The Life Space of the Urban Child
Perspectives on Martha Muchow's Classic Study

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With a foreword by Jaan Valsiner

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Why offer a book in English that was published nearly eighty years ago in Germany?

We believe that *The Life Space of the Urban Child* written by Martha Muchow is a milestone in urban child studies. It is a classic that remains relevant to the current work and discussions in the broader field of childhood research, and provides numerous implications for developmental and environmental psychology as well as pedagogy and social sciences in general.

The *Life Space* book provides a fresh look at children as actors and at how they appropriate their city environments. It uses an empirical base that is connected with theories about the worlds in which children live. The way Martha Muchow conducted her studies in order to obtain access to children in their environments by combining, for example, observations with cartographies and essays produced by the children, was new at the time and continues to inspire researchers today. Thus, given its theoretical base, methodological approach, and empirical findings, it can be concluded that the *Life Space* study is a jewel.

Additionally, the history of the book is interesting in and of itself. Martha Muchow and her students studied the lives of children in urban worlds in the 1920s in Barmbek, a district of the city of Hamburg. However, her brother, Hans Heinrich Muchow, published the results of this study only in 1935, after Martha Muchow committed suicide in 1933, while under severe pressure by the Nazi Regime. For a long time, the book was lost and forgotten, a fate similar to several other relevant research projects undertaken at that time in Germany. In the 1970s, Jürgen Zinnecker, a prominent German researcher in the field of youth and childhood, rediscovered the book and published it as a
reprint in 1978 (followed by the third edition in 1980), putting many scientists from different disciplines in touch with this unique work. It has since become a success story in Germany. However, it is noteworthy that it has aroused less interest in developmental psychology fields, while significantly attracting more attention in environmental psychology, especially in the context of pedagogy and general social science research on childhood (cf. Mey 2012, 2013).

New Attention to a Classic Study—German and International Views

In Germany, Martha Muchow is currently receiving renewed attention in the form of publications, exhibits, conferences, and special honors. This is no doubt partly due to the 120th anniversary of her birth (September 25, 1892) and the eightieth anniversary of her death (September 27, 1933).

For example, in 2012, the fifth edition of *The Life Space of the Urban Child* was published as an expanded volume which included other contributions that reflected on the study. This edition was edited by Imbke Behnken, the wife of Jürgen Zinnecker, who died in 2011, and Michael-Sebastian Honig. This was done after Jürgen Zinnecker’s fourth edition of 1998 had been sold out for a long time. Second, Hannelore Faulstich-Wieland and Peter Faulstich (2012) published a monograph about Muchow that provided additional insight into her life and work. Muchow began as a schoolteacher and then transitioned to a scientific career in 1920 at the Hamburg Laboratory as part of the productive research group led by William and Clara Stern, Heinz Werner, and others who transformed the place into one of the most important centers for childhood research at the time. During the ten years prior to her death, she produced an enormous amount of research on different psychological and pedagogical topics, all with the objective of bringing together theory and practice. Third, a documentary film is being made, which is directed by Günter Mey and Günter Wallbrecht (2014) and supported by the Martha Muchow Foundation, the Hamburgische Wissenschaftliche Stiftung, and Sparda Bank Hamburg. It addresses these themes through interviews with current researchers of different disciplines and by using original material. (The DVD is expected to be released in 2014.)

This renewed recognition of Muchow the scientist can also be due to Germany’s desire to give reparation to the victims of the Nazi regime. In 2007, the University of Hamburg renamed its Library of Education,
Muchow’s Marks—An Introduction

Psychology, and Sports as the Martha Muchow Library in an effort to remind students and researchers of the crimes committed in Germany during the Nazi regime. In memory of her birthday, Faulstich-Wieland organized a scientific exhibit at the library in 2012. Finally, the Martha Muchow Foundation was started in 2010 with the intention of furthering research in the field of childhood, ethnography, and life spaces according to the example set by Muchow, especially in *The Life Space of the Urban Child*.

Until the present time, international recognition of this unique study had been limited because of its availability only in the German language. Nonetheless, a broader audience has shown interest, as seen in some events. In 1983, Joachim F. Wohlwill organized a symposium at the meeting of the *Society for Research in Child Development* in Detroit, Michigan, in the United States. Wohlwill was born in Hamburg in 1928 and immigrated with his parents to the United States, via Portugal, in 1934. As a professor of developmental and environmental psychology, he rediscovered the *Life Space* study during a sabbatical at the Technical University of Berlin in the beginning of the 1980s. At the Detroit meeting, leading developmental and environmental psychologists like Phil Schoggen, Seymour Wapner, and Alexander Siegel honored Martha Muchow and discussed the *Life Space* study (Wohlwill 1985). Up until that point, there had only been one reference to this study in a textbook on developmental psychology by Werner (1948), who had worked with Martha Muchow at the Hamburg Laboratory (headed by William Stern) until he emigrated to the United States in 1933. Additional importance of the study to the international scientific community of developmental and environmental psychologists is demonstrated in a publication that resulted from the international conference called *The City as a Frame of Development for Children* in Herten, Germany, in the 1990s. The volume entitled *Children, Cities, and Psychological Theories: Developing Relationships* (Görlitz et al. 1998), which is dedicated to J. Wohlwill, contains twenty-five references to Martha Muchow, making her the most cited researcher next to Uri Bronfenbrenner and Roger Barker.

Owing to the difference between the German and international recognition of Martha Muchow’s work, it would be inappropriate to consider her only from the perspective of psychology, which has always been done until now in terms of international interest. Over the past twenty years, the range of studies related to Muchow’s research field has expanded. What had previously been categorized as “Development
and Environment” has broadened to include research on biography and culture.

**The Concept of the Book**

A broader perspective has been used in developing the present volume. The translation of the study is the core, which is framed by invited contributions that discuss the history of Muchow’s book, its theoretical base and empirical results, its methodological approaches and assumptions, and suggested follow-ups.

We hope that the wealth of perspectives presented in this work will help the reader follow the footprints left by Muchow, and lead them toward future actions, as expressed in the title, *Martha Muchow’s Marks*.

The heart of this book is the second section containing the translation of *The Life Space of the Urban Child* published by Hans Heinrich Muchow in 1935, translated into English by Hartmut Günther. The *Life Space* studies that have garnered such extensive renewed attention are themselves but a short research report. Heinrich Muchow himself observed at the end of his introduction that, although he had collaborated with his sister on this study, “I will sadly transmit only a fragment of it to the scientific and pedagogical world” (Muchow 1935/2013, 8). Hence, although this “fragment” presents especially relevant results and remarks about a methodological framework, an explicit theoretical contextualization is largely missing, and such contextualization can only be surmised on the basis of other publications by Martha Muchow. The relevance of these remarks to the study’s results was not discussed in a systematic manner in the original publication from 1935.

Consequently, the contributing authors of the chapters in this volume that accompany the translation address the points and perspectives of the study, such as considering children as actors, the treatment of life spaces as places for the (social) actions of children, and the development of innovative methodological approaches. The different authors present their perspectives, and everyday contexts are considered.

**Overview of the Contributions**

**Background Section**

The three chapters of the first section by Imbke Behnken and Jürgen Zinnecker, Kurt Kreppner, and Elfriede Billmann-Mahecha, respectively, provide a distinct historical background for the *Life Space* study.
Imbke Behnken and Jürgen Zinnecker trace the story about how the study was lost to science and then reencountered by Zinnecker. They contextualize the study first to the time of its writing in the 1920s and 1930s in Hamburg, then to the time of its rediscovery in the 1970s, and finally to more recent implications of the study today. Imbke Behnken uses various documents, articles written by Zinnecker, correspondence exchanges, and historical material to provide detailed insights in her compiled essay and offers an intimate portrayal of Martha Muchow the scientist.

Next, Kurt Kreppner places the study and other works by Martha Muchow into the context of the Psychological Laboratory at the University of Hamburg, in the years after World War I to the beginning of the Nazi regime. He outlines the influence of Muchow’s two main teachers, William Stern and Heinz Werner, and sensitively narrates Muchow’s commitment to her research on the cognitive and social development of children and her growing interest in studying their ecological conditions. Overall, he paints a lively picture of the unique career of a committed researcher.

Elfriede Billmann-Macheha’s chapter concludes the historical treatment of Martha Muchow’s Life Space study by describing the origins of research on children and youth beginning at that time. She points out the uniqueness of Muchow’s study by contrasting it with others’ research at the time, especially by Kurt Lewin, Siegfried Bernfeld, and Hildegard Jüngst. With these comparisons, Billmann-Mahecha gives an insight into the variety of research happening at that time and the special spirit of research in education and developmental psychology during a pioneering phase that was so abruptly stopped by the Nazi regime.

Theoretical Foundation Section

The translation follows with considerations by Hartmut Günther, which include reflections on his role as translator of a scientific text and his particular perspective as an environmental psychologist. Following the translation of the study and its comment, the authors of the third section discuss the theoretical foundations of the study, which are either mentioned in the book or inferred.

First, James Lamiell shows how Martha Muchow, as a student and close collaborator of Stern, based her study and work on her teacher’s approach. After outlining the theoretical and philosophical ideas found in the comprehensive worldview (Weltanschauung) that Stern
developed under the name of “critical personalism,” he analyzes how The Life Space of the Urban Child picks up the idea with regard to the “person-world convergence” and “play as focal activity in personalistic investigations.”

In the next chapter, Lauri Linask, Riin Magnus, and Kalevi Kull demonstrate how the impact of Jacob von Uexküll’s concept of Umwelt and ecology was stronger than the mere connection between Stern’s Psychological Institute and the Uexküll’s Biological Institute at the University of Hamburg during the 1920s. Using Uexküll’s differentiation between the perceptual world (Merkwelt) and the operational world (Wirkwelt), the abovementioned authors transfer Uexküll’s ideas to the lifeworlds of human beings and then establish a connection with the Life Space study and a semiotic approach that can be useful in formulating hypotheses about how children develop concepts of their Umwelten.

Finally, Peter Faulstich and Hannelore Faulstich-Wieland develop another important theoretical link to help understand Muchow’s Life Space study, specifically a connection to Husserl and phenomenology. This concept was important to Martha Muchow’s thinking when she was preparing her doctoral dissertation and other publications at the time of the Life Space study. This theme makes her approach to understanding the lifeworld of children more understandable and shows how she was inspired by very distinct theoretical approaches. It is also clear that Muchow preferred an integrative methodological perspective.

Perspectives Section

The authors of the fourth and last section of this volume pursue and expand various lines of research from the Life Space study. These chapters are particularly dedicated to Muchow’s range in outlining children in urban environments, methodological approaches, understanding children as actors who appropriate their environment, and the significance of space in the contexts of social science and education.

Urs Fuhrer focuses his detailed review of the literature aspect of the Life Space study on children’s places from a developmental perspective that is sensitive to children’s physical environment and their development. He centers his explanations especially on the behavior setting approach developed by Roger Barker and outlines how this line of theorizing stimulates a developmental view of child behavior within a cultivation paradigm. Thus, he emphasizes new investigative directions for current research that maintain the spirit of Muchow’s Life Space study.
Günter Mey discusses the methodological innovations provided by Martha Muchow’s use of observation, namely writing protocols as “thick descriptions,” drawing cartographies to understand the home range of the children, and essay writing. He carefully evaluates these combined methods through the lens of qualitative research, particularly the ethnographical approach, and with regard to methods of triangulation.

Beatrice Hungerland adds a stimulating sociological perspective that she calls “new childhood studies.” She analyzes the Life Space study by referring to methodologically and theoretically dominant approaches required by the new childhood studies: Muchow’s emphasis on the differences between how children and adults perceive their world is countered with the concept of generational order; Muchow’s view on children as actors who appropriate their world is countered with the agency concept. A comparison of Muchow’s concepts with the challenges of today’s child research demonstrates, like Mey does with methods, that past studies provide important stimuli for future research. At the same time, such a comparison also establishes that future research should not merely copy previous research. Rather, past studies must be appropriated and then transformed into current research questions.

The two concluding chapters by Gerold Scholz and Kristin Westphal, respectively, provide examples of possible transformations based on Muchow’s studies. Both deal with spaces that were not included in Martha Muchow’s research. In the context of the school environment, Gerold Scholz differentiates between space and educational space. He highlights the differences between a child and a pupil in the classroom, and between educational research and childhood studies. He suggests how to handle research in this field and argues that such research should expand the research style established by Muchow. In the discussion about the classroom as a designed education space, two questions are posed simultaneously: What can be observed and inferred when observing children in school, and what cannot.

Kristin Westphal directs her attention to the media, which is so prevalent in today’s childhood. She deals with how children and childhood can be considered the spatial experiences of virtual worlds, and how these can be appropriated. She discusses how spatial research and media research intersect from a phenomenological perspective, and to what extent Muchow’s descriptions of the dimensions of space from the perspective of children are still relevant.
From Past to Future

Considering this array of chapters that frame the translation of the Life Space study, we are convinced that our effort goes beyond making a historical book available to an international audience. We hope that science will benefit from being aware of its (sometimes forgotten) roots, given the motto from past to future. The Life Space study is a fascinating book with an integrating spirit, written in a lively manner that transmits an enthusiasm for current and future research. We hope that this animated discussion of an old study is similar to the experience many of the authors had at the conference and the after-conference meeting—with the support of the Fritz Thyssen Foundation—held at the University of Applied Sciences Magdeburg-Stendal in the fall of 2012, during the preparation of this book. There, we discussed the impact of the study, debated connections with today’s advances and challenges in childhood research in different disciplines. We reflected on our own connections between the Life Space study and our research activities. We also discussed possible future steps in the ongoing (his) story of The Life Space of the Urban Child.

Acknowledgments

As editors, we thank the German publishing house, Beltz Juventa, especially Director Frank Engelhardt for allowing us to translate the original study for this volume, and Jill Haring for her careful language editing of all texts for this book. Many thanks also to Jaan Valsiner for inviting us to edit the book in the series, “History and Theory of Psychology,” at Transaction Publishers; for his continuous cooperation with the long process of the book’s publication; and for his intensive discussions about the common application of “Developmental Science” during his visit, which was made possible by the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation in the summer of 2013 in Berlin and at University of Magdeburg-Stendal. And, finally, we thank the University of Brasilia for its financial support toward the language editing.

References


Muchow’s Marks—An Introduction


The Life Space of the Urban Child

Martha Muchow and Hans Heinrich Muchow (1935/1978)

Preface

The following studies brought together under the title “The Life Space of the Urban Child” are intended to provide insights and to contribute to the comprehension of the “World of the Child.” The original formulation of the question was social-pedagogical in nature, and the results offered to the educator led back to the pedagogical realm and are understood as purely psychological.

The embryo for this publication is a lecture series on the nature of “the City as life space and life form,” which we conducted under the supervision of the Hamburg Volksheim, during the winter of 1927–1928 in the course that featured Fritz Höger, Dr. Cimbal, Heinz Marr, A. E. Günther, and others. The lecture series intended to show how the city—as particular world—is able to influence and shape the young people who live in it. Thus, the approach of the study reflected a milieu-psychological perspective. However, in the preliminary studies conducted by my sister, Dr. Martha Muchow, between 1928 and 1929, it became apparent this method would be insufficient, and possibly even wrong in the long term. The more the person-world relationship was rationalized in fundamental new manners, the more evident it became that, in the child-city relationship, it is not the world of the city that “only enters in contact with the person (child) through a subsequent convergence.” Rather, the world “lived” by the urban child, as is the case with any “lived world,” is a particular life that takes place between person and world. Hence, the objective was no longer to investigate how an urban world, as described in a particular manner, influences children who live there, but to show how children transform their
“city” into their environment, and how thereupon the “world lived by the child” represents the city.

The additional investigations conducted from this perspective were intended to specifically develop methods and collect material. These were undertaken between 1930 and 1932. [7/8] Students from the University of Hamburg offered their services for these investigations. Without their careful observations and note taking, this study would have been impossible. Special thanks to Herbert Böckenhauer, Herbet Brose, Heinz Herrmann, Egon Heydenreich, Kurt Hettling, Hedwig Höfer, Werner Kobiella, Hettie Lesser, Erika Lübcke, Inge Meumann, Walter Nagel, Ingeborg Roy, Marianne Tamm, and Anneliese Westerman. Thank you also to Georg Göthke, who undertook the laborious task of taking geographical measurements.

My sister presumably meant to publish this research in 1934. Some preliminary work had already been done and several sketches had been made public. However, events that occurred in 1933 prevented my sister’s full dedication to this work, and then death took the pen from her hand. My sister allowed me to participate in her work from the beginning through conversations and collaboration, and my efforts to continue her work and publish it are a way to pay a debt of gratitude to which I am honor bound. I fear, however, that I will not satisfy the ultimate intentions of my late sister, and that I will sadly transmit only a fragment of it to the scientific and pedagogical world.

Vierhöfen, Lüneburg, March 17, 1935
Hans Muchow

[9]

Introduction

Until now, there has been no attempt to question the “life space of the urban child,” or to answer it scientifically. In both pedagogical and psychological literature, “the child” has been simply an object of research. The few, more recent studies, which do contrast the city child and the rural child, neither offer a detailed analysis nor description of the reality of life in the city, nor do they attempt to capture the “life space” of the urban child.

This fact, which nowadays strikes us as peculiar, can only be understood historically and sociologically. In terms of literature, one can suppose that most pedagogical writers of the past were—at least
mentally—urban dwellers. Thus, they had little awareness of the “urban attachment” of their thinking where form, content, and results were simple and universal to the point that they hopelessly ignored the peculiarities of humanity in the city and urban education. Only recently have changes been taking place in this respect.

The objective of the research was nearly exclusively a formal-psychological description of the inner life of children and the elaboration of formal-psychological regularities. All these psychological investigations, whether developmental or differential in nature, were fundamentally biased in a framework of general (universal) psychology. Today, we can show that this kind of psychology does not permit a full understanding or successful interaction with, for instance, the urban child. Doing so would require knowledge of the particular world domain upon which the formal forces of the child act. Once it became understood in psychology that, in an objectively equal life space, the “lived world” could be very different depending on the structure of the person who lives this world, it became necessary to turn to the then-current studies of the “person” and to investigating the “personal world.” This approach was first used in J. v. Uexküll’s [9/10] “Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere” and W. Stern’s “Studien zur Personwissenschaft.” Only then were we able to position our problem and begin dealing with it in appropriate categories and representing it in specific terms.

In our research of the “Life space of the urban child,” we first consider the space in which the urban child lives. For this, we use the empirical method and determine through interviews where the children live, or rather, from their point of view, where they play and roam about. Several characterizing traits quickly emerge that differentiate their space from adult space. In the second chapter, we will analyze the space that the child experiences. Here too we will interview children. We will see the specific manner in which spatial units referred to in the first chapter are present, and how they are reflected in the experiences of the child. In the third chapter, which is the central part of this research, we investigate the space that the child lives. Here we will use different observation techniques and will try to infer from the behavior of the children, and from their manner of interacting with the “circumstances” of the urban world, how they transform urban space by living it. The conclusion of our work will be a summary of the results, which offers an opportunity for pedagogical evaluation.

[11]
Chapter 1
Life Space as the “Space in Which the Child Lives”

Section One

The Method

To conduct our study, we initially use the concept of “life space” in its broadest sense, and it is commonly referred to as “space in which one lives.” For our specific research, it begs the question: What is the space in which the urban child lives? To answer this question, we used the empirical method, long recognized as a valuable psychological approach when used with careful procedure and analysis, which we implement during each step.

A total of 109 children of both sexes between the age of nine and fourteen were provided with ordinary maps of Hamburg. They were asked to mark with numbers or letters their current and possibly previous places of residence, current or previous schools, and if applicable, nurseries, daycare centers, sports grounds, gymnasiums, swimming pools, libraries, youth clubs, after-school jobs, private tutoring centers, as well as the homes of “friends,” relatives, and frequently visited acquaintances of their parents. Next, the children were instructed to: “Color all streets and public places blue that you know very well, where you play often, that you pass often, and that you can visualize when you close your eyes.” After this was done, usually a few hours later, the children were told to color the streets red that “you have passed, but that you don’t know as well as those colored blue.” They also filled out a questionnaire with the same information mentioned above, in order to make it easier to find the locations as well as to facilitate possible statistical analyses. The information, therefore, should be fairly free of errors and omissions.

[12]

It must be noted that all the children, including those as young as nine, understood their task and dedicated themselves to complete it with seriousness and eagerness. In this manner, we received a great number of graphic representations of where the children play and roam, which are subjectively honest and supplied with the best intentions for correctness. However, we can question if this material is objectively sound. Certainly, even nine-year-olds have worked with maps of local geography or city maps in school or elsewhere, meaning they know
about the principles of cartographical representation and can handle the task of finding and identifying the streets where they live and others they know on a map. Hence, the real difficulty is not so much in translating their knowledge onto the picture of the map, but rather having the streets they know present in their mind at the moment of the research. Either, the children need to have a spatial image of the streets, be able to go through that space in their imagination, and then transfer that image to the map. Alternatively, they have to update their knowledge about the streets using the map and the names of the streets. As our observations demonstrated, both processes were used concomitantly. Nevertheless, the possibility of forgetting remains, meaning the graphic representations are incomplete. Although this source of error cannot be avoided, we attempted to reduce it through repeated instructions on the need for complete answers.

The research is based on the life space maps created by children in the upper grades of the Boys- and the Girls-Primary-School IMSTEDT 18/20\(^9\) in the BARMBECK\(^10\) district. There were twenty-eight maps made by fourteen-year-old boys and twenty-one maps made by fourteen-year-

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**Figure 1**

Play Space and Roaming Space of a Fourteen-Year-Old Boy from Barmbeck
old girls available for analysis. For control and comparison, we basically used twenty-nine maps made by fourteen-year-old boys from a high school (the Public Secondary School of Hamburg), nineteen maps made by children of different ages at three different daycare centers for school children (Eimsbüttel, Hammerbrook, Barmbeck), and ten maps from a primary Girls-School located in the Hamm district. Although we tried to narrow down the information by using mostly maps from the Barmbeck district, most other parts of Hamburg were covered, with the exception of the districts of Neustadt, Harvestehude, Veddel, and Steinwärder. In this manner, it was possible to consider the similarities and differences and make the research in Barmbeck a real example of “urban” research (Figure 1).

