Holloway, University of London), and is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Neither the collaborating universities nor the research council will benefit from any significant financial gain as a result of this study.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

Research undertaken by the University of Portsmouth is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has also been reviewed by an independent group of people, as part of the Economic and Social Research Council funding process.

**Further information and contact details**

If you want further information about the study please feel free to contact the lead researcher, Tara Woodyer, on 023 9284 2510 or at tara.woodyer@port.ac.uk.

**Concluding statement**

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If your school decides to participate we will provide you with a copy of this information to keep.