

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21160) - YARDS AS SEMI-PROTECTED SOCIAL PLACES FOR CHILDREN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS FOR ADULTS

Deniz Yatagan Baumeister¹

1 - Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

Background and objectives

The layouts of apartment buildings in many cities feature spacious backyards. These places often don't have the best of reputations: They can be neglected and untidy, with none of the building's residents feeling responsible for their upkeep. However, as this research shows, they have the potential to become important social places for adults as well as provide children with safe environments where they can play and socialize without constant direct adult involvement.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Over the course of the qualitative research for a dissertation, 34 persons from different migrant generations were interviewed in Berlin, all of which had Turkish cultural backgrounds. In the in-depth interviews, they describe the challenges children faced when growing up in an urban environment as opposed to the settlements of 20th century Anatolia.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Interviewees mentioned their own or their children's childhood memories. They described how they considered outside social spaces in 20th century Anatolia to be safe, due in part to the architecture and settlement conditions there, and how migrants could not easily replicate these familiar conditions in Berlin. The research showed how they took advantage of the semi-protected nature of Berlin's backyards. For children, these combined the safety of having adults nearby with the freedom of being able to explore a space on their own, and for adults they provided a space to socialize.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

New urban and residential projects in large cities may aim to build or improve environments in back yards of apartment buildings to provide semi-protected social spaces. These kinds of designed spaces would allow children to play freely while still under a level of adult oversight and could also encourage supportive neighbourhood relations by giving residents a place to meet. This could help both children and adults feel better about the safety conditions in their environments.

Palavras-chave : Children's social places, Semi-protected areas for children, Neighbourhood social environments