Section Two

General Comments about the Structure of the Life Spaces

First, it is necessary to obtain a general overview of the life spaces. “Life space” includes the more restricted play area marked in blue (henceforth called “play space”) and the more extended play area marked in red (henceforth called “roaming space”), which for all fourteen-year-olds extends between a minimum of twenty-one kilometers and a maximum of 237.5 kilometers. The average is 103 kilometers, which corresponds approximately to the distance between Hamburg and Cuxhaven. In analyzing the play and roaming spaces separately, each results in similarly large ranges between maximum and minimum values. The play space of the children oscillates in its extension between 2.5 and 44.5 kilometers, with a mean of 10.9 kilometers; the roaming space oscillates between a minimum of twelve kilometers and a maximum of 195 kilometers, with a mean value of ninety-three kilometers.

As we can see, it is not possible to assert even an approximate equivalency of the “experienced” life space. While some children are restricted to their own “four walls” or immediately surrounding streets, others have walked stretches of their native city that, when added together, would reach all the way to the gates of Berlin. The play space where they walk and play every day also varies considerably amongst the children. While some are satisfied with 2,500 meters of street to play in, others have access to nearly twenty times as much. Clearly,
such differences in the extension of the play space affect the children's wealth of knowledge and experience. Likewise, we encountered differences between children whose roaming space is twelve kilometers of Hamburg streets and others who have explored 195 kilometers. These merely quantitative differences most likely have deeper effects. Of these consequences, however, we will speak more extensively later.

Let us now turn from the general findings of our study to the more specific analyses. In Table 1, we present the minimum, maximum, and mean values for boys, girls, and high-school students, respectively:

By initially considering the play space, we see that boys and girls (with the exception of high-school students, which we will consider later) show approximately the same minimum, mean, and maximum values. Here we have the real picture of the play space, which we can safely say is the home of the fourteen-year-old urban child. Besides their living space and schools, which are about eight or nine thousand meters of urban street (including the play and sports grounds within the city, figured in terms of twice their diagonal extension), the neighborhood

<table>
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<tr>
<th>(All Values in km)</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>24.0</td>
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<td>Roaming space</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>115.6</td>
<td>195.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life space</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>124.6</td>
<td>209.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8.2</td>
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</table>
city park is also considered the home of urban children. This is the home where they grow up, gain early knowledge and experience, acquire fundamental education, and develop psychological roots, which they are never completely free from for the rest of their life. This was a deeply distressing discovery, which, when considering the contents of this “city as home”, makes plain the full misery of the urban human condition.

If we now consider the numbers for the roaming space, we see that the mean for girls is approximately half of the mean for boys (a little less than half when compared to primary-school boys and a little more than half when compared to high-school boys). Two interpretations can be extracted: the girls have no time to roam because they have to help at home or, by nature, they are less inclined to “roam about.” In calculating the mean for girls who said they contribute significantly at home, and contrasting it to those who have no responsibilities at home, the difference is only 15 percent less. Thus, although domestic demands constitute an impediment to roaming, it is not significant enough to explain the difference (100 percent) between boys and girls. [15/16] The second interpretation, then, must be considered the most probable: that girls by their nature are not as inclined to “roam about” as boys.

Let us now look at the roaming space of high-school students. While these students surpass the girls by 80 percent, they lag 15 percent behind the primary-school boys, similar to the 15 percent of girls with responsibilities at home who lag behind girls without responsibilities at home. Here, too, one may assume that a specific demand is the cause. Both groups of boys were fourteen-years old at the time of the research, an age accompanied by motoric restlessness and the urge to roam.13 Therefore, both groups of boys have similar mental conditions. However, we must assume that there is a greater demand for doing homework among the first-year high-school students in their probationary period.14 Consequently, they would not have the same opportunities to “roam about” as the primary school students and would depend on walks in the neighborhood during the scarce free time they have. If this supposition were correct, the high-school students would have a smaller roaming space, albeit a comparatively larger play space. This is proved valid in Table 1, which indicates their play space as two-thirds larger than that of the primary-school children.

Of further interest is the attempt to correlate the life space of the children to their intelligence. We asked the teachers in the three classrooms to estimate their students’ intelligence into three groups: high, average, and low talent. The results are as follows:
Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the play space of the high- and low-talent students is below the mean of their respective groups, especially that of the low-talent students. The average-talent students are significantly above the mean (up to 54 percent). We had no way of determining the cause of this noticeable and consistent divergence from the mean.

We are able to see a clearer picture of the roaming space. Discovering unknown territory depends on individual initiative, and the children need to deal with new demands and tasks. The high-talent students naturally predominate, as they have a roaming space of up to 42 percent larger than that of the low-talent students, and noticeably surpass the average-talent students (the only exception being the average-talent students in high school). Considering that the high-talent group opens up more roaming space than the average- and low-talent group, it would seem logical that the high-school students would show more roaming area than the primary-school children. However, the tables show this is not the case. To explain this fact, we can only point to the higher homework demands placed upon high-school students, as mentioned above. This is especially plausible because between the ages of thirteen and fourteen, the roaming space increases by 35 percent (among
primary-school children it increases from a mean of 85.4 kilometers to a mean of 115.6 kilometers).

A brief reflection suggests that the life space of children depends on other factors as well, such as if they have always lived in their current neighborhood, or if they have lived elsewhere for a time. In these cases, it may be assumed that a “double home” implies a larger play space (since, so to speak, there are two basic playgrounds). It would also reflect a larger roaming space, since these children would have two “exploration areas,” and there would be a certain movement between the two homes in order to maintain old friendships and relationships. Table 3 contains data relevant to this and fully confirms our assumptions.

[18]

Finally, we investigated whether boys who reported that they had after-school jobs differed in some way from the others. The following picture emerged (Table 4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(All Values in km)</th>
<th>11 Boys with After-School Jobs Obtained the Following Values</th>
<th>16 Boys without After-School Jobs Obtained the Following Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play space</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roaming space</td>
<td>126.6</td>
<td>111.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life space</td>
<td>135.7</td>
<td>120.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Average Play, Roam and Life Space for Children Who Lived in Different Neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Average in km)</th>
<th>Children Who Only Lived in the Neighborhood</th>
<th>Children Who Also Lived Outside the Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play space</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roaming space</td>
<td>113.9</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life space</td>
<td>121.9</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Boys with after-school jobs equal their comrades with respect to the play space, but exceed them by 14 percent in the roaming space. Because of their work, they have access to a larger field of the known space. The high-talent students (especially the three that have always lived in the same neighborhood and, thus, according to Table 3, are at a disadvantage) in the group with after-school jobs obtain the highest observed mean values (7.8, 72.2, and 180.9 kilometers).

High-talent students with after-school jobs\textsuperscript{15} thus have the optimal preconditions to acquire a large life space.

**Section Three**

*The Shape and Composition of Life Spaces*

One could assume that the BARMBECK children would primarily use the BARMBECK district for their play and roaming spaces. However, it becomes evident that BARMBECK, a historical entity\textsuperscript{[18/19]} with the topographically of a former rural village, is not lived by the children. Rather, the spatial unit that the BARMBECK child lives in is a geographic whole that is clearly separated by natural borders from other spatial units, which we will call the “BARMBECK ISLE.”

Delineated on three sides by waterways (AUSSEN ALSTER, OSTEBECK CHANNEL, and the channel sequence of ELLBECKER CHANNEL, KUHMÜHLEN POND, and MUNDSBURGER CHANNEL) and, on the fourth side, by railroad tracks (local train), the area includes all of the Uhlenhorst district, about one third of the BARMBECK district (OLD BARMBECK), and one fourth of the HOHENFELDE district. Eleven bridges connect the channel sequence, which makes up the southern and southeastern border. Nine bridges connect the northern and northwestern border. The railroad track has three underpasses. Seven important roads cross the district, which we will address later. The main traffic artery that crosses the district diagonally is the MUNDSBURGER DAMM, HAMBURGER STR,\textsuperscript{16} AM MARKT sequence. The same sequence is also the main road for the traffic left of the ALSTER in the direction of OHLSDORF and the ALSTER valley, as well as via BERGSTEDT toward BARGTEHEIDE and LÜBECK. Several tramlines use this stretch of roads and there is extraordinarily intense car, bicycle, and truck traffic. Every day, the sidewalks are a mass of rushing, pushing pedestrians at all hours. The following streets or street sequences are called \textit{first-order}\textsuperscript{17} traffic roads. Running from southeast to northwest are ADOLPH STR, HOFWEG, LERCHEFELD—WINTERHUDER WEG with its bifurcation SCHILLER STR and HERDER STR, BACH STR, WAGNER STR—Elsastra-
Schleidenplatz, Friedrichsberger Str; the sequence Weide str—Dehnhaide sequence crossing the district in an east to west direction. Tramlines use only some of the streets, while others have intense through traffic of cars, trucks, and bicycles. Pedestrians pass in considerable numbers, especially before work, at noon, and in the evening. Streets that connect the first-order roads to each other and to the main traffic artery may be considered second-order traffic roads: the sequences Mesterkamp—Diederichs str—Beethoven str—Zimmer str; Volksdorfer Str—Schmalenbecker str—Schützenhof—Heinrich-Hertz-Str; Uhlenhorster Weg; Averhoff str; [19/20] Canal str; Humbold str; Richard str; Goethe str; Gluck str; Imstedt; Bartholomäus str; the sequence Hinrichsen str—Stücken str; Holsteinischer Kamp; von Essenstr; as well as bypasses Ufer str and Osterbeck str and the promenades Schöne Aussicht—Fähr str. The traffic on these streets is made up mostly of delivery vehicles (cars, trucks, and horse-drawn carriages) that drive to the businesses located in the respective streets, and pedestrians that stream to and from their homes. In other words, they consist of local traffic as opposed to the heavy through traffic of the previously mentioned streets. The so-called side or cross streets are the last group of streets in this district. They are mostly residential streets, or streets with few businesses that are typically short, often crooked, or lead to a dead end. These do not have through traffic or much local traffic, and in fact most of the time they experience no traffic. The residential streets are populated by the working class on the Erna str, Hauff str, Reuter str, or Vogtei str; by the petty-bourgeoisie on Bürger str, Mirow str, and Gerstenkamp; by the middle class on Petkum str, Overbeck str, or Ufer str; or by noble villas on Marien terrasse in Uhlenhorst, Bassin str, and similar streets (cf., Figure 2).

The geographic and traffic-geographic conditions play an important role in the composition of the life spaces. As we saw above, the district as a whole forms a geographical unit called the Barmbeck Isle. For the sake of easier comprehension, we can call this area an ellipse. The segment separated by Winterhuder Weg (which provides a clear border between sociologically different districts) could be called a “trapezoid.” The Hamburger Str is a shopping street and transit route that creates a traffic border that divides the district into two large triangles. The upper triangle has the AussenAlster as its base line and its tip is at the crossing of Flachsland and Am Markt. The lower triangle has
the railroad as its baseline. If we take the Winterhuder Weg once again as an “interior” boarder, we can see it as a baseline for a “smaller triangle” formed with the same tip as the previous triangle. Nearly all of the described life spaces of the “Barmbeck Children” are built according to these basic figures. We had twenty-eight plus twenty-one plus seven high-school maps at our disposal (cf., Table 5).

[21]

Figure 2
Barmbeck Isle

Eighteen boys (51 percent) and one girl (5 percent) use the entire “BARMBECK ISLE” geographical unit for their play and roaming area. Eight boys (23 percent) and three girls (14 percent) reach the natural limits of the “Island” in the north, the south, and the east, while they stay away from the “better quarter” in the west. Nine girls (43 percent) and two boys (6 percent) are restricted in their roaming space by the sociological border as well as the “errands” limit (HAMBURGER STR) and inhabit only the “small triangle.” Three boys (9 percent) and four girls (19 percent) move in the “large triangle,” meaning their life spaces are delineated by the ALSTER and the OSTERBECK CHANNEL as natural borders and the HAMBURGER STR as a traffic border. Since the residential district of nearly all the children is north of the HAMBURGER STR, the lower large triangle on the island that borders EILBECK does not appear as a figure. Similar to what was pointed out above, the number of boys at 83 percent is superior to the number of girls with 38 percent, in terms of having extended maps. While 51 percent of the boys advance to the natural borders of the district, and are stopped in 23 percent of the cases by the sociological line that demarcates a more “refined” district with different styles of buildings and traffic structure, they rarely consider the “errands limit” as a border. The girls, on the other hand, tend to stay within the domestic sphere close to the residential streets and, at most, go as far as the “errands limit” (62 percent).

If we transfer all the play streets mentioned by the children to one city map, we find the expected, namely that the play space essentially stays within the “BARMBECK ISLE.” The children are not hindered
whatsoever by the main traffic artery and, in fact, both boys and girls often include it if it is close to their residential streets. However, while the play area in both gender groups extends beyond the main traffic artery to the southern border, the channel, and the area beyond the sociological line, the Winterhuder Weg is totally taboo for the playing children. [22/23] Only the immediate home and its homogeneous area are relevant play spaces. Even though boys and girls, as shown on page 15 [of the original], indicate nearly identical play space sizes, it is noticeable that the girls keep their play space on the left of the Alster. They do not advance to the harbor and indicate much fewer outposts (places on the edge of the city, sports grounds, and playgrounds) as their play spaces. They keep closer to home and, even when visiting relatives outside their district, they do not stay on the streets like the boys, but in the homes of their relatives.

It is important to understand how the traffic and other factors affect the nature of the roaming space of the children.

The main traffic artery is part of the roaming area for all thirty-five boys as well as for twenty of the girls, and is part of the play area for fifteen children, even though they do not live close to it. Of the ten first-order traffic arteries, five are known to over 90 percent of the boys and only three are known to over 90 percent of the girls. Bach str and Elsa str—Schleiden platz are 100 percent familiar because they are access streets (or bridges) to the City Park as well as to sports and playgrounds on Diederich str and Schleiden platz. Weide str is also an access street to the City Park and Schleiden park, as well as a much-visited residential area with several empty lots. The percentages obtained from the streets or street sequences Mesterkamp—Diederich str—Beethoven str and Volksdorfer Str—Schmalenbecker Str—Schützenhof show that residential or play streets that lead to playgrounds grants the streets a higher degree of popularity than would correspond to its traffic importance. One hundred percent of the boys and 80 percent of the girls know the abovementioned street sequences, although they have a moderate amount of traffic. The same is true for Framheim str, Heitmann str, Desiness str, Rönnheid str and Humbold str, Imstedt (the school street), Richard str, and Oberaltenallee, with 90 to 100 percent of the boys and 70 to 100 percent of the girls knowing them. These mainly residential streets and neighboring parallel streets form the more immediate play space for the children but, certainly, do not have above-average proper traffic. The fact that popularity depends
on factors other than traffic conditions among the first-order traffic streets becomes even clearer when they present familiarity indexes of [23/24] less than 90 percent, or at times less than 50 percent. For example, Lerchenfeld (with 63 and 30 percent familiarity among boys and girls, respectively), Hofweg (63 and 45 percent), Adolph str (43 and 20 percent) are all first-order roads with intense car and bicycle through traffic and heavy pedestrian movement. However, they are, like Adolph str, purely residential streets without, like Hofweg and Lerchenfeld primarily residential with few shops. Thus, they offer roaming and searching children few observational opportunities, or, being considered uninteresting, are not considered for shopping or errands. Additionally, they do not lead to any important locations for the children, such as sports, playgrounds, and gymnasiums. Hofweg and Lerchenfeld thus are relatively more popular among boys because they provide access to sports fields. Of the remaining first-order traffic roads, Wagner str is known to 90 and 75 percent of the boys and girls, respectively, know because it provides access to Hammer Park; 85 and 70 percent know Dehnhaide because it is an arterial main road that leads toward the Dulsberg area at the edge of the city; and 74 and 65 percent know the Friedrichsberger Str because curiosity drives the children to peek into the gardens of the lunatic asylum. Remarkably, all the other streets in this neighborhood are virtually unknown.

If we address the issue of street familiarity from the opposite direction and ask which streets are little known, barely traveled, or ignored completely, we find streets that are strictly residential or located at “dead ends.” They lead to “nowhere” or they are clearly at the periphery, hence seldom visited. The criteria children apparently use to avoid them are: first, they lead to “nowhere” and are nothing but transverse or side streets; second, because there is nothing to see or experience; and third, because they are not part of traffic stream that children move through. On the other hand, streets with sports grounds or play opportunities of any particular kind are traveled more frequently. Besides the streets frequently visited by the children we researched, we noticed similarities with, for instance, Klinikweg, which has a sports ground and a gymnasium (71 percent of the boys, but only 15 percent of the girls!); Finkenau, which provides access to the sports ground in Birkenau coming from Barmbeck (Finkenau 71 and 35 percent; Birkenau 60 and 0 percent); Wagnerweg (43 and 0 percent) [24/25] (Sports ground Klinikweg) and Waisen str, which is the
entrance to the tennis and sports grounds at the orphanage (51 and 15 percent); and finally, the group of streets near the St. Gertrud Church with its loading dock near the Kuhmühlen pond that tempts boys to explore this more distant area (49 and 0 percent). The surprisingly high percentage of children compared to adults, and the even higher percentage of boys compared to girls demonstrates that proximity to sports and play grounds in fact increases familiarity with these streets.

The last issue in this section deals with the shape of the roaming maps, and how far they jut out from the “Barmbeck Isle.” For this, we limit ourselves to the thirty-five maps made by the boys.

Considering initially the left side of the Alster, it appears that the roaming spaces expand along the course of the large traffic arteries. Incidentally, only seventy-four percent of the boys are familiar with the immediately neighboring Eilbeck, most of whom know only the Wandsbeker Chaussee, which provides access to the “Wandsbeker Markt” and the “Woods,” Ritter Str, which leads to the Hammer Park (sports grounds), and the various “bridge streets” that lead from “Barmbeck Isle.” Only five boys know Eilbeck a little better: one lives not quite two hundred meters from the Eilbeck border, one runs errands there for his father, and three have relatives in Hamm or Wandsbeck, which can be reached only by passing through Eilbeck. Five boys know only one street in Eilbeck; either the one leading to Hammer Park or the one leading to the Wandsbeker Markt. Some of the boys know nothing of Eilbeck, three of whom have a small roaming space that essentially extends toward the City Park. The fourth of these is handicapped and avoids sports, playing, or amusement grounds and does not go to Hamm or Wandsbek.

Only 49 percent of the boys know the Wandsbeker woods and 46 percent know the Horner racetracks. In contrast, 80 percent know the Hammer Park, especially because of occasional sporting events that arouse general interest. Eleven percent of the boys know, albeit superficially, the Hamm district, and Horn is a terra incognita for all, even though 31 percent of the boys know the Borgfelder Str—Hammer Highway—Horner Highway stretch as an arterial route to Bergedorf, probably from bicycling. Twenty-six percent know the way to Veddel, or Harburg and 17 percent know the way to Rothenburgsort—Billwärder Ausschlag. Of the districts these streets cross, 17 percent (6 percent only superficially) know Borgfelde, [25/26] and 11 percent (6 percent somewhat better because they have
relatives there or lived there before) know Billwärder Ausschlag and Veddel. Approximately 23 percent know Hammerbrook and half of them more closely. Only 60 and 74 percent of the boys know the parts of town bordering the districts in the southwest called Hohenfelde and St. Georg, respectively. “Know” means that they are familiar with the main arterial roads of Mundsburger Damm, Mühlendamm, maybe Graumannsweg, Wartenau in Hohenfelde, and An der Alster, Langereihe, Steinamm, Koppel, Grosse Allee—Besenbinderhof in St. Georg. Only six each of the thirty-five boys know the two parts of town better than the mentioned main roads. One thoroughfare, however, is known by all thirty-five boys because it has to be used to get from the district to the center of town.

Similar considerations apply to the Winterhude and Neu Barmbeck districts, located to the north of our district. Sixty percent of the boys know the main streets in these parts of town. The remaining boys either know only one street or do not know the area at all. The 60 percent that have more intimate knowledge of these districts either live nearby or have their play space there (e.g., Dulsberg), or frequent a local gymnasium or sports ground.

Considering that the left side of the Alster and its immediately neighboring areas are not well known by all, and the more distant neighboring areas are little known or completely unknown, it could be said that the right side of the Alster is completely “foreign.” Approximately 29 percent know Eimsbüttel (11 percent of these are high-school students who go to school there), 17 percent know Eppendorf, 20 percent know Harvestehude, 31 percent know Rotherbaum (sports ground of the HSV), and 11 percent know Altona.

We can conclude that the life space maps of the boys are structured such that “Barmbeck Isle” is surrounded by districts that create a semicircle around the AussenAlster of lesser-known areas. Winterhude and Neu Barmbeck in the north, Hohenfelde, Eilbeck, and St. Georg in the south indicate 50 to 75 percent familiarity. Districts known to only 15 to 25 percent are as follows: Eppendorf, Eimsbüttel, and Harvestehude in the west and Borgfelde and Hammerbrook in the south and southeast. Furthermore, 0 to 15 percent know all the outskirts of Hamm, Horn, Billwärder Ausschlag, Veddel, Grassbrook, Steinwärder, and Altona. A higher degree of familiarity (25–50 percent)
Notes: Percentage of children who know given city districts.


NT—The blank space between areas 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 3 refers to the AUSSENALSTER, that is, a large lake within the city; the small blank space between areas 1 and 2 refers to the BINNENALSTER, that is, a smaller part of the ALSTER; the blank space between areas 21, 4, 1, and 20 refers to the Elbe river.

applies to the OLD TOWN and NEW TOWN as well as ROTHERBAUM. The first two for being commercial areas with exhibits and shops that are an attraction, especially in winter, owing to the historical sights and other places of interest recommended by the schools. ROTHERBAUM
is better known owing to the big sporting events at the HSV grounds and the tennis competitions. The Ethnographic Museum has attracted several of the boys to this area as well (cf., Figure 3).

As already mentioned, the BARMBEC children also visit places of interest in the center of town. Ninety-seven percent of the boys know the LANDUNGSBRÜCKEN [NT, where ships from overseas arrive], 66 percent know the tunnel under the ELBE, 71 percent the Bismarck monument, 94 percent the cathedral area, 74 percent the REEPERBAHN, 91 percent the ZOO, 74 percent HAGENBECK, and 77 percent the AUSSENALSTER.

Section Four

Summary

So far, we can infer with sufficient clarity from our presentation that the life space of the urban child (defined as the space wherein the child lives) does not encompass the entire city. Only about 6 percent of the total area of the city is intensively experienced by the children. All the other districts of the city are around the residential area, with zones of different degrees of familiarity surrounding it. In general, we verified that districts closer to the home space are better known. “Closeness from a child’s perspective” does not necessarily mean physical proximity. For example, the “City” with its exhibitions and interesting places is “closer” than the physically more adjacent HAMM district, and even though HARVESTEHUDE is easier to reach, the more distant ROTHERBAUM with its sports grounds and museum is “closer” for the children of BARMBECK. Essentially, however, urban children live in their “villages” (the outer districts of HAMBURG were originally separate villages) and seldom “move about any further.” We observe from our annotations that, in most cases, the grandparents and other relatives of the BARMBECK children live in their immediate neighborhood, if not on the same street, further clarifying that the “village” is their essential home and preeminent life space. We saw that especially the girls are closely attached to this home district, and that both innate and environmentally determined gender differences play a role. The boys are much more expansive, with life spaces that are larger and more varied. Both genders, however, show that the structure of their life spaces is largely independent of “grown-up” perspectives such as the importance of traffic, work opportunities, housing needs, and so
forth, and much more dependent on closeness to a playground, type of construction, suitability of playgrounds, natural borders, and affiliation to the home in a stricter sense. Finally, we observed that the size of life spaces was determined principally by the intellectual flexibility of the children and their physical mobility (frequent moving, having an after-school job).

Chapter Two
The Life Space as “Space That the Child Experiences”

Section One

Material and Method

In order to answer the question of how children experience space, which we explored in the previous chapter as the space lived by the child, we solicited written statements from the children of the above-mentioned primary-school grades. A detailed question scheme was used to ask the children about the location and characteristics of their play spaces and of other play areas, as well as about the nature of the games they play there. This information was associated with the previous annotations of the children that determined the location of the homes of relatives, swimming areas, gymnasiums, sports grounds, and so forth. Finally, the children prepared a large number of textual and graphical representations on how they spend Sundays, which is their real leisure time.

In all three cases, we obtained psychological insights using empirical methods. With specific, more or less skillfully formulated questions (upon finalizing this research we realized that several questions could have been asked differently), the children were prompted to talk about how, to what intensity, and with what manner of activity they experienced streets, squares, parks, and other conditions of the large city. One-third of the children were asked to prepare a detailed record or an essay about the events of their Sundays in order to learn how the children experience the urban space when their free time is not constrained by school or jobs.

The first two data gatherings presented no particular difficulties, since the questions were fixed. However, the data analysis process was not easy and the results were not exhaustive, since different researchers with different levels of psychological skill and intensity had gathered
the data. On this point, more and better results could be obtained in the future. The third data gathering was initially devised [29/30] for a different study; hence, many of its results are only partially useful for our specific objectives.

Section Two

Play Spaces and Games of Urban Children

The analysis of the life space maps in the first chapter already shows that the play spaces of urban children consist of streets, parks, and sports grounds. However, the order of preference of the three spaces remained duly open. A more detailed analysis based on the protocols is now possible.

We found that the urban streets are the main preferred play spaces for 41 percent of the children (50 percent boys, 29 percent girls), 33 percent (25 percent boys, 43 percent girls) name streets and parks as their main play spaces, and 14 percent (21 percent boys, and only 5 percent girls) play mainly in the parks. That leaves 6 percent (all girls) who play at home and in the front yard, with 6 percent being undefined. If we add to the “street players” half of the “street-park players,” the result is 57.5 percent “street players”; if we add to the “park players” the other half of the “street-park players,” we now have 30.5 percent “park players.” In other words, more than half of the children find their play space in the urban streets and prefer streets to parks at a ratio of 2:1, especially the streets where they live. “On street,” as the children in Hamburg say, is equivalent to the jargon “front of door.” The street is a second or extended home. With warmth and pride, children speak of “their” street as incomparable to any other in the district, or even in the city, despite objectively having no special features that make them better than the other streets. This is especially the case in the Barmbeck district, which is certainly not beautiful or attractive with its bare, dirty, gray tenement houses lining narrow treeless and backyards and terraces that open up to a tiny patch of hazy sky. Yet, it is part of the children who love it and call it “home.” This is where they have their [30/31] “friends.” They know every nook and cranny, and are familiar with the entire neighborhood. It is from here that they orient themselves as to the district, the city, and to life. Even after long and careful observation, an outsider cannot ascertain how far “home” extends, if it includes the street in its entire extension or only parts of it, and then which parts. There are no indications that can be based on factual criteria. Home is purely subjective, hence a real question of
the environment. For this reason, home as a creation of the self only comes to life and is present though active experience. This is most vivid and present in the struggle for home. Home is what is defended, and the “enemies” that attack it are “strangers.” When the lower “DESINESS STR” is fighting one of its traditional street battles against the upper “DESINESS STR,” two “homes” are fighting each other. For a moment, that which is subjectively experienced as home becomes a quasi-state and thus becomes objectively visible.

Let us now address what the children play “on street.” Among boys as well as girls, the “romping games” (hide and seek, war, rescue, cowboys and Indians, scout, cops and robbers, action in general) predominate. “We just run through all the streets,” says one child by way of explanation. The aforementioned serious “street battles” are part of these romping games, with fights of “lower against upper DESINESS STR,” or “HEITMANN STR against DESINESS STR.” Street battles start when the time is right, with neither side being able to say who exactly started it. Often, the issue is simply to protect “their” street against the different, hence strange and hostile boys from the “other” street.

Athletic ball games (soccer, handball, volleyball, stickball, and dodge ball) make up only a third of the romping games on the street, with more boys than girls playing. The low percentage of ball games may be due to traffic, or because they can only be played when no police officer is in sight. However, in the case of soccer, this may also be because there are practically no girls participating.

Next in the order of importance is strolling or walking through the streets, activities mostly undertaken by girls in the company of a girlfriend or while supervising younger siblings.

The last group that we formed is children playing small ball games like ball school, a game of skill. Quite naturally, this group is made up of mostly girls. Fourteen-year-old boys would be ashamed of playing ball school, although they probably occasionally played it when younger. Traditional games barely appear in our protocols.

There are few comments about the conditions of the streets used for the games. There is one mention that, in IMSTEDT, they could only play between the WEIDE STR and the BARTHOLOMAUS STR and not further up, because “the buildings are too close together and there are no open spaces for playing.” One girl mentioned that the side of the
street where the games were predominately held during ball season is referred to as simply “over there” or “on the other side.” Surprised, she exclaimed, “I think, in fact I could swear, I have never been over there.” An objective description of the district would have a specific location, while everything that is “over there” in the world of these children exists only from a perspective of “over-there-ness.” This implies not only a face-space perspective for “looking at,” but a life-space characteristic. In practical life, children deal with their environment segment as being over there. This may become clear, for instance, in the spatial organization of new games. While objectively they might need more space, they would not extend to the other side of the street because it is set in the function of “over-there-ness.” Many times free, empty lots on the street are pointed out as especially beautiful play spaces. The same is true of demolition sites, new constructions, and temporary scaffolding.

In terms of characteristics, the City Park takes the first place among the parks with an 84 percent mention. Inside the City Park, the fairground is visited most often, followed by the paddling pool and the meadows in front of it. Least cited is the area around the water tower, where “you look at the flowers” (girl) or “you walk about and chat” (boy). The city park is visited mostly because “it is still nice and open and there are not so many people and cars” (boy). Since there is no traffic, the “athletic ball games” irrefutably come in the first place. Romping games make up only half of the ball games; apparently, the many fenced in wooded areas impede romping games. On the other hand, the large open fields do not allow romping games, since they do not offer places to hide and there are no “free zones” for the catch games. [32/33] Notably, the Schleidenplatz, located at the center of the children’s residential district, is mentioned less often than the City Park. The larger boys disdainfully call the playground a “kindergarten” and complain about the building authority. “All you can do is bake cakes. If you dig a real hole, he soon comes and scolds us.” However, it is mentioned by 63 percent of the children as a play space, while all the other more remote parks (Hammer Park, Richard Park, the city moat, and the park near the city hospital) follow with much smaller percentages. The Schleiden Park has a sand box, paddling pool, and playground that are designed for younger children. Oddly enough, romping games are mentioned in the first place, and all the other games, including athletic ball games, follow far behind. Indeed, the Schleiden Park with its bushes and foliage (off-limits for children) offers “many paths
and intricate corners where you can play hide-and-seek and catch very well” (stated by a boy). Especially in the evening, “when all the boys from school meet here,” the park apparently becomes an Eldorado for the boys, who play here much more frequently than the girls.

As is to be expected, nearly all the boys visit sports grounds and gymnasiums, although only one fifth are members of a sports club or gym (1932). Among the girls, the ratio of members and non-members is the same, but only half of the girls visit sports grounds and gymnasiums. Mostly they mention the DIEDERICH STR, the sports ground located in their residential district, but also places further afar.

As is to be expected, waterways and bodies of water are much more important to boys than to girls. On an average, boys mention nearly two additional swimming pools besides the public pool on the BAR-

THOLOMÄUS STR, while girls mention only one. Eighty-nine percent of the boys mention other bodies of water, versus only 43 percent of the girls, where they not only swim, but also play and romp about. The difference is even greater when we look at how many different “water body” play areas are mentioned. Twenty-five boys mention fifty-nine distinct bodies of water, that is, an average of 2.4 per person. Nine girls mention fourteen bodies of water, an average of 1.5 per person. During a nine-hour observation period at the loading dock near the OSTERBECK CHANNEL, which we will analyze in more detail later, we saw some 140 boys and only 19 girls playing. Rented paddleboats, especially on the ALSTER, are equally important for both sexes, while “boating about,” meaning the unauthorized use of boats and makeshift implements, is mentioned five times by boys only. Most of the boys “sort of hang out there,” while the girls stroll about or “watch when a ship is docking.”

We had suspected that the number of children playing in empty lots on the streets or on the outskirts of the city to be very high, especially among boys. A closer analysis of the district indicated that there are very few empty lots. Because the parks offer sufficient opportunities for romping, only 57 percent of the boys and 38 percent of the girls mention empty lots as their play spaces. And only half of these mention “specific activities” such as “digging,” “scooping,” roaming, climbing, jumping, while the other half mention games that could also be done elsewhere, like athletic and skill ball games, traditional games, and role playing.

Fifty percent of the boys mention traffic facilities and 32 percent mention industrial areas (mostly “The Gas” [i.e., Gasworks]), as play
spaces, while none of the girls refer to these areas. While six out of fourteen boys that play near the traffic facilities claim to be there “to learn something,” it can be assumed that the remaining boys go there to “look around” and make “observations.” The total absence of girls may be attributed to gender-specific behavior.

Section Three

Free Time (Sunday) for the Urban Child

The research for this issue is used here separately from the original objective in order to elucidate information related to life space. It is based on essays entitled “How I Spent My Sunday Yesterday” written by 108 girls in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and eighth grades at Magdeburg. We also had statistical data of Sunday events from twenty-eight fourteen-year-old boys attending high school in Hamburg, which covered some fifty-seven Sundays. Finally, we had data from a so-called Sunday Circle of children between the ages of ten and fourteen, of both sexes and of varying degrees of education, covering approximately 134 Sundays, which we will address in more detail.

I. With few exceptions, the essays by the girls are written without reflection and are very naïve and unencumbered by problems (for example [34/35] their attitudes about Sunday). For the children, Sundays are a self-evident truth. More often than not, they describe it without emotion, as par for the course. However, we can suppose that Sundays place things and people in their environment in a different light. What they do not have on weekdays is especially present in the Sunday descriptions. However, in judging the essays of the children, we must not overestimate what they write and, at the same time, we must not underestimate what they do not write.

Family life is mentioned most often as a part of the Sunday experience. Although not always mentioned explicitly, the family is the protective backdrop. The punctually kept family meals, which are not possible in this manner during the week, structure the whole sequence of Sunday events. Not mentioning the family could be based on indifference, where the natural need for parents to rest, and the equally natural desire for freedom on the part of the children, sufficiently explains the mutual indifference. To further clarify this point, we have divided the mention of family into a number of subcategories: (a) helping at home, (b) being together with relatives or friends of the family or visiting with them, (c) parlor games with the family, and (d) taking walks with the family. The results are as follows (Table 6):
Here we can see that the girls under study spend nearly half of their time helping at home, while one third visit with relatives and friends at home or take walks with their parents. Of the remaining girls in our statistics, 28.5 percent play outside and spend time with girlfriends and in the garden; 24 percent go to church; and 23 and 20 percent, respectively, read and perform activities such as needlepoint. Cinema is not very important to 14 percent, and listening to the radio and playing music or homework is even less important to 9.5 and 7 percent, respectively.

II. Sundays in the life of boys, especially for those in high school, are naturally structured very differently than those for girls in primary school. Therefore, it was surprising to see the level of similarity between boys and girls on important points. The boys show the same or nearly the same percentage points as the girls in the following activities: participation in activities in the home, being together with relatives and friends of the family, being together with friends, playing outside, occupying oneself with handicrafts and hobbies, and going to cinemas. While 22.5 percent of the boys spend time on sports grounds in October and November, 24 percent of the girls spend time in the garden in September. However, there were also significant differences. On an average, 20 percent of twelve-year-old girls mention reading as an activity in September, while 71 percent of the fourteen-year-old high-school boys mention reading in November. Surely, the time of the year contributes to this discrepancy, as do differences in age and education. The fact that education separates these two groups may be implied from boys mentioning homework ten times more as a Sunday activity than the girls. However, the fact that boys mention parlor games with the family four times more than the girls may be partly due to the time of the year, but also because older boys know how to play card games and therefore participate more often in the “family Skat”20 games and similar activities. Gender may be the underlying difference between boys (7 percent) and girls (33 percent) taking walks with the family, and between boys (46 percent) and girls (0 percent) taking walks alone without the family. Differences in age and gender may also affect the

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**Table 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By</th>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>(b)</th>
<th>(c)</th>
<th>(d)</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<td>41.5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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[20] Skat is a traditional German card game.
numbers of church visits. Twelve-year-old girls participate in children’s services, which for them is a naive religious and social activity (they usually go with a girlfriend). The fourteen-year-old boys, however, are embarrassed to participate in children’s services; in fact, they appear to have no spontaneous religious interest. Of the three boys who mentioned church visits, one had attended the baptism of his younger brother, and the other two, who were of a petty bourgeois background, traditionally participate on the Day of Prayer and Repentance.

III. Finally, for analyzing leisure time, we used data from a “Sunday Circle,” which recorded how ten- to fourteen-year-old urban children spent 134 Sundays. The Sunday Circles are organized as follows: data obtained during 134 Sundays are rounded down to the nearest half hour and percentages are calculated for the activities conducted during the waking hours of the Sunday. The percentages thus obtained are grouped into six categories [36/37] and mean values are calculated. The categories are (1) helping around the home, (2) playing inside, (3) playing outside, (4) homework, (5) cinema, and (6) activities with the family (meals, visits, dressing, and undressing). We used the same calculations for the fifty-seven Sundays of the high-school boys above. Thus, we arrive at the following comparison (Table 7):

By joining groups 1 and 6 (helping around the home and activities with the family), we can verify an impressive correspondence between the two studies, with family activities taking up over two-third of the Sunday activities. Surprisingly large is the similarity in numbers for outside activities on winter Sundays, which occupy only one-fifth of a Sunday. Greater differences can be seen in playing inside and going to the cinema. Both activities are of secondary importance among high-school boys who use more time for homework. It is revealing that, although visits to the cinema and playing inside are reduced, playing outside is not. “Fresh air” is definitely important during leisure time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Groups</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>34.7% For 134 Sundays</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>38.2% For 57 Sundays</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 7
Percentage of Children Engaged in Different Activities on Sundays
Section Four

Summary

The objective of the preceding sections was to analyze, as fully as possible, the life space of an urban child from the perspective of the child's experience. Although we observed only winter Sundays, meaning we cannot generalize from the data of the dominical life space we gleaned, important insights were nevertheless obtained. The school world, with its objective, personal, and intellectual content, and the urban environment of the weekday life space are replaced on Sundays with predominately family and the home. The studies show that the center of gravity of the child's experience is helping around the home, being together with the family, and playing at home.

During weekdays, however, the street world clearly belongs to the children, whether it is “their street,” which becomes the “home” they feel part of, or the neighboring streets where they play and gain experience. It is noticeable that, among all the information about games provided by the children, functional plays, romping, and ball games clearly predominate their experiences. As for the specific characteristics of their life space and particular areas, the children do not show clarity. They are able to only provide some answers in response to specific questions; therefore, systematic studies on this point are a task for the future.
the life stream of children and young people. Once we were able to determine these centers, we conducted extensive observations of the children and their dealings in those particular parts of the urban environment over a period of years, at all times of the day and week, during different climatic conditions, and so forth. Obviously, we could not attach the exact age information (e.g., eight years three months) to the observational facts, as is customary in psychological studies, owing to the large number of children and the anonymous observational technique we used. Therefore, we had to content ourselves with the approximate age information. Initially, the observers were given information about the physical development of children in this district based on student data from the local primary school. Next, they were systematically trained in recognizing and grouping age categories. Thereafter, kindergarten children (3–5 years), younger primary-school children (6–8 years), older primary-school children (9–10 years), as well as middle-school children (11–13 years) and fourteen-year-olds could be distinguished with considerable certainty. All observational facts were ordered according to these approximate age groups.

Three kinds of observational methods were used. One was the flash light method where, in a prescribed observation area, rounds were made in a limited timeframe [39/40] to record the behavior of all the children present within this space and time, as if featured in a spotlight. Another was the time sample method, where the observer maintains a fixed position and notes all the behaviors of the children within a limited timeframe at that particular location. Finally, the permanent observation method was implemented, where certain children or groups of children were observed for the duration of a given behavior, or were continuously observed with changing behaviors.

Over the years and with the help of these three methods, we arrived at a nearly incalculable number of “behavior patterns,” which are analyzed in the present chapter. Given the extent of the material, however, we will limit ourselves to seven locations that stood out in the life spaces of the BARMBECK children. These are the “loading dock” at the OSTERBECK CHANNEL, the playground at the DIEDERICH STR (called CORWEGH PLACE), a vacant lot at the corner of the HINRICHSEN STR and KÄTHNERKAMP, the quiet residential area of the MIROW STR, the traffic street “AM ALTEN Schützenhof,” the main traffic route of the HAMBURGER STR, and the KARSTADT Department Store on the same street.
Section Two

The “Place with a Specific Purpose” in the Word of the Urban Child

To contrast the urban space initially called “loading dock at the OSTERBECK CHANNEL” with our own21 “world,” and to be able to describe it as a “world of the child,” we will first try to understand it as a “factual space”22 free from personal specificities and detached from the “subject that experiences and from his current or continuous determinacy through locality or life conditions.” The location of the place, its shape and size, the measurable conditions of the location, and the distances between its parts and the whole of the extended environment are described in words, which must be free of any significance or any attempt at explanation.

A—The Loading Dock as “Factual Space”

The “loading dock” is located to the northwest of the BARMBECK district and extends approximately eighty meters parallel to the OSTERBECK CHANNEL, between [40/41] the channel and the OSTERBECK STR. The western border is created by the BARMBECK STREET BRIDGE and measures about thirty-five meters long. On the eastern side, there is a wooden fence measuring two meters high and about twenty-five meters wide. Behind the fence are the boat sheds of the HAMBURG CANOE CLUB.

From the OSTERBECK STR, which is about three meters above the water level of the channel, a seven-meter wide road leads down to the loading dock at a slight angle. This road has cobblestone pavement, with curbstones and sand sidewalks on either side. Paving stones cover the embankment created by the angle of the road. The height of the embankment on the side of the OSTERBECK STR increases gradually to 1.60 meters as it follows the slope in the road. On the dockside, the embankment decreases gradually from an initial 1.60 meters to zero as it nears the level of the dock site. A strong, wooden, three-rung fence about 1.10 meters high runs along the edges of the embankments separating the road on either side from the OSTERBECK STR and the loading dock. There are two stone stairways that lead from the street directly to the loading dock: one has ten steps measuring 2.50 meters wide, which leads from where the street and the road are still at the same level; the other has six steps measuring 1.90 meters wide, where the road meets the loading dock. A third stairway with six steps with a width of 1.60 meters leads from about half way down the road to the...
loading dock. All three stairways are equipped with a smooth metal railing.

Common cobblestones cover the dock site, which is bordered by a pathway and curbstones. Small cobblestones cover the pathway along the water. It is 1.15 meters wide, bordered along the dock site with curbstones, and along the waterside by an iron rail. This pathway has twenty-six whitewashed curbstones that are fifty centimeters high and three meters apart. The water level is about one meter below the edge of the loading dock. The water in the channel is turbid, and only near the bridge is it shallow enough to see the bottom.

In the middle of the site, directly in front of the road embankment, there is a wooden lean-to that is 1.25 meters high. Below it, there is a plainly visible water pump. Both sides of the lean-to have a fifty-centimeter-high stone bench. Not far from there is a 3.50-meter-high lamppost. Another lamppost is located where the road enters the dock site, where it stands on top of a fifty-centimeter-high stone pedestal. The border of the dock site on the side of the BARMBECKER STR is created by a high earth embankment covered with shrubs and medium-height trees. It is supported on the dockside by a nearly 1.50-meter-high fieldstone wall. Above this wall is a double barbed wire fence, and on the upper part of the embankment along BARMBECKER STR is a 1.30-meter-high picket fence. In this embankment, immediately next to the channel, there is a small sandstone, dungeon-like building with a door and small grated windows. On the corner of the OSTERBECK STR and BARMBECKER STR, there is a small brick building with large, permanently closed double doors facing the street.

A nearly two-meter-high wooden lattice fence separates the dock site from the CANOE CLUB. At the end of the fence near the channel is a life preserver and two life hooks. At the other end, butting the OSTERBECK STR at the entrance of the CANOE CLUB, there is an eighty-centimeter by sixty centimeter box and a closet that is 1.70 meters high, sixty centimeters wide, and thirty-five centimeters deep, both made of wood and locked.

Immediately in front of the entrance to the dock site, up near the street, are two, double iron trapdoors set in the sidewalk, that when opened, give access to a cavity made of bricks.

**B—The Loading Dock as a “Purposeful Space” of the Building Authority**

In the previous section, we tried to describe the “loading dock” with strict objectivity, or in other words, just the “thing itself.” We avoided
mentioning any kind of purpose or introducing significance in the description. Indeed, the description avoided all words associated to purpose to prevent the space from being associated to any kind of “world” (whether adult or child). We considered this necessary in order to understand the locality more clearly and as undeniably “related to a world.” In so doing, we initially intend to describe the space as we see it, when we consider it to serve a particular purpose. Many years ago, building authorities built this space to serve as a loading and transfer facility for the channel boats. Barges and sailing barges carrying coal, potatoes, sand, stones, and similar mass goods docked, according to their water level, at the channel bank that had been heightened for this purpose. They were moored at the curbstones to have their goods transferred to land vehicles, where the kind of pavement suggests carriages. These vehicles would come from one of the neighboring streets and descend on the road, which had sufficient frictional resistance,

[43]

Figure 4
Schematic Sketch of the Loading Dock

Notes: German terms are given in alphabetical order
Böschung—embankment
Brücke—bridge
Fahrbahn—road
Haus—house
Kanal—channel
Schuppen—shed
Senkgrube—cesspool (Note that “two, double iron trapdoors set in the sidewalk, that when opened, give access to a cavity made of bricks.”)
Verliess—dungeon-like building
owing to the cobblestones. Thus, the space presents itself as very service-oriented and “adult” both as a whole and in all its details. Additionally, the space contains public hygiene facilities removed from traffic flow so as not to interfere in the aesthetics of the street. The abovementioned hidden “dungeon” is a public bathroom. Behind the double doors of the brick building, the street-cleaning department keeps tools and handcarts, and the cavities near the entrance to the site serve as temporary storage for street garbage. These installations were not part of the original purpose of the loading dock and were added later, from an adult perspective. We can say that adults created this space for the purpose of adults.

C—The Loading Dock as “Action Space” for Adults

And what are the adults doing with the loading dock? What role does it play in their world? Given that the toilet facility is locked, the street cleaning installations are used only occasionally, and that there is seldom any boat-unloading activity, the reader will not be surprised that 99 in 100 adults have no contact whatsoever with this space. [43/44] Adults either pass by inattentively, their eyes directed on the path ahead, or they glance at the dock rapidly, as any pedestrian glimpses a street in passing. The great majority of passersby are not prompted to any prolonged observation of the site, or to enter for any reason, whether “adult” or “child” in nature. They clearly sense that they have no business at this site, because they are either “unauthorized” or not interested in the space. The loading dock does not affect most of the passing adults. It has become part of their “surroundings” but not of their “environment,” that is, their “lived world.”

The few adults that did enter into any kind of contact with this space during our period of observation usually classified it as part of their “specific world,” and certainly not as “place-specific.” Only once during the weeks of our observations did we see a barge lay anchor and fix two hawsers to the curbstones. On this occasion, a bargeman stood on the gangplank between the vessel and land. Another time a garbage truck drove down the road and turned around at the dock site where two garbage men transferred garbage from the cavities. In both cases, the characteristics of the place were used in the manner and sense they were intended to by those who built the facility. To the bargemen and coachmen, the channel bank, curbstone, road, and covered space become environmental “markers” recognized by their
respective professions, which they materialize through their actions. In other words, they delete them as markers. They read from their “surroundings” or from the given space around them, a few factors that shape their “environment” for a short time. The “world” created by the utilitarian thinking of the builder, the utilitarian space, and the worlds or action spaces “lived” by the bargeman and garbage men, respectively, are totally identical, without any contradictions. This becomes more significant when in each case the activity in the space prompted attention and caused several passersby to stop and watch.

We observed other adults sitting on the curbstones along the banks of the channel fishing. In other words, they used the space and the curbstones for purposes other than those for which they were created yet, as it turns out, for which they were well-suited. From the conditions or surroundings of the place, they select a few to became part of the “fisherman’s world.” The wide-open site gives free access to the fishing grounds. The curbstones are raised, offering somewhat higher [44/45] seating conditions that allow them to see the laid-out fishing rods. The pedestrian path allows the fishermen to lay out their fishing gear, and the removed location of the site provides freedom from disturbances (leaving the city outside). Others assemble their faltboats and put them in the water at the bank of the channel. In these cases, the gaps between the conditions of the site and the “world of faltboat users” are noted more clearly. The wide-open paved area of the site, designed to accommodate barges and wagons, permits a clear, dry, clean space for spreading out the faltboat parts and can therefore be included in the specific world faltboat users. However, placing the boat in the water proves to be unexpectedly difficult, and even dangerous. The one-meter difference between the water level and the loading dock is appropriate for the barges, but is a serious impediment for faltboater users and cannot be easily integrated into the context of their actions. Finally, a few adults accompany their small children to see the water. In their world, the loading dock is first and foremost a collection of dangerous moments, which could be noted by the firm holds they keep on to their children, and from the anxious, preoccupied way they survey the place for a possible “escape.”

Thus, we can see that the loading dock, although characterized initially as “made by adults for adults,” is not very present for most of them, with only a few more or less integrating the site into their specific world. The site is only seldom used in a place-specific manner.
The loading dock means as much to the children as little as it means to the adults. Many children are merely passing through or play on the Barmbecker Str or Osterbeck str, paying no attention to the site, much less entering it. The place remains “outside” their “lived space.” However, there are also numerous children who behave quite differently and make intensive use of the site. Their numbers are twenty times higher than that of adults. We can distinguish two groups: one very small group that consists of children who walk along the Osterbeck str and only use the space to pass through. The other group consists of children who come from various places and remain for a short or long time. During our eleven hours of observation, during all seasons and times of day [45/46], we counted 159 children in both of these groups. Certainly, this number of visitors to the loading dock is small in comparison to other streets and locations in Barmbeck. At “Am alten Schützenhof” for instance, the same number of children was counted in one hour, while on the playground on the Diederich str, the same number was counted in ten to fifteen minutes. The reasons for this are that, first, the loading dock is somewhat out of the way, on the edge of “Barmbeck Isle,” and removed from traffic flow. Second, it is not an official “playground” making it all the more notable that so many children come from far away to play.

The loading dock is nearly exclusively a boys’ affair (140 of the 159 children were boys) and, furthermore, a place for younger and older primary-school children (61 percent are primary-school students, and only 15 percent belong to the four older age groups). None of the other streets and sites show this predominance of boys over the girls (e.g., B:G = 2:1, at most 3:1). Most of the children on the streets are usually three- to eight-year-olds, and on the studied locations, they are usually eight to fourteen-year-olds.

Therefore, we must question the significance of the loading dock for these children. How does it become part of their “world?” How does it differ from the world of the adults?

The difference between the two worlds begins with defining the site. For adults, specifically the builders, and for the above-mentioned users and the observer, the most important part, or the psychological center of the loading dock, is down below near the edge of the water. For the children, a very important one is located, from an adult perspective, at the periphery. It is the 1.15-meter-high wooden lattice fence along
the street. The site begins with this fence, which captures the children that pass and charms them into realizing the site.

In the world of the adults, the fence has two tasks: one, it marks the boundary between the street and the site and structures the space; second, it is a kind of parapet that protects the passersby from falling down the embankment. In other words, it is intended to impede movement. It hardly plays a role as a tactile marker in the adult world (when would adults enter into contact with it?). Rather, in the adult perceptual world, it primarily constitutes an optical signal and, as such, is endowed optical-aesthetically in terms of colors, the shape of the stakes and rungs, the proportioned distance among the rungs, and so forth.

No doubt, the children have an optical impression of the fence as well. However, this (probably) neither affects them aesthetically, nor does it impede and limit their movements, according to observations. The majority of the children, both those passing by and those playing, try to enter into direct contact with the fence. The fence literally has a demand characteristic. Rarely does a child between three and thirteen years of age walk on the sidewalk of the OSTERBECK STR along the fence without touching it. Some focus on the top rung, sliding their hand over it; touching it with a stick, a ball, or even a bag or shopping basket; or brushing along the middle rungs. Alternatively, they might choose a rhythmic manner, hitting, touching, or slapping the stakes as they pass along the fence. They seek, almost need, contact or a tactile experience.

Other children, not just those who want to reach the loading dock, appear to have the same fascination with the fence as a passionate climber has with a mountain (or is the climber’s experience that of a child?). They cannot let the looming height go unconquered.

Although there are two wide, easily maneuvered stairways and a gently descending road that offer easy possibilities to walk up or down, the children invariably use only the fence and the embankment for such purposes. They either climb over the fence or between the rungs (smaller children), for no other purpose than to climb back over or to reach the dock via the embankment. Sometimes, they just climb around on the fence.

The fence has many uses. There are several possibilities like sitting freely and letting their legs dangle, or squatting on or behind a rung. In both cases, balance is required, and just getting up and turning around is beyond the ability of kindergarten children. The six-year-olds receive help from the older kids and “train” how to climb and turn,
soon mastering the skill. True mastery is necessary to sit up high to “daydream,” rest, talk with comrades, or even look at and exchange pictures. They also lie across the fence on their stomachs, supporting or not their feet on the ground to enjoy a (more attractive?) view of the site. A few, mostly older boys, risk balancing feats. Only twice did we observe ten-year-old boys doing such tricks. The drop toward the street is only a little over one meter, but the fall on the dockside is three meters, meaning it requires considerable courage.

Upon recapitulation, we see the fence in the world of the adults as a visually perceived element that structures space by impeding movement and offering security as a boundary for passing adults on the OSTERBECK STR. In the world of the child, the fence is a tactile image to notice and act upon. It appears to forcefully and irresistibly compel touching, many time becoming an “informal” gym apparatus, which sends numerous movement stimuli. Therefore, what to us, adults, is an irrelevant and uninteresting object of the surroundings that exists only peripherally, namely our action space, becomes a thing for grasping, jumping, climbing, sitting, and squatting in the world of the child.

From a street engineering point of view, the rather steep embankment behind the fence is a consequence of filling in the inclination of the road, giving it no special purpose. The adults only noticed the embankment when the rains threatened to wash it out, which they solved with a stone cover. Since then, it is of no importance and almost nonexistent in the adult world.

For the children, on the other hand, the stone embankment is something “gripping.” Most of the children we observed deal with it in one form or another and, usually, quite intensively. Although it is still very “taboo” for the kindergarten children, we observed several times three-, four-, and five-year-olds approaching the railing with older children or walking up to the foot of the embankment. However, then they switched course and used the steps or the road. The six-year-olds begin with attempts to conquer the embankment. After climbing over the fence or having trained on it sufficiently, the average six-year-old sits on the embankment and slides down on his bottom. This is the least dangerous manner. As they go down, they gradually pull up their legs arriving at a squatting position, which shortly before “landing” should be changed into a standing position. Once that is accomplished, it is only a question of courage to when they switch to descending the embankment in an upright position by running or “skidding.” Some prefer to acquire this “downhill technique” by holding on to the railing while
going down, or use it as a slight support. With increasing courage and more practice, they gradually “free” themselves. The *eight-year-olds* are skillful “descenders” who race down the inclination of the embankment with nonchalance or slide down gracefully. This skiing-like experience appears to be twofold: the “pleasure-anxiety” transmitted through the experience of sliding, and the heightened self-esteem of being able to complete the slide. It appears that the latter is sought with special passion. Frequently, attention is called for with shouts of “Hey, look here!”

Climbing the embankment from below is easier, and requires less courage but more strength. With a sufficient running start, it is easy to reach the top and grab the fence. An eight-year-old can do this without effort, while the younger ones need “training.” They begin where the embankment is not as high and gradually increase the challenge. Others train by pulling themselves up along the railing or by at least holding on to it while climbing. Here we see how slow climbing security is acquired. We observed boys training like mountain climbers as to the position of the feet, push and pull, body position, and balancing. The most accomplished feat we observed was an eight-year-old who pulled his approximately six-year-old sister behind him up the embankment without support.

Those who do not run up or down the embankment by themselves throw balls, pieces of wood, or similar objects and observe how they slide, spin, or roll down. Given the steep inclination of the embankment, nice effects can be achieved especially with non-round objects, which are observed by the experimenters with interest and cheers.

Those older than eight are little observed on the embankment. They use the stairs or the road because something other than the “training slope” attracts them to the site. Only when they are in the presence of younger comrades will they run up or down once to impress. Other than that, the embankment does not exist, as it does not for the adults.

For the *two and three-year-olds*, the embankment also has a different meaning. To them, it is a hole or abyss that separates them as they walk on the sidewalk of the road and their mother walking along the OSTERBECK STR. Separated spatially by the fence and the difference in height, yet still visually close, the small ones enjoy this independence and distance from their mother. This usually occurs accompanied by shouting, waving, and other indications of happiness when the mother is visible. However, when the mother removes herself from the fence so that she can no longer be seen from down below, it provokes anxiety and nervous screams. This appears to be a clear case of “pleasure-anxiety.”
The embankment serves especially well in differentiating between the “world of the adult” and the “world of the child.” From the perspective of the builder, the embankment is doubly disagreeable: first, stones had to be placed to secure the earth embankment and prevent it from being washed out by the rain; second, a fence had to be erected to protect the public from falling. The earth embankment is something to be remedied through appropriate technical intervention. Once that is accomplished, the embankment becomes irrelevant to the purpose of the site and without consequence. For the adult users and passersby of the site, the embankment does not exist. For them, the essence is the sidewalk, stairways, and road. At most, the fence on the embankment reminds them of potential danger, but it is not something real. It is a given. However, when children approach the site, they convert the embankment, or “byproduct of street engineering” into an essential part of their world. The road and the sidewalk disappear nearly completely for the child, with the fence and embankment becoming the highlight in contemplative and observational relief. This occurs in different manners in different age groups. Here the worlds of middle-school children and of adults are most similar, with the embankment being an obstacle to be avoided or bypassed, though for quite different reasons. The small children enjoy the distance that the embankment creates between them and their mothers, the pleasure-anxiety of being far and alone, which adults accomplish through long trips. The primary-school children see the embankment as central to their world. It is an “exercise slope” and a training space of the first order. The courageous and the cowardly, the agile and the awkward, the apprentices and the masters all reveal themselves here. What is important to all of them is proof and confirmation of their skill to themselves and in front of others. They go about this with seriousness and perseverance, to the point that the embankment and their activities become a world of experience, and the rest of the surroundings disappear into nothingness.

The three stairways that lead to the site at different places provide more rapid and comfortable access to the dock. To most of the children, this is not important, so they do not use them. Hence, depending on the person, the stairways might enter or not into their world as a space-structuring element. In the specific manner, that is, using the steps as would adults do, only the younger kindergarten kids, and the fourteen-year-olds do as well. The majority of the two and
three-year-olds are still occupied with the cumbersome task of taking the steps one at a time. However, as soon as this phase is over, using the stairways normally is no longer enticing and they seek new challenges. The fourteen-year-olds, however, go down the steps like the adults, since the highlights of their “lived world” on the loading dock are not on the stairways. All the others tend to use the railing rather than the steps. They either hold on to it as they walk down the embankment, or they slide down in the most varied manners. They also use the railing as a gymnastics apparatus for many “circles.” Once we observed a five-year-old reclining on it, reading a comic book.

Here again we reevaluate: once adults decide to descend to the dock they find themselves confronted with a set of steps that they overcome with rhythmic lifting and lowering of the legs. This idea does not appear to cross the children’s mind, and they totally ignore the steps. For adults, the railing delineates a limit to everything non-stairs and, at the same time, protects and provides a “handle.” In the surroundings of children, it acquires a special value and becomes an essential element therein.

The road and the sidewalks on its either side are very seldom used in a specific manner. Adults other than specific professionals do not traverse it longitudinally, but only cross it to take the stairways down to the site. It is not comprehensible to the observer what the purpose of the sidewalks along the road might be.

Among the young users, one group glides down the sidewalk on a scooter or a bicycle. Since the scooter is always carried back up the stairs, and sometimes the bicycle as well, the ride down usually happens only once. We can easily see that there is neither purposeful activity nor training of any kind in these cases, but only pure pleasure. The ride down is fully enjoyed. Some of the older, thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds make turns and perform tricks with their bicycle in the curves of the site.

The second group of users is composed of mostly older boys, who no longer have childish interests in the railings and the embankment. As they pass along the OSTERBECK STR, they make quick detours through the site, scanning the area like hunters. Neither the slope nor the direction of the road is important to them. They only want to be closer to the content and events of the site. Therefore, if [51/52] something is happening they want to have a head start so they can enter quickly into the action. In other words, for them, the road is not an activity space oriented by their own movement when passing, riding, running,
sliding, or skipping through. Rather, it is a space filled with a sense of pending adventures and sensory stimulation.

The third group of users is the afore-mentioned two- to four-year-olds who enjoy the “parallel walk” on the sidewalk and for whom the road represents strangeness and independence. For all the others, meaning the four- to twelve-year-olds, the road is practically nonexistant.

For our analyses, one can divide the site into four segments: the site itself, the sidewalk around it, the water’s edge covered with curbstones, and the sand embankment with the dungeon.

From the adult point of view, the purpose of the site itself is lining up and turning around horse-drawn vehicles. Hence, the wide-open space is covered with permanent cobblestones with frictional resistance. Even though its expanse is enticing and it sends out stimuli for movements the area is little used. Either it has no allure, or stimuli from the neighboring areas are stronger. Only once did we observe a few six- to nine-year-olds playing catch. Even so, “home base” was the fence, which clearly implies that the appeal of the game was not the open expanse with its possibilities of escape, but the “taking” of the embankment. Otherwise, we observed no ball or romping games. Mostly, people just crossed the site to reach the other segments. This would probably be the posture of most adults, unless using the space for parade ground or roll call of associations. One activity that we frequently observed that may seem rather strange to adults is the children using their hands or a stick to dig up sand or small stones from between the cobblestones, which they then throw into the water of the channel to watch the splashes.

More important is the water’s edge where twenty-six curbstones were erected three meters apart to prevent horse drawn vehicles from driving into the channel and to fix the hawser of the barges. The sidewalk is covered with small cobblestones, and along the edge of the water, there is an iron railing so that the ships unloading and doing other activities do not damage the embankment. As we saw on page 44 (of the original facsimile), adult fishermen use the curbstones [52/53] as places to sit. Other than this, the curbstones act as a fence, despite the distance between them, to keep adults from the water’s edge. Nobody advances beyond these stones, and none of the adults would think of touching them.

With the children, this is totally different. Once they advance to the water’s edge, most children have some kind of relationship with the curbstones. They sit on them or goosestep over them. Most frequently,
the entire row is used for leapfrogging. The older children proceed by bridging the gaps with larger jumps and one smaller jump followed by a step and thus move rhythmically along the water’s edge. The smaller children climb with considerable effort over each of the half-meter-high obstacles.

The edge of the water was intended by the builders and users of the dock to be the border between water and land. The current place used for transshipment is a quiet spot where the children sit. Here they can dangle their legs and daydream, watch passing ships, and chat with a friend. A few of the braver older kids balance along the edge, moving their feet precisely along the iron rail.

The children also indulge their almost unlimited pleasure of observation by simply standing at the water’s edge. We observed all ages between three and fourteen trying to get “closer” to anything interesting. Therefore, the edge is perceived not as a border that creates distance, but the exact place where the otherwise inaccessible elements enter into their perceptual field and thus their lived space. Passing faltboats, rowboats, barges, tugboats, as well as the “family swan” provide multiple stimuli for the “aggressive craving for the new.” In the same manner, the children participated in fishing and setting up faltboats, with the younger ones abandoned to their curiosity and the older ones with an air of expertise and technical judgment. The observed behavior of the children corresponds to our expectations. Children who appeared absorbed in passing ships or who were occupied with other activities suddenly flocked to the corner near the “dungeon,” to take up a post with interest or excitement. Some hydrodynamic activities could be observed on the corner between the water’s edge and the bridge pillar. First, a suction effect occurred when larger vessels such as barges or tugboats passed, which allowed the sandy bed of the channel to be seen for a moment. Seconds later, a strong swell followed causing the water to splash up the edge, at times even splashing the spectators. Practically, only primary-school children showed an interest in these occurrences. This was so exciting for them that, at times, they would come running from the OSTERBECK STR only for this purpose. Younger children participated only when they were part of a playgroup of primary-school children.

As Ernst Goldbeck demonstrated in his “World of Boys,” any kind of water movement or splashes is experienced with great intensity by youth with their preference for strong sensory stimulation. Thus, it is not surprising that the children tried to provoke these effects
themselves, even if to a lesser degree. Thus, many of the visitors of all age groups invariably picked up sand and small stones from the site to throw into the turbid, often oily water.

The third section of the site is the sidewalk that surrounds the area. It is intended for pedestrians and serves especially as access to the “dungeon,” the water’s edge and, on the eastern side, to the entrance of the Canoe Club and the rescue equipment. For the adults, the sidewalk is totally irrelevant and unused unless they want to go the few meters to the Canoe Club.

The children use the sidewalk in front of the “dungeon,” as a jumping off spot to reach the embankment, which is covered with shrubs and allows for all kinds of games. It is not considered an access to the water’s edge, which is usually reached by using the paved site. The sidewalk in front of the canoe space, or essentially the corner between the fence and the OSTERBECK STR embankment, are taken into consideration. In this quiet corner, children make drawings in the sand of houses, living quarters, steps, and furniture that keep for days and are used repeatedly. In this fictitious place, they play, for example, “mother and child.” Alternatively, they draw railroads and streets where four- to eleven-year-olds play “traffic,” sometimes with the help of toy cars they bring along. In this corner, they also play, without drawings, a series of fictional games like “assault,” “airplane,” and “theater,” in which case the audience sits on the wooden fence along the street. The relative seclusion provided by the fence [54/55] and the embankment grants a kind of security and sense of “being among ourselves” to the corner and turns it into an “island,” from where children shout mockeries or insults to passersby or the nosy.

Finally, in analyzing the social constellations formed by the children on the loading dock, we determined sixty-two “groups.” Of these, the most frequent were twenty-one loners, nineteen doubles, and thirteen triples. All the other groups (four, five, six, eight, and twelve members) occurred between one and three times. Only thirteen of the true groups were composed of different ages. Girls rarely appeared in separate groups, nearly always coming as members of boys’ groups. Thirty-one of the groups were occupied with functional games, eighteen with reception games (observations, looking at pictures), eight with constructions (mostly drawing) and only two with fiction games (but several in a row). The loners and equal-age doubles and triples dominated the loading dock. These social constellations correspond to the most frequent age groups seen at the place, and the principal activity is functional play.
The few larger groups play receptive and fictional games since the remote aspects of the loading dock are well suited for these games. Gangs do not occur. Even in the two large groups, we observed more side-by-side activities than joint movements. The site, in the world of the child, is “lived” primarily as a place of motor exercise or a place to “show off,” and does not offer anything for the more mature youth that organize themselves in gangs.

Section Three

The “Vacant Lot” in the World of the Urban Child

In the second chapter, we establish that nearly three-fifths of the boys and two-fifths of the girls we talked to mentioned vacant lots as playgrounds. We recognized that such locations possess considerable attraction for urban children. For this reason, we chose a vacant lot at the corner of Hinrichsenstr and Käthnerort as a second urban space to analyze in more detail.

The Platz, [place] as it is simply called by the children in the neighborhood, measures seventy meters by ninety meters. Its north side is delineated by the cobblestone pavement of the Hinrichsenstr, its west by the small stone pavement of Käthnerort, its south by Käthnerkamp, and on its east side a wooden plank separates it from some storage yard. On Käthnerort, there are two old-style Barmbeck houses, true “Käthnerhouses” with their broadside to the street. Behind them, there is a third rather run-down cottage with its gabled end facing the street that apparently is no longer used as a residence. These houses are surrounded by small and large yards and gardens, some of them deserted but still surrounded by broken fences. Particularly, the constructed areas are separated from the empty one by a high wooden fence. The Platz itself is not uniformly flat; rather, it is covered with small rubble heaps and a few depressions. There are three tree stumps and the abandoned gardens contain some shrubs. The non-tiled sidewalks along Käthnerort and Hinrichsenstr are as much part of the Platz as the old elm trees, the lamppost, and the advertising pillar on the corner, since the children include them in their games. However, the constructed part, with the exception of the gable side of the house facing the Platz, is never part of the play space, and the “garden part” is seldom used.

We observed the space in the summers of 1932 and 1934 at various times of day using the spotlight and the time-sample methods. All told, the observations lasted seven and three-fourths hours. In this period,
we observed 412 children, of which two-thirds were boys and one-third girls. The majority of the children were playing on the Platz. Only one-fourth were passersby or children “working” by mostly watching their siblings. Of the passing children, who like the adults cross the Platz diagonally to cut the corner, we counted as many boys as girls. It is clear that the Platz is primarily a boys’ affair, who make up three-fourth of the playing children. Unlike the results of the loading dock (cf. page 46 [of the original of the facsimile]) where only 15 percent of the children fell into the ten- to fourteen-year-old age group, here they make up 40 percent. If one considers only the boys, this proportion reaches 45 percent of the ten to fourteen-year-olds who populate the playground. Primary-school children form the largest contingent at 50 percent (47 percent boys, 58 percent girls). Kindergarten children

[57]

are almost totally absent, making up less than 10 percent of all playing children, while on the loading dock they were 24 percent.

The social constellations found on the Platz were varied, with 46 percent of the children forming “small groups” (three to five members), 23 percent “large” groups with more than five members, 21 percent “pairs,” and 10 percent “loners.” The loners, who incidentally are from all age groups, were seldom seen playing. They are more often spectators or “ball fetchers” for other players. We observed, in terms of the results of the social psychology of children, that pairs peak at 53 percent among the primary-school children, while “small groups” peak at 49 percent among the ten- to fourteen-year-olds, with primary-school children still expressive with 44 percent. The “large group” is clearly present at 67 percent among the ten- to fourteen-year-olds.

[58]

Thus, age-specific socialization is also present on the Platz, albeit the specificities of the Platz apparently shift the picture. Of all the primary-school children, approximately one-fourth choose to play in pairs, while nearly half organize themselves in “small groups.” In the same manner, one-third of the ten- to fourteen-year-olds choose to play in “large groups,” while half of them are found in “small groups.” Hence, we must ask what facts provoke this shift. To address this we conducted a survey of the toys the children brought to the site. Of the
th  e Life Space of the Urban Child

Notes: German terms are given in alphabetical order
Anschlagsäule—advertising pillar
Baumstümpfe—tree stumps
Bäume—trees
Busch—bush
Garten—garden
Gras—grass
K—denotes location of cottages
Kuhlen—depressions
Sandhügel—sand hill
Zaun—fence

278 children who brought toys, 107 played with balls and thirty-one played with stones, grass clumps, cardboard pieces, yarn reels, and similar throwing objects. Although never with the required number of players, most play soccer, dodge ball, baseball, volleyball, or simply shoot goals. Other throwing games such as catch, target hitting, or dodge ball are seldom played, usually when there are no more than two players available. “Shooting goals” is played with one being the “goalie” and another one or two being the “forwards.” Occasionally, there may be a “defense.” As one can observe during recess intervals at school,
these are typical games played by all boys in upper elementary school. The same is found on the *Platz*. The many older elementary and middle-school boys and the prevalent “small groups” are an expression of the predominant play situation. The *Platz*, bordered on the south side by a fence, offers a totally different terrain that is practically ideal. In the northwest corner, this space is completely level. It leads directly to the sidewalk without impediments and can be reached without difficulty at any time of the day. Quite regularly, the elm trees along the sidewalk, or one elm tree and the advertising pillar or lamppost are used as goalposts. It is almost as if the environmental conditions transform the corner of Hinrichsen str/Käthnerort into the perfect sports ground. This corner is the most frequented on the *Platz*. Because the place is undisturbed by sidewalk traffic and there are no guards or police officers to enforce rules of conduct, the boys become totally immersed in their play on this “sports ground,” to the point that they are not distracted by spectators or other events close by. For them, this inconspicuous unfriendly corner becomes the “lived world” of the “sports ground,” and everything else is “outside.” Even the houses are referred to as “back there,” and they consider the eastern border along the Käthnerkamp far away.

Vehicles such as scooters, bicycles, or carts are brought along infrequently, and the *Platz* itself is not often used for gymnastics, jumping, or tag (about seven percent each). In contrast, nearly a third of the children use the space frequently for sitting or for a “stand-up party.” Most often children sit in the summer grass area near the wooden fence next to the houses, or on the fence itself. Equally as often, they sit near the eastern edge in the depressions in the abandoned garden, and less often on the tree stumps, leaf piles, or blankets they brought along. The “standing meeting” usually takes place near the wooden fence somewhat out of sight and removed from the edge of the *Platz*, in the shade of the early afternoon. The *Platz* is a kind of a “retreat,” or a substitute for the “cave” where they exchange secrets or chat without constraints. Toward the evening, the *Platz* appears to assume the above characterization in a pre-going-home stage. The children, who mostly appear to belong to the neighboring apartment buildings, circulate back and forth between the *Platz* and the buildings in a peculiar manner. Some arrive from another playground further away to stay here a little while longer. Some organize small games, but most hang around the fence and talk. They wait until called in by their parents for dinner once the father has come home from work.
During our preparation for this research, we had assumed that “place-specific” activities would occur like digging, shoveling, building caves, and so forth. However, we observed this among few children. Six times we saw children collecting stones, thrice shoveling, thrice digging in the sand, once playing “knife in the sand,” and once two boys crawling about the bushes and the garden.

In the adult world, the Platz is perceived as a vacant lot or a fairground when used temporarily by a traveling circus, yet it is always considered an urban “blemish” that is used and valued only as a shortcut. For the urban child, it becomes an ideal playground. Out in the open air, the children are free from constricted narrow streets and courtyards, unencumbered by traffic rules, removed from traffic dangers, and not obligated by specific conditions of an official play or sports ground. [59/60] All these restraints can be left “outside” while the children totally live this “world” in their “own way of life.” Luckily for the youth, that there still are such spaces in well-kept urban areas, which medieval urban administration would have condemned as “depraved locations.”

Section Four
The “Playground” in the World of the Urban Child

Our Barmbeck children most frequently named the Corwegh Platz on the Diederich str as the place they visit for playing. We will analyze it now as the third partial space.

The Corwegh Platz is shaped as a rectangle that measures approximately sixty-five by fifty meters, with the left back corner cut out. Along the Diederich str, a one-meter-high wooden fence separates the Platz from the street. The entrance gate is set in the middle of this fence, accessible by a thirty-centimeter-high cement step. On the right side, a three-meter-high wire mesh fence separates the playground from a sports ground. A tall wooden plank borders the far side of the park and the left side has a one-meter-high wooden fence that separates it from a “Skat place for the jobless.”

To the right and left of the entrance at the Diederich str, there are two tables with rules and regulations written in Sütterlin specifically for the children.

The sandy soil of the playground is level and firm. Only in the sand box and the jumping pit is the white sand in a loose heap. The sand box is set in the inner half of the park and is enclosed by cement walls measuring one meter on the far side and a half-meter on the other sides.
The front is a wooden beam that barely rises above the ground. Here the sand is nearly at the same levels as the rest of the playground. One-meter-high wooden posts are placed around the sand box at intervals of 1.5 to 2 meters. Inside the sand box, there is a “small climbing tree” made of interconnected tree trunks and a kind of wall made of thin planks. On the left front of the playground, beams barely visible above the ground demarcate a jumping pit measuring twenty-five meters by twenty-five meters. This pit is filled with loose sand and contains a “large climbing tree”.

Figure 6
Schematic of Corwegh Place in Barmbeck

Notes: German terms are given in alphabetical order
Holzpfähle—wooden posts
Eingang—entrance
Abkürzungen—abbreviations
g.KL.—großer Kletterbaum—large climbing tree
k.KL.—keener Kletterbaum—small climbing tree
Sp.G.—Sprunggrube—jumping pit
S.K.—Sandkuhle—sandbox
1, 2, 3, 4—Schaukeln—swings
R.—Reck—horizontal bar
Ab.—Abort—toilet
The branches of this climbing tree extend in a radial manner upward into the air over the rectangle. They are held up by a large square of thick logs in the middle. To the left, toward the back of the park, there are two structures with swings fastened with iron chains. There are two more swings like this further to the right and foreground. Between them are horizontal bars. Additionally, there are two wooden trash bins on the ground and a 1.20-meter-high children’s restroom made of clinker bricks. The park contains many tall trees, especially on the right side, that provide shade during sunny days.

In the summer of 1932, we conducted three hours of observation in this park using the *time-sample* method. Approximately 1,879 children were registered, 68 percent of them boys and 32 percent of them girls. The proportion of boys is higher here than that on the streets, which will be discussed later, but is as high as the proportion on the *Platz*, and nearly as high as that on the loading dock. Even though this place was built as primarily a romping space for eight- to fourteen-year-old children, it is visited by children of all [61/62] ages. The eight- to fourteen-year-olds predominate at 63.2 percent, but the three- to five-year-olds form a noticeable contingent at 21 percent because of the sandbox, as well as the six- to eight-year-olds at 13 percent. This lower number of early primary-school children, as compared to other places we observed, is easily explained given the nature of the place. The kindergarten children can play age-specific games in the sandbox, and at the edge of the jumping pit, without being disturbed. The six- to eight-year-olds, on the other hand, consider themselves too old for playing in the sand, but are not sufficiently brave or skilled to climb on the climbing trees or the horizontal bars. It is also notable that up to age six, there are more girls than boys. The typical proportion of boys to girls, which is on an average two-thirds to one-third, is practically inverted in this age group. We could not find an explanation for this. In the primary-school age group, there are once again two-thirds boys and one-third girls. In the middle-school group, there are four-fifths boys versus one-fifth girls. Thus, this “playground,” too, is primarily a boys’ affair. Of all the children, there are 58 percent in middle school, 28.3 percent in primary school, and the rest are in preschool. Of the girls, 26 percent are in middle school, 44 percent in preschool, and 30 percent in primary school. Thus, the “playground” is primarily a middle-school boys affair, which given the resources, is not surprising. During the vacation periods, there are exactly two-fifths less children, both boys and girls, on the grounds. This may be explained by the fact
that, during the vacation, children may visit playgrounds that are farther away. This supposition is also based on another numerical result. Twice as many preschool children can be found during the vacation period than during the school year. They are not able to take long walks to playgrounds located farther away, roam about in the outlying areas of the city, or go on hikes during vacation. Consequently, the playground offers them undisturbed play opportunities when less occupied by older children. According to our observations, especially middle-school boys seem to disappear from the playground during vacation periods.

We also conducted observations of the frequency of use during different climates. The results were as expected: there were always more children during hot weather than during cooler weather. On the one hand, more parents obviously send their children outside during hot weather; on the other hand, the children do not like to walk as far in hot weather, and even walking to the city park is too far.

Of the social structures observed among the children on the playground, the “small group” was the most frequent with 34 percent, although not as often as in the places discussed so far. This may be explained by the higher proportion of ten- to fourteen-year-olds, who tend to congregate in this social structure. They play tag most often on the climbing trees and, although prohibited, the abovementioned ball games: both are modes of play that are most appropriate the social form of small group.

The next most frequent group formation is the loner at 30 percent found especially among preschool children. Among the primary-school children, there is no clear pattern of preferred social formation: nearly half are loners (on the climbing trees), but all kinds of formations are observed, especially among the older ones (Table 8).

The large climbing tree has on an average four times more boys than girls. Even considering that there are overall twice as many boys than girls on the ground, the “large climbing tree” is primarily a boys’ affair, especially for prepubescent (ten- to thirteen-year-old) boys. Half of the boys are between ten- and fourteen-years of age. Of the female tree users, nearly two-thirds are prepubescent. Younger age groups, especially those in kindergarten, do not appear at all. The large climbing tree requires a high degree of skill and courage that the younger ones do not have, and that is seldom seen among girls.

The small climbing tree attracts fewer boys, and their numbers do not even reach the average on the grounds. Less courage is required to climb this tree and more girls and younger children dare to use it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>L. C. Tree</th>
<th>S. C. Tree</th>
<th>Swing</th>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Shovel</th>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Car</th>
<th>Ball</th>
<th>Animals</th>
<th>Scooter</th>
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*Note:* L.C. Tree, large climbing tree; S.C. Tree, small climbing tree.
More girls than boys use the swings. Considering that there are twice as many boys as girls on the grounds, the predominance of the girls on the swings (three-fifths girls versus two-fifths boys) clearly makes the swings a girls’ affair. Although used more frequently by prepubescent children, the younger age groups are also strongly present.

The fact that kindergarten children are found playing on the horizontal bars is as surprising as the fact that girls predominate on gymnastics equipment typically meant for boys.

Shovels and scoops are toys found essentially in the kindergarten age group, although later on larger shovels are encountered among middle-school boys. While the younger ones usually shovel and bake, the older ones occupy themselves with true “earth work,” as long as the guards do not intervene.

Only preschool children use molds, buckets, boxes, and pails. Other toys, such as metal cars, ships, cardboard animals, and scooters occurred very seldom and were thus considered statistically irrelevant. Ball games, which according to the sign at the entrance are totally forbidden, occurred approximately fifty-two times and mostly involved the ten- to thirteen-year-old boys. During the winter, the playground was used nearly exclusively for ball games.

By analyzing the relationship between the children and their play equipment from the perspective of age and sex, we noted that most of the boys played on the “large climbing tree” and most of the girls played on the swings. The thirteen- to fourteen-year-old boys especially used the large climbing tree and then the small climbing tree. Except for on the horizontal bars and swings, they were not observed on any other equipment. The same is true for the girls of the same age, except that they do not use the large climbing tree.

Of the ten- to thirteen-year-old boys, nearly half are active on the large climbing tree. About the same number were active on the small climbing tree, the swings, and in ball games. The rest were divided nearly equally between “working the soil” and gymnastics on the horizontal bars. Of the girls in this age group, 36 percent were observed on the swings, 28 percent on the large climbing tree, 19 percent on the small climbing tree, and 10 percent on the horizontal bars.

The older primary-school boys were mostly active on the two climbing trees, but they use the smaller one more frequently than the middle-school kids. In contrast to the 71 percent who climb trees, only 13 percent on the swings are of note. The older primary-school girls are found mostly on the swings at 39 percent, followed by 33 percent
on the small climbing tree, and 18 percent on the large climbing tree. The horizontal bars were used by 6 percent (boys only 2 percent), and 3 percent played with shovels and spoons (boys 8 percent).

Among the younger primary-school children, the small climbing tree is the favorite (33 percent), and the swings (25 percent) are preferred to the large climbing tree (20 percent). Among the girls in this age group, the swings predominate with 40 percent, followed by the small climbing tree with 21 percent, the shovels in the sand with 13 percent, and the large climbing tree with 10 percent.

Very few kindergarten children tried to use the climbing trees, and those who did tried more frequently on the small one in the sandbox than the big one. Shoveling and using molds in the sandbox occupied nearly half of the boys and a third of the girls. The large number of the kindergarten girls trying the swings was surprising. It could be ascertained that all types of play activities mentioned by Charlotte Bühler occurred in our observations, albeit with different numerical distributions. The playground essentially permits functional games that are mostly traditional gymnastics exercises, particularly on the horizontal bars where nothing else occurs. Typical exercises take place on the climbing trees, although new ones are constantly invented. On hot days, the gymnastics equipment is used less and also less new exercises are played. Fiction games are very rare. Sticks are used as spears, chimneys, or flowers, while stones serve as money, and sand becomes ice cream. Fiction games such as playing house, cops and robbers, and so forth, which do not require material from the environment, were not observed at all. Construction games occurred with greater frequency, especially in the sandbox. Again, reception games occurred less frequently. Twice a child brought something along to show the other children, and once some boys read over the shoulder of a man who was reading a newspaper. A few times, children watched soccer or “goal shooting” so intently that it can be characterized as a reception game. Work was rarely observed, that is, usually older girls taking care of younger siblings. At times, children simply stand, sit, or squat, but real inactivity was not observed.

Let us now try to address the issue of how the playground, with its person and object content, becomes the personal world of the child.

The importance that one child attributes another child depends on the place. On the “playground,” the child encounters primarily “play” mates, which determines their social behavior. The preschool children
mostly play alone and rarely play with other peers, and even more rarely are they included in the activities of the older children. They use especially older girls and adults for help and protection. Beginning at age six, all children are considered potential playmates and they can contact anyone at any time. Within the larger playground community, there are frequently changing groups of all sizes. The playground guard has a different meaning for the children than other adults. For all children, he is a person to be respected and, for the younger ones, he is especially a court of appeal. We observed children as young as four “approach” him. The ten- to fourteen-year-old boys often visit the unemployed in the neighboring grounds. The children watch them play Skat or chitchat with them. Some exchange pictures with them.

As for the objects in the environment, we have mentioned the climbing trees, the swings, and the horizontal bars. These were built by adults as gymnastics equipment, and are used predominantly for this purpose by the children. However, there are also a number of other uses that may appear unusual to adults. The climbing trees, for example, offer opportunities to be alone, to rest, or to chitchat for the ten- to thirteen-year olds. In tag and fiction games, the trees are used as “safe havens” from danger. On the swings, the actual process of swinging is intensely desired and experienced only by the younger children. The older ones swing quite mechanically, seeing that the more important experience is competing with others or chitchatting. On the horizontal bars, children conduct competitions and are admired in the process. They stand on the bars, sit and chitchat, or rest. They also “daydream” while suspended from a bar or leaning against it.

The sandbox is also typically used in the manner expected by the adults. It offers opportunities for construction games or building something or the other. However, here too other uses are observed. The edge is used by the smaller ones to jump from and by the older ones for balancing, sitting and chitchatting, or resting. The back, higher edge is used as a platform for watching ballgames between the trees at the far end of the playground. At times, the sandbox becomes a set of gymnastics equipment where children sit on the edge and fall backward into the sand, or dive into the soft sand. They also hide from pursuers by lying behind the cement wall flat against the ground. A twelve-year-old was observed being buried in the sand up to the neck.

The fence that was intended to separate the playground from the jobless is not treated as such by the children. A constant coming and
The Life Space of the Urban Child

going can be observed. The three-year-olds are lifted over the fence, but the four-year-olds climb over by themselves. Children who come from the Bach str to reach the playground almost exclusively cross the area where the jobless are and climb over the fence. Additionally, the fence is used for various gymnastics activities.

The fence along the Diederich str, however, is a clear border for the children. Since it is not as suitable for climbing (there is more supervision here), nearly all children use the entrance gate. Seldom were children seen standing near the fence looking out toward the street, unless a fire engine passed by. More often, smaller children were observed walking on the lower horizontal beam of the fence.

Most of the children ignore the trees. Even during the hottest sun, none would withdraw to the shade. Only occasionally older boys climbed the trees to be admired by the others. The trees were used frequently as goal posts for the soccer games, practicing “head shots,” and “shooting goals.”

The wire fence on the side of the sports ground was climbed only twice. Often, children would sit on the ground behind the fence looking toward the sports ground.

Papers, sticks, and stones found lying about the playground, or the sand on the grounds were used mostly for fiction games. Stones, for example, were used as money. Stones and sand wrapped in paper were used to bombard one another. Often, stones were used to destroy buildings constructed in the sandbox.

In summary, we can affirm that, essentially, the playground on the Diederich str was used and “lived” by the children in the manner it was intended to by the adults. Separated from traffic and the world of the adults, the children made extensive use of the play possibilities provided by the grounds. It can be said that the inclusion of equipment indicates a sensitive understanding for the world of the child. However, these grounds intended for children also demonstrate, when lived by the children, clear divergences from the intentions of the builder. This is evident in how the children re-signified, or “re-lived” the fences and parapets intended by the adults to be borders or demarcations, into gymnastics equipment. Another example is how the children “re-lived” the climbing equipment as “safe havens” in fiction and functional games, or as places to “daydream” without being disturbed.
Section Five  
*The “Low-Traffic Street” in the World of the Urban Child*

In the second chapter, we noted that most of the interviewed children considered the urban streets as their favorite playground. Now, we will analyze in more detail a few typical streets to see how they are “lived” by the children.

We will use the Mirow str, a side street off the Barmbeck Isle, as an example of a “low-traffic street.” It is not used by horse-drawn vehicles at all, and is seldom used by delivery vehicles. Residents of the Mirow str make up most of the pedestrians, which is quite a small number. Women go shopping, push a pram, or hold a child by the hand. Men walk home from work, and children either come home from neighborhood schools, playgrounds, and running errands, or they pass through from other streets on their way to more distant playgrounds.

The traffic flow, if such a strong term may be used at all, clearly swells as it reaches the Hinrichsen str. It basically moves on the eastern side of the street (at the time of our observations it was the only one built up) and is approximately equal in both directions. This can be explained by the fact that the eastern/southeastern side has the “traffic hinterland” of the Mirow str shopping area. The adults and the older children returning from work come from the direction of the Hinrichsen str and Osterbeck str, creating a slight flow against the main movement.

In this low-traffic residential street with only one side built up, we worked using the spotlight methods during the summer of 1932. In 9.5 hours of observation, we registered 453 children of whom 64 percent were boys, 32.5 percent were girls, and 3.5 percent were non-classifiable infants. The number of children counted during specific spotlights varies between zero and sixteen with a mean of 4.1 in the morning and 6.2 in the afternoon. Of these children, 21.2 percent are passing through, demonstrating that, from a child’s point of view, the Mirow str is a “play street” where “nothing much happens.” In the morning and at noon, the passing children are ten- to thirteen-year-old schoolboys from the nearby gymnasium. In the afternoon, they are primary-school children on their way to the loading docks at the Osterbeck channel. All the passerby children, whether carrying along toys or empty-handed, behave as if they just want to “get the trip over with.” On their way, they are mostly occupied with function games: limping, skipping,
swinging objects in their hands, kicking a ball along, touching the
garden fences, and throwing balls or other objects in the air.

The vast majority, or 78.8 percent of the children, here are play chil-
dren. In none of the other analyzed streets did we observe such a large
number of play children. This is, of course, due to the nearly complete
absence of traffic that gives the Mirow str characteristics of a “play-
ground.” However, this does not explain why on school mornings most
play children are of the kindergarten age, an observation that can be
made on other streets as well. But the fact that in the afternoon the ten-
to thirteen-year-old boys [69/70] predominate can only be explained
by the “playground characteristics” of the Mirow str.

About two-thirds of the play children on the street carry toys with
them. Of the 189 children, twenty-five played with toys (in the adult
sense) such as scooters, Indian things, sabers, flags, and a large lead
ball. They used these objects here no differently than they would have
in any other street, or in other words we observed no “place-specific”
uses. Of the children playing with balls, only four played the so-called
proof play. 34 Since house fronts are available only on the corners, and
they are not accessible because of front yards, this otherwise predom-
inant street ball game was practically absent. Instead, they bounced
the ball on the sidewalk, threw it against ledges, or kicked it from one
to the other across the street, the latter of which was rarely observed
in other streets. The ten children who played with small metal cars
and a model railroad most likely did so because of the low traffic and
lack of children to interfere or provoke fights. Eight children, mostly
older, were observed using a bicycle. Some were learning to ride while
others practiced curves and turning around, something easily done on
a street without car and truck traffic.

Objects brought or prepared at home or on the street and used on
the Mirow str as toys according to their own definition could, of
course, be used in other streets or places. Objects from home include
things such as jam containers, brooms, milk pails, papers, rags, strings,
stones, water balloons, peas, sticks, or a dog. Objects from the street
included a hatch from the milk store, an iron grate from the water
works, a lamppost, the lattice of the fences, and the entrances. The use
of these objects, or the special kind of play is in part due to the nature
of the Mirow str. Being able to sit with a pail in the middle of the
street, to sit on the curb and paint on a piece of paper spread out on
the sidewalk, to stretch a string from a tree on one side of the street to
another on the other side and use it in fiction play, to examine and to
tinker with an iron grate in the middle of the street, and to stand in the street and have a conversation with someone inside one of the houses are possible only because there is no urban traffic. Like a playground, this street represents a space for withdrawal and does not have a sharp, life-protecting border between sidewalk and pavement. [70/71] An idyllic small town mood is felt on the street, and the children behave more harmlessly.

The children here are under nearly constant supervision because, behind one window or another, someone is always doing something that allows an occasional glance toward the street. If the children are noisy or they scream, an adult immediately appears on a balcony or at an open window. Often, women stop and watch the children on the street, without interfering in their games. There are always the same children on the street and, hence, the mothers know all of them. The children appear to sense that mothers heading out for errands on the Hinrichsen str go past them. Thus, a neighborly and peaceful life is visible on the street. Furthermore, both in the mornings and afternoons, the children play quite casually: about one-fifth is inactive, either looking on or just standing around. The children that play do not do so very intensively and are always ready for some diversion. In the mornings, there is the impression that children are sent out into the street so that they do not interfere at home, and are just hanging out. In the afternoons, the street seems like a second home, turned outward and quite familiar to the children who feel safe and sheltered. However, it is a space that does not particularly invite cultivation or transformation. Fiction and construction games are very rare. The spatial meanings provided by the street are places where the children are active and that are included, according to some rule, into their games. Thus, the Mirow str is to the children a spatial environment more than an object environment that is transformed into a personal world. It is a wrapping around the children, a container “wherein” they live.

This characteristic of the street as a home moved outside also means that the children quite literally play “outside the door” on the built side of the street. They go outside and stay in front of the door. House number 10 appears to be the most attractive one. Many children seem to live there, it has a very ample entrance hall, and there is direct sunlight at least in the afternoon. The old buildings on the corner are in the shade, and the other new building has only occasional lighting because of the trees. The street corners are favorites as well. In the morning, the corner of the Osterbeck str and the gymnasium schoolyard
always has something to see: during class periods, there are gymnastics outside, and during the break, there are many activities in the schoolyard. On the opposite corner, the attraction is a dairy store with an iron-plate-covered hatch. Here the smaller children can watch the dairy boy clean the bottles. Besides, he appears to be fond of children and likes talking to them.

For all age groups, there is another favorite place, which is an abandoned and desolate garden on the western side of the street. To the adults, it is an area protected by a barbed wire fence and a “No Trespassing” sign. Not so for the children, who pull grass and weeds there from the street, or climb over the fence and the compost heap into the garden to get the “building material” that they need for the “houses” they construct on the sidewalk. Finally, there are children who use the holes in the fence to get into the garden as part of their fiction games and hiding place.

Section IX

The “Street with Heavy Traffic” in the World of the Urban Child

As an example of a street with heavy traffic, we choose Beim alten Schützenhof in Barmbeck. It connects the Bach str and the Hamburger Str and has intense through traffic of trucks, cars, and bicycles. Pedestrian traffic is quite intense as well. So as not to compromise the clarity of our investigation, we considered only one section of the street between the Bartholomäus str and the Deseniss str for our spotlights.

In a period of 6.5 hours, 959 children were observed, 57.3 percent being boys and 42.7 percent being girls. Girls are more strongly represented here than in any other place we investigated, including the playground-like Mirow str. According to our data, the number of girls passing by and working explains this. It is quite apparent that girls are more often called upon to supervise younger siblings and to run errands than are boys. No other factors could be ascertained.

In the individual age groups, primary-school children make up the largest group at 47.3 percent, followed by kindergarten children at 29.9 percent, and lastly prepubescent children at 21.2 percent. Thus, the street belongs to the primary-school children, as do the places we investigated. Yet, while the kindergarten children are seen in the same percentages during the early and late afternoon, the number of schoolchildren (both elementary and middle school) increases in late afternoon by one-third. The larger “population” on Saturdays, as
compared to other weekdays (about one-third different), is most likely
due to the demands of homework. The observation that there are nearly
twice as many children during the school year than during vacation
is not contradictory, since we have seen previously that this is due to
migration to more distant playgrounds.

It is noteworthy that 41 percent of the children are passersby. Al-
though a considerable number of the playing children were occupied
with function games, and thus counted as playing children, they were
in fact actually passing through the street “getting the walk over with.” It
is clear that Beim alten Schützenhof is essentially a through street
for children. No fixed points where games took place were registered.
The exceptionally low (6 percent) number of fiction, construction, and
reception games also reflects the through-street characteristics. Most
children were occupied with a constant back and forth flow, and it
was not possible to clearly identify where they were going. Of course,
the destination of many could be inferred as the swimming pool or
playground because of their swimming gear or sand pails and shovels
that they carried along.

Besides the passing children, there were another 12 percent who were
registered as “working.” Taking care of siblings and running errands
were the most frequent duties. Of the passing children, many should
probably be considered as “running an errand,” despite this not being
externally visible as such. Therefore, Beim alten Schützenhof is not
only a through street to other streets and places, especially playgrounds,
but also a kind of workplace, or a way to work.

How poor a playground this street is becomes clear when we observe
the playing children, who are mostly occupied with function games.
Only a part of them bring toys, [73/74] that is, toys in the adult sense, or
objects that offer or favor opportunities to play. Most frequent is the use
of balls (forty-three cases) and scooters (twenty-eight cases). The boys
play catch or “shoot goals.” For this, they retreat to entrances or let the
ball roll down a store awning. The girls are more often equipped with
balls than boys, and mostly play proof against building walls. Some-
times, stones serve as ball substitutes. Sometimes, stones serve as ball substitutes. In twenty-eight cases, mostly
among boys, scooters were used as toys. Scooters, like balls, were used
primarily for function games and only three times it was clearly part of
a fiction game. On this street, scooters rather than balls clearly had a
more group-creating function. The twenty-eight children played with
only six scooters among them. Other moving toys showed the same
effect: one tricycle was used by four children, one cart by six children,
and a toy car by another six children. A metal pail, a harmonica, a paper box, a toy drum, and a broomstick complete the entire inventory of toys on this street. Less than one-fourth of all playing children here have a toy at their disposal, and toy owners make up one-eighth of all playing children. This is a very poor result. Certainly, not many children take toys to the Corwegh playground, but the place itself offers many opportunities with its play equipment. What about such environmental specific toy substitutes on our street? A total of 221 children used and incorporated environmentally specific elements into their world. How do the children do this, and how do they form their personal world from these opportunities?

Steps in front of higher entrances used for seating by the older children (eight- to thirteen-year-old) were used most frequently (twenty-six times). Sitting on “their” steps, they talk with comrades, look at and exchange cigarette pictures, watch passing traffic, or “day dream.” Most of these activities occur in groups. The smaller children, especially the three- to six-year-olds use the steps for sliding and jumping. They usually do this in groups but can be active as loners as well. The children who are on the street to work mostly use the steps for going up and down like the adults.

[75]

A nearly equal number of children (n = 24) seek contact with store windows, mostly the chocolate and grocery store. The kindergarten children touch the mirror glass or play on the bars in front of the windows. The older children look at the goods in the window and then go in to buy something. Most of the children pay no attention to the shop windows. A like number of children seek out the gateways, like in the previous two groups, to play ball games like soccer or “shooting goals.” Since the street has intense truck and car traffic, and the sidewalks are narrow and crowded, the two gateways in our segment offer the only opportunity for games like these. The fact that only one of the two entrances is used consistently is probably due to its quieter location and that it leads to residences, while the other leads to a car repair shop and has heavy traffic use.

The small iron gates and bars in front of the shop windows are used infrequently and only by the younger children for function games such as climbing, gymnastics, etc. Since they are inappropriate for the older children and the bars are uncomfortable for sitting, they are not used
at all by the eight- to thirteen-year-olds. The tiles that cover part of the sidewalk have many uses. First, they allow for fiction games where the small boys play train using the tiles as rails. Second, the children play by bouncing balls or kicking stones so that they always land on a tile. Finally, the children try, with measured paces, to step only on the tiles. In this game, they either they try not to step on the joints between the tiles, or they try specifically to do so. This game is ambivalent, played either is a game of skill, or to help pass the time on long walks by concentrating on the tiles. Finally, one can interpret “tile walking” as magic or a so-called oracle among the older ten- to thirteen-year-olds. If they succeed in passing from one street to the next by stepping only on tiles, or in some other specific manner, this is seen as a good omen for the coming events of the day.

The children use the grates in front of the store windows for trampling. They have fun [75/76] provoking loud, resounding rattle sounds. Only occasionally do the children sit on the grates and pass stones or strings through the openings. Only girls use the building walls for “proof” games. The spaces between the groves are used as the targets, every time a higher space it attempted. The store awnings are used for function games. Two boys (eight to ten-year-olds) tried to touch the awning in passing. Three six- to eight-year-olds threw stones or balls onto the awning to watch them roll down. Besides the steps, we observed windowsills, curbstones, and wooden planks on the sidewalks being used for sitting. The curbstones were used in this manner only three times.

The sandy strip between the sidewalk tiles and curbstones are very seldom used. This is explained by the intense traffic on the street that would disturb the children in their drawing, and the drawings would not last very long. A plank and a fence were used by passing children to touch, albeit unconsciously. Ash cans, trees, and lampposts are used for climbing. A parked truck was also used for climbing, and parked motorbikes and cars on the street are admired more reverently and knowingly. The noise of the car repair shop attracted four passing six-year-old boys who looked at the transmissions.

In conclusion, the result is that the “street with heavy traffic” is not a play space for children. Either the child is integrated into the stream of through traffic as passerby, or she is “working” by running errands or caring for siblings. Furthermore, from the perspective of the child, the physiognomy of the street is significantly different than that of a playground. It is not a sheltering space, a training space, or a location
for movement games. Rather, it is primarily a space to be conquered, a space between two activity centers, and a “workplace” that is “managed” without special attention. However, the children who are present play or join the flow, so to speak, of the heavy traffic, washed in and out of the street from quieter side streets. It is as if they are “washed up” against the side of the buildings. They cannot fixate themselves in the external flow, at least not for any place-specific game. Therefore, nearly all are engaged in function games that can be “lived” on the street, which is first and foremost a “moving space.” Thus, for most of the children, whether working, passing through, or playing, the street Beim alten Schützenhof [76/77] is an intensely pulsating moving space where they can rarely stop, linger, or be “wrapped” peacefully.

Section 5

The “Main Street” in the World of the Urban Child
(At the same time about the showcase in the world of the child)

The research for this section was conducted on the Hamburger Str, which in the Barmbeck section is considered a main road. Although it is a residential street with four- and five-story apartment buildings, they do not appear as such to children or adults. Often, stores are built in front of the apartments, or apartment entrances are sometimes as far as two meters from the street, creating a kind of porch. Consequently, apartment buildings and their entrances are hardly noticeable to the passersby. The narrow sidewalks require an uncomfortable upward movement of the head in order to look at the building front. Furthermore, in the evening, the apartments are less illuminated than the brilliantly lit storefront windows that capture the gaze of the passersby. The road looks like one uninterrupted storefront, like a row of fairground booths.

On weekdays and at all times of day, the visual image of the street is totally dominated by its commercial activities. The local residents are hardly visible. Some of the people populating the street are adults and children who use it for through traffic to and from the city. This kind of “population” predominates at lunchtime and closing time. Otherwise, people flood the street window shopping or visiting the stores. Traffic registrations that we conducted at different times of day and during different days of the week indicated that the main traffic flow occurs on the northern Karstadt35 side of the street, both going toward and returning from the direction of the city. The other side of the street exhibited between half and two-thirds of the “population” of the
Karstadt side. This consistent difference in traffic density on the two sides of the street, independent of sun [77/78] or shade, is only partly due to the clockwise transit required by traffic laws. Although the rules direct traffic on the Karstadt side toward the city, high traffic is seen on both sides. A logical explanation of this finding is the special nature of the store on the Karstadt side. First, the windows and entrance portals of the Karstadt and Woolworth department stores attract a flow of people, who then continue on that side of the street. Second, the kinds of stores are different on the two sides of the street. One side has furniture, bedding, clothing, and shoes. The products displayed in these windows are looked at in a leisurely manner and shoppers only enter on special occasions since, for example, a bed “is bought only once in a lifetime.” The other side of the street has mostly stores for groceries, baked goods, preserves, and paper, whose windows are glanced at more frequently and rapidly and that are entered daily. The two sides are “walked” in different manners.

Thus, the stores and their windows are crucial for life in the space of the street. The windows emit strong stimuli that attract the passersby in a way that excludes everything else. On the store side of the sidewalk, people approach the windows, look, or enter the stores. Some, mostly older folks, stroll in a leisurely manner through the masses and look at the windows with less intent to buy. Most people “flood” the middle of the sidewalk, but still look, even if perfunctorily, at the windows. No doubt, the contact with the windows is stronger on Saturday than on other days.

The proportion of women, men, and children (women:men:children) at lunch and at closing time is about 2:2:1. On regular weekday evenings, it is 5:2:2 and, on Saturdays, it is 5:3:1. In the mornings, about one-third of the children are alone, and their mothers or fathers or both parents accompany the rest. Toward the afternoons and especially in the evenings, the number of unaccompanied children increases. Few of the loners appear to be on the street of their own volition, since they are usually sent on errands, thus becoming part of the commercial life. They carry packages, paper bags, and so forth, and their paces are adapted to the general rush about them. The other children, if they are not buying something, are mostly passersby on errands or on their way to the swimming pool, and so forth. We observed very few playing children. Even those with scooters [78/79] use them more as a means of transportation than as toys in function games. Other toys and games are embedded into activities and work processes. Only on
a few occasions did we observe games that used the traffic itself as a backdrop. Twice we observed eleven-year-old boys playing “tag” using the moving pedestrians as obstacles, incidentally, without endangering or even touching them. Once, three thirteen-year-olds played “stick ball” in the middle of the traffic above the heads of the passersby and, at another time, two nine-year-olds played “handbill distribution” using red pieces of paper that they had prepared themselves and that contained nothing important. Finally, two approximately ten-year-olds played “chicken” by jumping back from the pavement to the sidewalk when approaching vehicles emitted warning signals.

Thus, the majority of the children on the street are passersby. We then investigated to what extent these passing children enter into contact with the store windows that are so essential to the street’s structure. Most of the children made no contact with the contents of the windows. We made statistical observations in a few places and registered that at most one-sixth of the children paid any attention to the windows, be that a fleeting glance or an extensive contemplation. For most of the children moving down the street, the window fronts are nothing but obstacles and limits to their active space, comparable to what the glass walls of an aquarium or a terrarium represent to their inhabitants: touchable limits of their life space. The children are very absorbed by their play, their activities, by the errands they are running, by watching the flowing traffic, and in short, by their life.

Let us now look at that one-sixth that showed some kind of response to the windows, be that in a positive or an explicitly negative manner.

The infants that reach the windows from their baby carriages or pushcarts are mostly occupied with function games inside their vehicles. They play with their own hands and feet or with small toys and do not participate in the store windows at all. When they divert their gaze at all from their play activities, it is to something that moves, like passersby, rather than something stationary, like the window. When they do look at the window, their gaze is usually vacant and without interest.

Among the kindergarten children, the more active insist on moving and they push and pull until their father or mother gives in and move on. However, if they are not successful and the adults do not want to be interrupted in their window-shopping, they turn their backs to the windows and watch the activities and the passersby on the street. The kindergarten children who are held by the hand by their accompanying person and forced to look in the direction of the window seldom pay
attention to the window display. They rub or stroke the glass, and tap their hands on the window behind which price tags or figures stand at an apparently unreachable distance. Sometimes they trace the outlines of exposed goods or try to climb up the ledges or protective rails, or run their hands or a toy along the rails. In other words, for them, the window is mostly an instrument for motor activity, a field for the most variable function games. When they do look at the window, their gaze is mostly empty and without focus. Objects attract them only if they show attractive color stimuli or familiar figural representations, for instance, in the form of child size mannequins. Even in front of toy stores, only age-appropriate toys capture their attention rather than by all the exposed objects, as might be assumed. The magnificent steamboats and sailboats that are the delight of any primary-school boy do not interest the two- and three-year-olds. They look only at objects that are familiar to them, such as teddy bears, bonzo dogs, carts, sandpails, and shovels.

For the primary-school children, the purely “adult” windows are totally “taboo.” A hat store, or a window showing women’s blouses, fabrics, umbrellas, clothing, undergarments, banks, bedding or furniture, as well as newspaper exhibits and grocery stores with mass displays (e.g., lard or eggs) are all totally ignored. If the children are forced to stop, they are frequently seen with their backs to the window, watching passing traffic and “slighting the window.”

However, some windows attract many primary-school children when they offer something special, unusual, or strange that typically command intense attention. Artwork made from sugar or baked goods (such as castles, palaces, the Hamburg town hall) and lit from inside in the evenings, like the display for the bakers guild competition, attract the children. Likewise, [80/81] a poster from the book fair that shows a boy leaving behind discarded toys and running toward his father with an open book caught children’s attention. Spellbound, several primary-school children stand in front of a furrier store window, which is normally among the ignored windows, to stare at a display of three small, fist-size, and cat-like stuffed animals with great sparkling eyes and natural fur skin. A picture store also provokes interest with its display of realistic narrative pictures.

Stores that attract usually display age-appropriate objects, like pet stores that display live animals, or radio stores, (less for the equipment than the additional parts necessary for tinkering), a pocketknife store, a grocery store with unusually cheap chocolate, and especially
toy stores. In the latter, only age-specific toys like scooters, wagons, toy cars, Indian things, and ships are of interest. All these items are studied very intently, and when there is more than one child standing in front of the window, they compare the items and express intense desire for possession.

The middle-school children take yet another position in front of the store windows. The objects determine their interest. A thirteen-year-old girl stands before a clothing store and exchanges knowledgeable opinions with her girlfriend. Two twelve-year-old boys discuss the stability of the displayed sailboats and the durability of the materials. A fourteen-year-old and his father look at sailboats and motorboats and exchange experiences and expert opinions. A boy refers to merchant flags of European and overseas merchant fleets displayed on a chart in the window and talks with his father about them. Two thirteen-year-olds look at different kinds of keys and argue about their anti-theft effectiveness. An eleven-year-old looks at the pictures of a newspaper display at a newsstand. Several times we saw thirteen-year-old girls using the reflection in the window as a mirror for fixing their hair after looking at the display.

Therefore, this main street and its interminable storefronts that essentially do not respect children is primarily a “work space” and a “passing through activity space.” Embedded in the traffic flow, carried along, and enjoying its particular activities and “experiences,” the children pay little attention to the real content of the street. Mostly, they do not cross the “environmental limit,” and thus, the street does not become a personal world.

[82]

Section Eight

The Department Store in the World of the Urban Child

An important center in the lives of the children in Barmbeck was and is the “Karstadt Department Store” on the Hamburger Str. For this reason, we dedicate the last part of our study to a more detailed psychological analysis of this life space and its role in the world of the child.

A—The Department Store in the World of the Adult

The Karstadt Department Store was built a few years ago along the main business street in this part of town as a modern, multi-floor
building with a roof garden, escalators, modern cooling equipment, etc. Its large variety products become a center for satisfying the practical needs of adults. Adults enter, look at the offerings, and buy what they need. The department store for the adult is a kind of “exhibit” or a “museum of modern necessities.” Shoppers can wander amongst the floors, inspect—out of curiosity or inquisitiveness—the exhibited objects, allow fantasy and desire to flourish, and enjoy everything extensively. The department store has the reputation of a place worth seeing. At times, we observed parents with children doing a thorough tour of the inside and outside of the department store, followed by lunch at the restaurant. Finally, this department store in particular is a place of predominantly female social life. It is a place to meet, see people, talk, look for free offers, have a cup of coffee, and especially be part of a moving crowd.

Thus, the number of visitors is always quite large. In the course of fifteen minutes on a weekday afternoon, for instance, 614 adults and children entered the building through the three available portals. Later in the afternoons and especially on Saturdays, there are even more visitors, according to our observations. We counted 819 people in one quick walk through the different floors, not counting people on escalators and stairwells and elevators.

The BARMBECK department store, compared to other department stores in the suburbs and the city center, has an exceptionally large number of children [82/83] accompanied by adults. In the cafeteria, they offer special “children’s menu” listing a cup of coffee or chocolate or a glass of milk and two pieces of pastry for a low price. In other words, this special clientele is taken into account. Owing to possible intolerances, unaccompanied children are allowed in the department store only if they can prove they have been sent on an errand. The doormen at the three portals exercise rigorous control.

B—The Department Store as “A World of Adventure”

The inside of the department store is temptingly advertised outside in window displays and propaganda, and are well-known by the children because of previous visits with their parents. It exerts an unmistakable and “magical” fascination on the children that stand about outside or pass by. The barrier that prevents them from going inside, represented by the controlling doormen, only serve to increase their fascination and attraction. The kindergarten children usually do not dare to break through the barrier, while the thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds pass as
representatives of their parents or usually pass without problems, which reduces the attraction considerably. For the seven- to twelve-year-old children, however, the department store is a kind of *adventure world*, which they try to penetrate using the cunning and cleverness of a smuggler crossing a frontier. Children of this age group spend a lot of time around the entrances waiting for the doormen to be distracted or busy so they can slip inside unnoticed. When they get an opportunity, they enter quickly through the revolving door. Or pretending nonchalance, they walk toward the entrance, hoping that the doormen will not look or not intervene. However, if the “enemy” is watchful and sees them approaching, they look indifferent and change directions just before reaching the entrance, pretending they were . . . just passing by. The more indifferent they appear, the better. Under no circumstance can they call attention to themselves if they hope to achieve future visits. Sometimes, they have to switch entrances. Reaching the revolving door unchallenged does not mean they are safe. It might happen that when they get one foot through the door, there is a shout from the guard. Most of the primary-school children turn and flee immediately, and the game begins anew at another entrance. The [83/84] older children, however, tell the doormen a previously contrived story, which depending on the circumstances may be accepted and may lead to success, or not.

With this image in mind, a second set of behaviors can be described as “crossing the border with valid or forged passport.” The children use or “forge” a parental errand like buying some pepper, mustard, salt, oil, or any other small item to get into the department store. They show a small or large coin that they happen to have in their pocket. Often, we observed money being divided among friends to achieve the “security of an errand” to get past the doorman. They even changed a larger coin into smaller coins to divide amongst several children. Three boys showed an example of exceptional boldness. The first showed the doorman a coin as a “collective passport,” to get himself and his comrades across the border. The doorman, however, allowed only him in and turned the others away. Once inside, the first boy rolled the coin through the open door to his colleagues outside. The very shrewd leave their scooter or bicycle at the luggage check and show the ticket as their “passport” to get through the narrow gate, usually without problems.

If none of this works, they ask adults near the department store, “Could you please take us inside?” This frequently does not work, but it is tried with tenacious perseverance. Incidentally, this is tried mostly with young adults. Two eight-year-old boys, for example, finally
persuaded an approximately thirty-year-old woman, who said, “Well, then, let’s go!” At a short distance before the entrance, they attached themselves to either side of the woman, which she—smiling knowingly—allowed. Thus, they went through the entrance with her. As soon as they were out of the doorman’s sight, they disentangled themselves with thanks, and ran off laughing happily. Once, a boy was caught at the revolving door. “Are you alone?” “No, I’m with my father!” “And where is he?” “Over there!” and pointed to a gentleman inside, whom he selected as his father, and shouted “Daddy, daddy!” But when the suspicious doorman approached the man, the boy took flight. Other children simply attach themselves to unwitting strangers and pretend to be part of the group. Those who do not dare to “adopt” such family members go with their own parents or with someone barely grown up who might pass as an older sibling.

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In very few cases (which we will return to later) could these behaviors be interpreted as true fiction games or “get-across-the-border” games. They miss, according to our observations, all the essential structural elements of imitation or role-playing: awareness of the role, simulated activity, and designing and conducting a play idea. There is no manifest pleasure in conducting the activity, which is a general characteristic of fiction games. Instead, the expressions on the children’s faces show a peculiar tension. It is exactly this peculiar tension of awareness of life that characterizes what we consider here as the “adventure.” It is not the content of the experience, of finding the appropriate means to circumvent danger and break through, that is essential. Rather, it is the form of the experience, or the peculiar tension and intensity of feeling life. It is being torn back and forth between the security of their actions and the uncertainty of events. It is being abandoned to powers beyond their control. It is the oscillation between the happiness of success and the despair of failure.37

No doubt, entering the department store is an adventure savored by the children. However, it is not the end of the story. Their true desire is to be inside, where they continue at the constant risk of being expelled. Inside, they behave as if on “secret paths,” frequently tiptoeing or whispering to not call attention to themselves. They avoid all stores where they would be conspicuous, likes those that sell clothing, rugs, or furniture. In other words, they avoid departments where they
cannot be buyers, or those, that having few customers, where they could not blend in among throngs of adults. They avoid everyone they consider supervisory personnel. Often, they even ran away from us, as we went through the aisles making our observations. They develop an Indian-style ability of avoiding “enemy patrols.” The easiest manner, of course, is to mix with the adults and to slip away with greater dexterity; or simply stay in loose contact with an adult to appear as an accompanying child. When moving about on their own, they have to pretend to be examining something, searching for something, or buying something. They are above the enemy as long as they are camouflaged or hidden. They avoid being spoken to because, on the rhetorical field, [85/86] they feel at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the enemy and usually have to give up after a brief exchange of words. Therefore, they try to anticipate being addressed by patrols or sentries standing about “lying in wait.” When an eight-year-old boy courageously asks a department head standing near the escalator for the closest men’s toilet, he anticipates the attack and dictates the action of the enemy, who usually responds in a well-mannered and surprised way. At the same time, they have a legitimate reason to roam the floors, even if only according to their own conscience, which gives them security in deceiving the enemy.

Moving through this adventure space as described above is extremely stimulating. Thus, it is not surprising for resourceful youth group leaders who are familiar with the psyche of young people to use department stores for scouting games. The February 1935 issue of Nordmarkjugend contained the headline “Something is happening in Jungfernstieg,” that described a “department store scouting game” undertaken by a youth group that had to transport red pieces of paper designated as cocaine from one department store to another.

The children’s book, “Horst, the story of a young scout,” also describes such a department store game.38

C—The Department Store as a “Maneuver and Training Ground”

Overall, the department store becomes a world of adventure for the child. However, in the same manner that an adult ventures out on an adventure and lives and experiences a number of different things, a child finds a number of other worlds in the department store. Children in different age groups deal with these worlds in specific manners.

For the primary-school children, especially the younger ones, the department store is predominantly (but not exclusively) a “kinetic
maneuvering and training ground.” All of the diverse and interesting products are, with few exceptions, background and irrelevant trimmings that are not registered with concentrated attention, but “are there” in an otherwise centered experience. Only the instrumental character of the installations is relevant for the children. Once the children get past the revolving door bottleneck, they rush to the stairs that lead to the first floor.

There are two flights of stairs that go to the left and the right of the elevators. Halfway up and behind the elevators, the two staircases meet in a way that you can see and make contact with people from the other staircase, or you can walk over to the other stairs and continue upward or return down the stairs. It is these possibilities that interest the children. They experiment for a long time on these stairs, arranging hide and seek games with comrades, investigating the stairways to subsequent floors, combining the stairs between floors in hide and seek and war games, racing the elevator, etc. Or they try to get on the already full elevator—a challenge similar to getting into the building to begin with—and get off where it becomes advisable to escape the eyes of the operator, race down the stairs along the elevator, and then argue with friends about having reached the third or fourth floor. The exhibited products are considered only occasionally and in a few departments. The display tables, however, are a favorite for moving games, hide and seek, counting games, etc. The most extraordinary equipment for function games is the escalator. Their specificity does not require explanation, since the adults know and appreciate them as well, not only during “Hamburger Dom.” They are stimulating for all ages.

As soon as smaller children can stand and walk, their mother or father places and secures them on the escalators. More or less timidly, they move up or down. They do not really enjoy the fluid or “swift” movement of the ride, but are occupied either with themselves or with mastering the function of standing on the moving stairs. Alternatively, they stare at the escalator running parallel to them, and at the faces moving in the opposite direction.

The somewhat older kindergarten children, however, make their first attempts to master the escalator as an object in their surroundings and attempt to integrate it into their environment. A four-year-old boy, for instance, arrived independently at the top and got off with a courageous last step. Turning to his mother, he enquired, “Did I do a good job?” He responded to the praising “Mm-hm!” of his mother with, “Yesterday, I
didn’t do this well!” Therefore, he tried to improve his achievement by consciously exercising and gradually acquiring the function of “using the escalator.” A part of the technological surroundings is being included into the environment of the small child.

The primary-school children have already overcome these initial difficulties. They enjoy the stimulation of the escalator with an air of superiority. Let us give an example of the many opportunities that can be created by an eight-year-old boy who went up and down the escalator eleven times while his parents were in the cafeteria, initially holding on with both hands, then using no support and with his hands in his pockets, and finally standing backward. Next, he explored the movement by climbing one step at a time, taking more than one step at a time, and then doing the same downward, which produced considerable and dangerous acceleration. Then, he stood with his back in the direction of the escalator, stepping backward against the direction so that he stood in the same place with the stairs seemingly disappearing below him. Next, he walked down more rapidly against the movement of the stairs to arrive again at the beginning of the movement. In doing this, he gradually realized that, for this feat, it is better not to hold on to the railing. When his parents finally came to get him, he was totally secure on the moving stairs.

Older children who visit the department store apparently already know all these techniques. They only do the more difficult tasks like walking down against the direction of the stairs to watch the stairs pass below them, or they support themselves on the hand railings and are carried up without the use of the steps.

When the children are not alone and training, the escalator assumes a different function. Groups of two, three, or four children, mixed among adults, move from floor to floor several times in a row. We saw some groups repeatedly on successive days. Similar to children who “roam” the streets simply to follow their kinetic drive, these children “roam” the escalators. Therefore, besides the hedonistic experience of moving on the escalator in the abovementioned manners, apparently the transition from one set of stairs to the next is essential. This is because, while using the stairs themselves is not dangerous, there might be a “supervisor” at the top, at the end, or on the short path to the next set of escalators that could put a stop to their activities. In these sections, they have to be attentive and use all the techniques from the doors and from dealing with the department.
The Life Space of the Urban Child

D—The Department Store as a “Show” Place

We mentioned above that, once the children are off the escalators, they mostly mix with many visitors on the floors. Hence, we [88/89] find them mostly on the ground floor in the toy and grocery department. What do they do there?

Curiosity and inquisitiveness make the nine- to thirteen-year-olds stop at the ground floor to watch the “talking” sales staff offer bathing salts, toothpaste, or darning tools with considerable vocal effort and great rhetoric ability. They follow every word of the sales clerks, observe their gesticulations, and study the behavior of the adults, standing about observing or buying.

For other children, the department store is essentially a place to collect all sorts of things. Often, they carry paper, notepad, and pencils. In the toy department, for instance, they are busy copying the prices from the price tags on the toy horses. At times, they talk excitedly about how many pieces they have collected and how different they are. Soon after leaving the building, they continue their discussion of the collected information for a while on the street.

Still, other children consider the department store as a kind of “museum.” They pass through the rows of display tables and contemplate everything with great attention and interest without touching anything so as not to be ejected. They exchange whispered opinions about the descriptions of the displayed objects, what the objects are used for, or what they could do with them.

A last group follows very personal, age-specific interests. They ask for rubber bands, advertisements, boxes, and so forth. This collecting mania, which in this age group may be interpreted as an expression of heightened desire for possessions, can also lead toward criminal behavior. Several times, we observed ten-year-olds loitering in the stationary department looking at the exposed goods, when suddenly an eraser or a pencil sharpener would disappear into their pocket.

E—The Department Store as the “Big World”

For the thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds, the department store primarily serves as a neutral backdrop for a “playing adult,” and as a background for “experiences” and “practical jokes.” The department store is the “big world” especially for, but not limited to, girls. The fourteen-year-old boys also like to move about like “young gents.” The following exchange overheard between two thirteen- to fourteen-year-old girls in front of a window display may serve as a typical example
of their behavior. The window [89/90] was full of beach and bathing objects. The girls who were in fact coming from school stopped in front of the window. Apparently a little tired, they looked at the objects and occasionally talked.

A.: “. . . if we really should go to X . . . ah, it won’t happen anyway. What would you take, a beach suit or a bathing suit?”
B.: “If I had a bathing suit, then a beach suit!”
A.: “Look, the blue and white, for M 7.50. That one is nice.”
(A gradually acquiring the voice of a serious contemplating adult, but without giving the impression that the trip to X is for real. She tries to make B believe that her reflections are based on real possibilities).
B.: “It does look good.”
A.: “Eh, wool.”
B.: “Blue and white.”
A.: “I really would like this beach suit.”
B.: “Blue and white. Then all your things would be blue and white.”
A.: “M 8.50.”
B.: “Mm-hmm.”
A.: “I don’t know. I’ll ask. But I don’t know, my father, he is always complicated, if he would like it?”
B.: “Look, a beach umbrellas. M 3.90. Or whatever that is called.”
A.: “It is nice.”
B.: “What else do you need?”
A.: “Blue and white beach sandals.”
B.: “Isn’t your robe blue and white as well?”
A.: “Mm-hmm.”
B.: “You don’t really need a beach umbrella.”
A.: “No, I do. At times the sun is quite intense.”
B.: “——”
A.: “I’ll have to see. Altogether, this will total about M. 20.”
B.: “Sorry, but M. 8.50 and M 7.50 is not M. 20.”
A.: “Well, this one is about M. 10, and that, too. And then, the beach umbrella . . . M. 3.90. Well, I’ll have to see.”
B.: “Mm.”
A.: “After all, my bathing suit is good for another year.”
B.: “Or that one over there!” (Pointing to a less expensive one)
A.: “But that one is not wool.”
B.: “Sorry, it is wool.”
A.: “Well, ok! Let’s go.”
B.: “Shall we go inside?”
A.: “Mm. Yeah, well, let’s go.”

Both went inside. A short while later, the same kind of dialog developed regarding exhibited items, with “A” once again behaving as the one who would purchase something if things were agreeable, or if
there were other conditions, which they hinted at, but left in significant obscurity. “A” played this role with great self-assurance in front of the sales clerks when the clerks asked her whether they could help her. She responded with “for the time being, no.” “B” did an excellent imitation of an adult and once again played the advisor who had come along for shopping to give friendly advice. The “adult mannerisms” displayed by both girls in terms of tone of voice, gestures, and mannerisms were very characteristic. This was especially notable in their speech, as soon as the girls sensed the staff or other buyers to be close by. They are not “children” who orient themselves, since their decisions depend on the parents who pay the bill and, thus, must be convinced of the girls’ desires. Rather, the girls behaved as if they would decide in earnest on the basis of their own power and independence.

It was also a wonderful feeling to force the sales clerks into service. Once, two thirteen-year-old girls looked at the items displayed in a glassware department and had the following exchange. Sales clerk (SC): “What would you like?” Girls (G.): “Some blue bowls, do you carry them?” (SC shows them to the girls). G.: “No, not this kind of blue, that kind!” SC.: “But they are blue!” G.: “Yes, but not this kind of blue!!” SC.: “We don’t have any others.” (The girls leave.)

Real purchases are conducted with the same intent. Shoppers browsing the aisles in the grocery department finally buy a roll mop for six pfennig or a ring of figs for five pfennig. They might buy a frankfurter with mustard and a roll. Some of you readers might remember how unpleasant it was when as a child, especially an older one, you were sent on errands to make noncommittal inquiries about prices and quality at an enclosed store. You appreciate the pleasure a purchase can give, done after a noncommittal inspection almost in passing. It makes you feel much freer and self-assured. The department store filled with strange people presents an especially suitable play backdrop. On their street, in their yard, or at school, children are with other children they know in terms of age and ability. Here, in the strange environment, they can be what they wish to be: ladies and gentlemen. Both boys and girls of this age group visit the department store in order to fulfill these desires. Even if they come for other reasons, this “as-if-adult” behavior eventually emerges in nearly all cases.

Occasionally, there is a group looking for highly sensational experiences and opportunities for playing tricks. In these cases, we saw primarily erotic games. Several times, we observed older boys following two or three girls that walked arm in arm through the floors. Owing
to the dangerous terrain, they did not dare to do what they would on the street, like bumping into them, pushing, or the like. There was a real fear that the girls would complain to a supervisor and the “gents” would be quickly kicked out, an unimaginable humiliation. So, they restrained themselves to other forms of flirting like simply “following” the girls and issuing verbal provocation and calls, and occasionally touching [91/92] in the crowd. The boys challenged each other to make further attempts. These flirting games apparently began on the street, continued in the department store where the girls had gone to protect themselves from the boys or to shop, and continued later in the street.

Conclusions

Considering everything we presented in the previous chapters, what can be concluded about the “life space of the urban child?”

While still in the preparatory stage and before closely analyzing the “space in which the urban child lives” in the first chapter, it was clear to us that we were not dealing with the three-dimensional mathematical space that epistemologically is the basis for all possible knowledge. “Space” was conceptualized as a concrete space “wherein” we exist, and especially “wherein” urban dwellers exist, that is, the urban space. In so doing, however, we had to accept that the urban space is inherently fictitious, since there is no such thing as an urban space that is equal for all urban dwellers, and has universal validity. It is easily understood that the urban space is experienced differently by, for example, a city administrator than by an air raid protection coordinator, or by the director of the cultural department. It is also lived more or less differently by each individual urban dweller, depending on extent, intensity, and accentuation. In the same manner that there is no “space independent of the subject,”"60 the big city is different for each and every adult, meaning “the” big city is only a fable convenue. Similarly, and given the existing structural difference between children and adults, it was expected from the beginning that children’s urban spaces would be quite different from each other but, overall, would be noticeably different from (fictitious) adult urban spaces. Thus, the results demonstrated that children have very different life spaces in terms of size and structure, according to their age, sex, aptitudes, education, and their degree of “settledness” or “mobility.” Furthermore, it became evident that the city is not a life space as a whole for children, as is usually the [92/93] case among the adults, especially if they are “natives.” On the contrary, the life spaces
of the children are infinitely small, partial spaces, which enter into the 
personal world of the children. As we expressed above on page 28 (of 
the facsimile), the urban child lives “as if in a village” and does not ven-
ture far. The life space is more or less close to their home or residential 
street, and extends out of this center in layers. The central layers are 
usually formed in rings around the residential area and built up quite 
densely, while the more peripheral layers go in all directions radially and 
are only loosely connected. The “density” of the connections depends 
on several factors. The first is clearly the distance from the residential 
area, but this is not a consistent rule. Then there are natural limits, 
like the channels forming the northern and southern borders of the 
residential area that we analyzed. On the eastern side, a railroad bed 
structures the space and, beyond them, the structure of life spaces was 
more flexible. Even more noticeable is the case of the lake-like river that 
divides the entire city into two halves. This life space seldom extends 
beyond its natural borders, and then only very loosely. The structure 
of the children’s life space does not depend on “adult” facts in the city, 
for instance, traffic conditions or administrative buildings, entertain-
ment, restaurants, and bars. Children’s life space is determined by the 
adequacy of a playground, proximity to other playgrounds, the nature 
of constructions, proximity to children’s experiences, and so forth. 
Finally, these life spaces depend not only on size, but also on density 
together with age, sex, and abilities. Younger children, especially girls, 
tend to have life spaces that are close to their residential area and are 
closely connected. They are still tied to their domestic sphere and do 
not strive to go as “far away.”

These spatial layers that we observed in life-space plans correspond 
to layers in the experiences of the children. The research on free time 
shows that, at least on Sundays, the parental home is the center of life 
and experiences. Although less than two-thirds of the waking hours on 
weekdays are spent at home, the parental home is an immediately pres-
ent spatial whole for the children, which they feel is intensely personal 
and intimate. Therefore, the home is more of a “family space” than an 
urban space. Owing to a lack of comparison, the children are not as 
conscious of this fact, even though it offers some peculiarities because 
of its “urban nature,” which [93/94] will require a closer analysis before 
we can consider it part of the “world of the child.”

Of the life space disclosed in the first chapter, the street is closest 
to the children’s experience. Especially the residential street, or “their 
street,” has more experiential and evaluative characteristics. Often,
the street is nothing but a second home that has been transposed to the outside, which in this sense means “home.” Here the children feel embedded or “at home.” Here they know their way around, and this is where they began their first primitive orientations in the world. Here is the directional point of reference that determines left and right, the other side, “behind there,” “close by,” and “far away.” From here, children advance into neighboring areas and then into ever-farther-away streets and places. The orientation scheme that children acquire on the basis of “their street” also serve to determine—as experiments can easily show—adult orientation, even after they have been gone a long time. Everything that is in “their” street in terms of personal and objective realities will be important for the future. Though these things are—probably very soon—no longer experienced or perceived consciously, they will be included deeply in the “world of the child” and become the basis for their “world view.”

All the other streets and places experienced by the children “offer opportunities for playing.” The decisive element is whether they can romp, play ball, travel or roam about, or play hide and seek. Spontaneously, the children do not speak about other uses or about the special characteristics of their life space or its particular parts. This does not mean that they are not conscious of its form and structure. However, in the few cases where we could make enquiries, children responded only about the “play world.”

Therefore, when interpreted as a lived and experienced space, the life space of urban children differs only formally and structurally, but hardly in terms of content from urban adults. Only when we see how children deal with particular and substantially characterized pieces of the adult environment, and how this results in a totally different observational structure of how they “re-live” a certain urban section into their world, do we recognize the true “life space of the urban child.”

This different observational structure appears when we appreciate the role that individual urban subspaces play in the world of the children and the adults. The playground, for instance, hardly exists in the world of the adult despite being a constitutive element. The Main Street [94/95], on the other hand, is extremely important in the world of adults for shopping, transportation, showing oneself, and strolling, while for children it is primarily a “passing through mobility space” and thus an in-between space to be surmounted and left behind. Similar shifts in significance and evaluations exist nearly everywhere, as the third chapter shows. It is of course of greatest significance to know these
differences in observational structure, or in other words, differences in life spaces if we want to interact with urban children.

But the differences between the urban child and adult world go much further. While the real objects in the individual urban subspaces are mostly lived in relation to a particular (just the adult) world (since concrete objects are usually constructed with an intended use), the child is quite maladapted to this “adult world.” According to its structure, it lives “around” the concrete objects. We saw, for instance, how a wooden fence that is irrelevant in the adult world, and quasi-peripherally “just there,” becomes a thing for touching, jumping, climbing, and sitting in the world of the child. Or we saw how small children use a road that is totally irrelevant in the adult world, in a way that is both hedonistic and feared because of its “distant parts.” Yet, for prepubescent children, the road becomes a space filled with anticipated adventures and stimulation. A totally charmless empty space becomes an ideal sports ground that completely fills the world of older boys in such a way that it does not allow for other events. Even on a playground built with the psychology of the children’s world in mind, this “re-living” occurred. The examples that we pointed out in the third chapter of our study all point in the same direction. They indicate that the life space of urban children is not constructed alongside that of urban adults (since much of the adult world content is also lived by the children!), but are superimposed, or better, interspersed. Nobody sees more clearly than we do that this is where the enormous task of research lies before we can clearly describe the life space of the child. But we dare hope that teachers, educators, and social worker can be aided by our research to take a better look into this realm, which can facilitate “interaction” with the urban child.

Notes
1. Page numbers refer to the facsimile of the original 1935 edition.
2. *Großstadt* is translated as *city* rather than big or large city, or as metropolis, which would be *Weltstadt* in German. The adjective *großstädtisch* or *Großstadt* as part of compound noun as in *Großstadtkind* is translated as *urban*.
3. *Der Lebensraum des Großstadtkindes*, published originally in 1935 by Martin Riegel Verlag, Hamburg. In 1978, Jürgen Zinnecker, re-edited the text, published by päd.-extra Buchverlag, Bensheim. This first re-edition of 1978 contains a facsimile of the original text, which was used as the basis for this translation. The translation was prepared by Hartmut Günther, Universidade de Brasília, Brazil, email hartmut.gunther@me.com
5. One should add that Muchow uses the verb leben in three different ways. In the first chapter, it is used in the “traditional,” intransitive form, “The life space in which the child lives.” In the second chapter, the intensifying prefix “er-” is added to the verb “leben,” such that erleben becomes to refer to the “life space as the space the child experiences”. In the title of the third chapter, to live is being used as a transitive verb; in other words, the world is being lived by the child, or the child lives the world. Hence, here the world is the object of an action, different from the concept of the second chapter, where in a sense the child is the “object” by some “action” of the world wherein it lives.


8. W. Stern, Studien zur Personwissenschaft [Studies of a Science of the Person], Leipzig, 1930

9. All geographical references, such as district and street names, are given in SMALL CAPS.

10. At the time of the research, the spelling of the district was “Barmbeck”; since September 1946, it is “Barmbek”; we have kept the original spelling.

11. While we speak of “space,” our numbers of course are only one-dimensional.

12. In the original, the verb “erfahren” is placed in quotes, as it represents multiple meanings: to know, to experience, and even to discover by means of driving about by bicycle, car, tram, and so forth.


14. Since they are my own students, I know about these demands well.

15. In other words, intellectually mobile and the job-related requirement to move about.

16. Throughout, the abbreviation Str is used for street.

17. Not in the sense of the Hamburg traffic code, but in terms of the utilization by adults.

18. Cf. previous note.


20. Skat is a favorite German card game, which can be played with three or four participants.

21. That is, the adult world.


23. See footnote on page 40 [page number of the original text] above.

25. In 2012, long after the publication of Gibson’s (1979) *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, one is tempted to use the word *afford*.


27. Berlin, s.d., 49ff.

28. Käthner is the resident of a Kate, or cottage, hence might be translated as cottages, cotter or cottier


30. In a demarcated sandy area, a knife is thrown; if it sticks in the ground, the area is divided by drawing a line in the sand in the direction suggested by the blade’s position.

31. A handwriting style common in Germany up to the end of World War II.

32. The following data use an unpublished report by Erika Lübcke and Anneliese Westermann.

33. Charlotte Bühler, *Kindheit und Jugend* [Childhood and Youth], 133 ff.

34. An individual ball game to bounce a ball against a wall without letting it drop to the floor.

35. Karstadt is a department store chain; see also the following section.

36. More detailed numbers were impossible due to the intense traffic.


38. Günther Eten, Horst, Plauen, n.d.

39. “The traditional ‘Hamburger Dom’ (Fun Fair) takes place annually in November/December on the Heiligengeistfeld (Heiliger Geist=Holy Ghost; Feld=field). It is one of the largest fun fairs in Germany. The unusual title ‘Dom’ originates from the earlier Christmas Market that was held in a side hall of the 1806 demolished Mariendom (Marien=Madonna, Dom=Cathedral) in the Altstadt (Old City). Copied from the Internet on April 14, 2003, http://www.rrz.uni-hamburg.de/rz3a035/tourist/dom_english.html

The Life Space of the Urban Child represents a fascinating example of how multiple perspectives benefit the study of human behavior. Accordingly, my comments on the study are based on my point of view as both its translator and a researcher on urban behavior.

Translating the study initially appeared easy, and except for some specific terms referring to children’s games played in the 1920s, nothing seemed beyond the help of a good dictionary. However, as the text went through several revisions and began to circulate informally, Scott Montgomery’s observation appeared to be confirmed: “examined in light of its historical complexities and importance, translation reveals itself to be a formative influence in the making of scientific knowledge” (2000, 253). He continues:

For if science is truly a universal form of discourse, then all questions of translation (save those of accuracy) become trivial. If, on the other hand, scientific speech is today more like literature or philosophy in being unable to escape certain dependencies upon localized linguistic phenomena, then the complexities of transfer across language and cultures remain. (254)

In other words, the emic-etic problem (see below) is relevant not only to the scientific description and interpretation of the world around us, but also to the translation of such descriptions.
As an environmental psychologist, I must consider the interplay between personal and contextual factors in my actions. Personally, the subjective reasons that led to the translation of the *Life Space* study are childhood memories and my partner. From the first day of school, I had to walk. Today, Google Maps tells me that the distance between my home and my elementary school was little short of a mile. It was fun to have this freedom between school and home, looking at front yards (no shop windows) and varying the course a little, especially on the way home. Later, I would spend afternoons bicycling and exploring different neighborhoods, thus making mine the city where I had arrived as a refugee from East Germany just before starting school. My wife and partner is a developmental psychologist. At a certain stage in our academic careers, after we had moved to Brasília, the capital of Brazil, we decided to work together.

As concerns environmental factors, living and working in a planned city like Brasília provides an ideal habitat for environmental psychology. One of the multiple justifications for transposing the capital of Brazil from the coastal city of Rio de Janeiro to the interior of the country was that the new capital would bring about a new Brazilian person. However, the Brazilians who were required to move from the old capital to the new, when the latter opened for business, began modifying the environment idealized by the architects and urban planners. What a wonderful laboratory for environmental psychology, defined as “the discipline that studies the reciprocal relations between the behavior of persons and the socio-physical environmental, both natural and constructed” (Aragonés and Amérigo, 2010, 28; for a history of definitions and conceptions of environmental psychology, in different times and contexts, cf. Günther 2009). The rich and varying habitats and life spaces of this planned city provide different age groups with unique challenges—an ideal setting for combining the research efforts of a developmental psychologist and an environmental psychologist.

If circumstances and personal reasons provoked my initial interests, what sustained them? When I first read *The Life Space of the Urban Child*, which was published in 1935 and was based on research conducted in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the text seemed to anticipate a number of ideas and concepts of a science that only formally came into existence some thirty years later as *Environmental Psychology*. Yet, I had found no mention of the text in the relevant literature, although I later discovered a symposium about Martha Muchow organized by Joachim Wohlwill (1985). The historical circumstances contributing
to this intellectual gap are pointed out elsewhere in this book, most notably in the first three chapters by Imbke Behnken and Jürgen Zinnecker, Kurt Kreppner, and Elfriede Billmann-Mahecha, respectively.

Thus, the present chapter is an exercise in reading Martha Muchow’s study in order to verify to what extent her approach and her findings fit into current environmental psychology across cultural contexts. To this end, I shall consider the following parts of an admittedly larger canon of environmental psychology: definitions and objects, theories and research methods, cognitive maps, valence and affordance, (place) attachment, and ecological psychology.

Furthermore, this exercise was inspired by my experience with “false friends.” Pari passu, might seemingly different concepts/theories not refer to the same phenomenon? Hence, rather than turning Martha Muchow posthumously into an environmental psychologist, we should be asking what environmental psychology can learn from Martha Muchow.

**Definitions and Objects of (Environmental) Psychology**

Given that environmental psychology emerged as a distinct discipline during the 1960s (cf. Proshansky, Ittelson, and Rivlin 1970; Wohlwill 1970), the diversity of specific definitions is not surprising. However, in 1911, Willy Hellpach was one of the first to use the term *Psychologie der Umwelt* (literally, psychology of the “world around,” hence environment) and to differentiate between social, cultural, and natural environments (1911/1950). Subsequently, Hellpach concentrated his research and writing on the natural environment. Much of the nature-nurture controversy in developmental psychology appears to equate nurture with social environments (cf. Wachs 1992). The current “standard” definition of environmental psychology largely corresponds to the one espoused by Juan Ignacio Aragonés and María Amérgio Cuervo-Arango, as cited above, that focuses on built and natural environments. Yet, given the many facets and interfaces of environmental psychology with other fields of study (e.g., Moore 1987, 1361), many varieties of *environment* can be found in the literature. Thus, Hans Muchow’s introductory observations on the nature of Martha Muchow’s study may very well be indicating that readers will encounter an environmental psychology study. He states, for example: “The more the person-world relationship was thought about in fundamental new manners [. . . the more it] is a particular life that takes place between person and world” (Muchow and Muchow, this volume, 7). 2
His observation that “the approach of the study reflected a milieu-psychological perspective” (7) may refer to yet another variant of the many contexts of environmental psychology, and may also indicate a fundamental point made by those in the fields of psychology, which argue that behavior cannot and must not be studied apart from the social and physical environment in which it takes place. In the introduction (Muchow and Muchow, this volume, 9), Martha Muchow also touches on this point and the very object and method of psychology when she observes, “All these psychological investigations, whether developmental or differential in nature, were fundamentally biased in a framework of general (universal) psychology.” This raises the implicit question of the emic-etic distinction (cf. Harris 1976), which has more recently received attention from J. J. Arnett (2008) (see as well, Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan [2010]). To what extent is there a general, universal science of behavior, and to what extent is one possible (the etic perspective)? Should not cultural characteristics and context be considered when trying to understand (groups of) individuals (the emic perspective)?

Considering the nature of what would later be called environmental psychology, Martha Muchow asserted (9) that previous authors had “little awareness of the ‘urban attachment’ in their thinking . . . [had] hopelessly ignored the peculiarities of humanity in the city and in urban education,” thus justifying why her work presented a new approach to studying urban children in their own respective environments. Robert Sommer (1990) makes a similar point in an autobiographical chapter entitled “A Fish Who Studies Water,” when observing that he worked “most efficiently and creatively on things within [his] immediate experience” (48). The common ground of these two observations—lack of awareness (Muchow) and heightened awareness (Sommer)—refer to a central concern in environmental psychology: studying aspects of one’s surroundings that many take for granted.

Theories and Research Methods

The relationship between method and content varies considerably in social sciences. In some fields of study, one defines the other, as in the case of experimental analysis of behavior. In other fields, there are dominant methodological approaches, as in the case of using behavior observation across disciplines. In numerous fields, there are defining differences not only in the manner of data gathering (the very notion of data being a point of controversy), but also regarding the process of analyzing what is acquired.
In contrast, considering the *strictu sensu* origins of environmental psychology, not to mention the innumerous interfaces with, for example, architecture, design, landscape, or engineering-ergonomics, it is not possible to define a typical or even main research approach in this field. Even the status of the field of study or discipline has been subject to debate (Sommer 2000; Graumann 2002). Thus, the few texts dedicated to research methods in the field (Bechtel, Marans, and Michelson 1987; Pinheiro and Günther 2008) are edited books consisting of chapters written by researchers representing different fields and methods. Likewise, Robert Bechtel and Arza Churchman’s (2002) *Handbook of Environmental Psychology* includes eight chapters dealing with various methods. Another recent example is Ernst-Dieter Lantermann and Volker Linneweber’s (2008) encyclopedic volume on the foundations, paradigms, and methods of environmental psychology that includes six chapters on such diverse methods as observation, evaluation, participatory approaches, experiments, measurement and scales, and simulation. Clearly, this is not a field of study circumscribed by any one method or procedure. A similar, if not stronger, point may be made regarding the theoretical orientations represented by environmental psychology researchers, as may be observed in any number of textbooks by American (Gifford 2007), Dutch (Steg, van den Berg, and de Groot 2013), French (Moser and Weiss 2003; Moser 2009), German (Hellbrück and Fischer 1999), Portuguese (Soczka 2005), or Spanish (Aragonés and Amérigo, 2010) authors. Deborah Winter and Susan Koger’s (2004) text may be considered the most explicit multi-theory approach to environmental problems, in that they present Freudian, social, behavioral, physiological, health, cognitive, and holistic approaches.

Thus, in considering these multiple perspectives on theory and method, two things caught my attention while reading and translating Hans Heinrich and Martha Muchow: the historical context and the multiple perspectives. Muchow’s descriptive data presented in the tables is coherent with the state of the art of statistical analyses of the time (cf. Lazarsfeld 1929). It is therefore noteworthy that, albeit in a rudimentary way, she tried to connect geographic information with social science data (see Table 5; 22), analyses that today could easily be done using any number of geographic information system (GIS) software packages interfacing with statistical analysis programs.

Furthermore, the particular questions she tried to answer indicate that she not only used various research approaches, but also combined research strategies in a manner currently called “mixed methods”
(e.g., Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). There seems to be no evidence of mutual inspiration between Martha Muchow’s work in Hamburg and Kurt Lewin’s work in Berlin, both of whom addressed the lives of children and were undertaken at about the same time. Similarly, there appears to be no mutual inspiration between her multi-method approach and that of Paul Lazarsfeld, Marie Jahoda, and Hans Zeisel (1933/1971), another classic of that time.

I have no doubt that these observations, more than any other aspect of Muchow’s studies, reflect the interplay between personal and contextual factors on my part, namely the attempt to overcome conflicts between qualitative and quantitative approaches to gathering and analyzing (Günther 2006). Furthermore, the methodological considerations in the beginning of Chapter 2 (29–30) shed an important light on the research strategies of a then nascent science. Much of what Muchow wrote about interviews, data collection strategies, and the relation between researcher and study participant may appear to be “obvious” to today’s researchers, at least those adopting a more qualitative approach (cf. Mey, this volume; Mey and Mruck 2010). At the same time, these observations should remind us of the need to carefully adapt research procedures to the context and study question at hand.

**Cognitive Maps**

In the interplay between person and environment, how the former perceives the latter is of central importance. In the late 1950s, Kevin Lynch conducted studies in three US cities to verify how residents imagined their urban environments (Lynch 1960). Respondents in Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles were interviewed and asked, among other things, to make a quick map and give directions from home to work (141). An important contribution of this study was the identification of the five most important elements (paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks) that allowed people to find their way around town. Muchow, on the other hand, used a passive memory approach rather than relying on the active memory approach alone. She provided maps to her students and asked them to identify streets and spaces. Most importantly, she seems to have anticipated concerns of cognitive mapping when she observed, “the children have to have a spatial image of the streets, be able to go to that space in their imagination, and then transfer that image to the map” (Muchow and Muchow, this volume, 12). Additionally, when describing the shape and composition of the life spaces that she was able to identify on the basis of the children’s
responses (ibid., 18), she primarily used what Lynch would later call paths, edges, and districts. Furthermore, as pointed out above, these shapes and compositions entered into the “rudimentary” GIS analyses.

Valence and Affordance

Transactional definitions of environmental psychology, such as the one by Aragonés and Amérigo cited above, need to come to terms with a central question: how does the environment impact, stimulate, provoke, influence, elicit, cause behavior in the person? Kurt Lewin speaks of valence, a doubtful translation of the original Aufforderungscharakter. It should be noted that the semantic meanings of the verb auffordern include invitation (e.g., to a dance), challenge (e.g., to a duel), instigation (e.g., to try something), and intimation (e.g., to appear in court). As mentioned above, there is no evidence of Martha Muchow referring to Kurt Lewin’s work in this text, but clearly the children’s interactions with the curbstones (44), the fence (47), or the stone embankment (48) bring to mind the demand characteristics of these objects.

James Gibson’s (1986) concept of affordance may equally benefit from Muchow’s descriptions of children’s interaction with their environment. She closes the first chapter by observing that the “structure of their life spaces is [. . . ] much more dependent on”—among other things—“[. . . ] suitability of playgrounds” (Muchow and Muchow, this volume, 28). While Muchow speaks of suitability, Gibson speaks of allowing for certain behaviors. There are other parts of Muchow’s text that bring to mind the concept of affordance. See footnote 25 on page 44 of the original text, as well as the observations by Joachim Wohlwill and Harry Heft (1987, 285), when they write about the environment as a set of affordances.

In the third chapter, Muchow provides extensive descriptions of appropriation and the use of spaces by children in ways neither intended nor supposedly imagined by adults. In their chapters about environmental cognition in children (Heft and Wohlwill 1987) and about the physical environment and the development of the child (Wohlwill and Heft 1987), the authors make extensive use of Gibson’s (1986) concept of affordance while referring to elements found in the environment of Muchow’s study, such as the curbstones (44), the fence (47), and the stone embankment (48). No doubt, these are interesting examples of attempts to explain the impact of the environment on people’s behavior through different theoretical referents. Gibson describes the multiple affordances of a given environmental object:
They are in a sense objective, real, and physical, unlike values and meanings, which are often supposed to be subjective, phenomenal, and mental. But, actually, an affordance is neither an objective property nor a subjective property; or it is both if you like. An affordance cuts across the dichotomy of subjective-objective and helps us to understand its inadequacy. (1986, 129)

One can only wonder if and to what extent Muchow would have accepted Gibson’s description of affordance, or how Muchow’s data might have informed Gibson’s definition of affordance.

(Place) Attachment

The significance of place presents yet another important facet of the person-environment relationship, as is reflected in studies of place attachment and place identity. The former is based on an intense familiarity with place, while the latter, almost as a consequence, contributes to the larger concept of self, of who we are. Yi-Fu Tuan defines topophilia as “the affective bond between people and place or setting. Diffuse in concept, vivid and concrete as personal experience” (1974, 4). Thus, “place attachment” received considerable attention in child studies (cf. Chawla 1992; Spencer 2005). Closely related to the concept of place attachment is the concept of territoriality. And, given the ample meaning attached to the German term Heimat—translated as home—it is understandable why Muchow uses this term not only to refer to the attachment that she observed in the relationship between the children and “their” street and “their” neighborhood, but also to refer to their struggles to defend their Heimat. Current environmental psychology uses the term territoriality to describe a pattern of behavior and attitudes of real or imagined control over physical space (Gifford 2007, 166). Insofar as territoriality implies psychological ownership (ibid.), this is clearly an excellent example of place attachment.

Besides describing behaviors of “controlling” and “defending” street territories, another extensive example of anticipating the concept of territoriality is provided in Muchow’s description of the strategies children developed to cross the frontier defended by the doormen in order to get into the department store (Muchow and Muchow, this volume, 84).

Ecological Psychology

My greatest surprise in reading and translating Muchow was the emphasis she gave to the interaction between people and different
environments, and the relation of these varying interactions on children’s behaviors. This encompasses not only the essence of environmental psychology, but also what Roger Barker (1968) later called behavior setting. Muchow’s interest in the person-environment interaction may very well point to possible associations between Jakob Johann von Uexküll’s laboratory and William Stern’s groups at the time that Muchow was in Hamburg (cf. the chapter by Linask, Magnus, and Kull, this volume). However, one must not ignore the point made by Phil Schoggen (1985):

The remarkable thing is that, against this background of ubiquitous preoccupation with the intrapersonal processes, which underlie behavior, Muchow had the courage and the creativeness to look beyond such processes, even beyond behavior itself and its immediate stimuli, to a careful examination of the child’s entire molar environment. (214)

Two examples are sufficient to point out Muchow’s anticipation of the ecological analysis of Barker’s behavior setting: the changing scenarios provided by one physical space to different users, for example, the loading dock (40–55); and the changing scenarios and opportunities offered by the department store (86–92). The detailed descriptions of the loading dock and the department store demonstrate how a given physical environment acquires different meanings according to different users. Muchow showed how different meanings of spaces reflect the distinct interactions between user and space, and how different meanings become the basis for appropriating spaces according to the needs of different users.

Conclusions

As the translator of the Life Space of the Urban Child, I am left with Montgomery’s question unanswered: when we render descriptions in different languages, are we dealing with facts, or suggestions of factual possibilities? (Montgomery 2000, 269). As an environmental psychologist, I am sure readers will discover their own examples of demand characteristics placed by Martha Muchow’s study on much of current environmental psychology. Finally, assuming a transactional perspective between person and environment, I am happy to see that this translation enables a larger audience to be inspired by Martha Muchow’s pioneering study that has not lost its relevance in investigating the lives of children in the twenty-first century, as especially suggested in the last five chapters of this book. This realization may
even bring me a little closer to the answer of a translator’s dilemma as traduttore—traditore.

Notes

1. The extent to which two words that sound and/or are spelled alike between different languages, but refer to different ideas or objects. For example, the English to become means turn out to be, while in German bekommen means receive.

2. Page numbers refer to the numbers in the original facsimile edition of Muchow and Muchow. These numbers are indicated in the translation provided in the current edition.

3. Such a lack of evidence may very well be due to the virtual prohibition of making reference to “non-Arian” researchers; in other words, omitting references to Kurt Lewin may have been the price Hans Heinrich Muchow may have had to pay for publishing his sister’s studies in 1935.

4. Donald K. Adams, who translated Kurt Lewin’s text on environmental forces, observed in a footnote that a more accurate translation of Aufforderungscharakter should have been demand value rather than valence, but that Lewin and Edward Tolman had agreed to the latter term to avoid misunderstandings (Lewin 1933, 596). Bruno Bettelheim (1983) discusses in detail how much is lost in translation when using an apparently simple English term derived from Latin or Greek to render original German-based concepts.

5. A recent example of the routine yet sensitive nature of affordance is related in the story of a parent who took her children to the open air Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, “May children romp in the Berlin field of steles?” (Goos 2013). Does a monument per se invite respect (the German term, Ehrfurcht being a compound of honor and fear), or simply induce a naïve, playful interaction? Obviously, this example does not even touch on the cultural context of affordance.

References


