

# Development of the Subculture Spaces for Children in Architecture of Postsoviet Ukraine

## Abstract

This article uncovered the problem and show the absence of integrated approach to the organization of Children's area in a city. Proved the necessity and expediency of this issue consideration, in terms of architecture, when creating Children's area in urban environment. Exposed the concept of internal and external Children's area in cities, examined a general classification of such area with a description of its characteristics. Proved the necessity and feasibility of children's objects creation in urban environment, as holistic system with integrated approach to architectural design and urban planning, on the example of inspection the initiative "Child Friendly Cities". Overall, the article provides insight into the issues of children's area existing in terms of its architectural creation and its functional use of in urban areas through the lens of children's subculture.

**Keywords:** environment for life, children, children's subculture, kids space, public space

## Problem actuality

The world of childhood – is an integral part of human society. Society cannot cognize itself, without understanding the patterns of its development, and at the same time – you cannot understand the world of childhood without the knowledge of its culture's features. Firstly, an individual child development takes place not in a social vacuum, but in a multilateral dialogue with the world of adults and peers. Secondly, a child animates the world, saturates it with emotional overtones; transforms the reality objects on its own mind, dramatizes the relationship with peers and thereupon generates and recreates a crucial cultural quality of a person in the creation of ideal values. Thirdly, a child is closely connected with a tangible world: on the basis of a sensual experience, formed a conceptual apparatus that definitely cannot be considered as an absolute replica of adult concepts it means, that children forms their own – children's world, the world of the unique culture. Childhood, as a specifically stage in the development of personality, can only be understood, considering the age experiences of symbolism, i.e. through the system of children perceptions, images, feelings and moods, in which the child perceives a culture of adults, comprehending their own way of life. On the one hand, age symbolism reflects the child's ability to perceive the world, in which she lives on her own, and on the other – should be considered as subsystem of a culture, which is based on normative age criteria, stereotypes, beliefs, rites, rituals, and a set of values, i.e. on everything, that constitutes the content of any subculture, child as well. [1]

There is no doubt to the fact, that the childhood in human society is not only physiological, psychological, educational, but

quite a difficult socio-cultural phenomenon, which has its historical origin and its own nature. Etnosociocultural child explore program is in the modern stage of development in Ukrainian society, when the essence of child rearing as a carrier of a genetic code of the nation and created Ukrainian Research models of education of future generations is reconsidered and especially relevant. Updated paradigm demands common efforts of a number of scientific disciplines – teachers, psychologists, linguists, historians, ethnographers, sociologists [2] as a sharp growth of technologies in economic spheres, engineering, construction, architecture, has a direct impact on child development and education.

Transformation processes, (economic, social, political) taking place in Ukraine, related to the study of real transformation processes of contemporary childhood and the research of social childhood phenomenon, as an object and a subject of social modernization process. In modern sociology, scientific interest in exploring of social changes and neoplasms, taking place in transformation era among children society, is not monitored. There is no attention to the problems of modern children adaptation to rapidly social changes, and not researched their influence on space formation around them. [3]

Child subculture (from Lat. sub – under and cultura – cultivation, education, development)- in the broad sense, is all that what was created by human society for children and by children themselves; in narrower – semantic area of values, attitudes, ways of life, and communication forms, carried out in children's communities, in some concrete historical situation of social development. In society culture, Children's subculture takes a subordinate place and, at the same time, it has relative autonomy, since, in any society, children have their own verbal communication, different forms of interaction, and their moral behavior regulators, quite stable for each age level, which developing largely independently from adults. [4]

The content of children subculture correlates depending with the age characteristics of children. For each age period is characterized anatomic – physiological and psychological child features, which emerging new social needs, and affect the child's adaptability to the environment.

### **State of research**

The issue of space for children and its impact to them in Ukraine, according to the stages of state development, acquired varying degrees of relevance. As a result, actuality and the depth of studies were different. The period of building socialism (in Ukraine) is characterized with a massive construction of kindergartens, infant schools, educational institutions, and extracurricular institutions. Consequently, problems of designing children's institutions were the object of attention of number scientific research institutes, many researchers, what is reflected in a numerous scientific papers. At present, there are a lot of well-known works, related to the study and development of children objects, which are based on a study of pedagogical and psychological aspects, (preschool education, age group and pedagogical psychology) and architecture (stages of architecture development of childcare facilities in the world, functional aspects, architectural composition, chromatics, psychology of visual perception, analysis of means of expression, in relation to the design of child care centers).

It is not allowed here to leave without enough attention the works of sociologist: representatives of childhood evolution, researchers of sociocultural aspects of development; psychologists, teachers.

According to the detailed analysis of references, the issue of children's visual perception studied a lot of psychologists and architects in their works. To the issue of space influence to the child's psychology devoted works by German professors of pedagogy: W. Mahlke, N. Schware.

Much attention is given to the placement of "friendly – city" to children. This initiative is widespread in the world, and it did not bypass Ukraine.

However, all these studies do not answer the question: how should exactly look the city, to meet all children's needs, taking into account their psychological and physiological characteristics and sociological needs? It is still not disclose all nuances and the importance of aged socialization for children, from an architectural point of view (internal and external architectural spaces) and its impact to formation of identity.

### **The aim and methods of research**

This work disclosed the issue of children's society in post-Soviet Ukraine cities and shows the main reasons of their occurrence, identified child subculture in cities and understanding their influence on architecture. There will also be an attempt to prove the necessity and appropriateness of the issue in terms of architecture, when creating children's spaces in urban environment through the lens of children subculture. Expand the concept of indoor and outdoor spaces for children in urban areas. To achieve these goal empirical research methods of existing spaces were applied.

### **Problem analysis**

Socialization of children's is a lifelong process and an ongoing process which is divided into stages, which are responsible for solving specific problems. When tasks do not complete – transition to the next stage may not happen, it may be distorted or delayed. It is important to provide a child, with completing all the stages according to its needs at every stage of life, and to ensure harmonious development.

Important components in formation of harmonious development of the child's body are certain features, which can not only develop a child physically, but also to form its social environment and consciousness. An environment itself is able to stipulate children's education and development, showing an active systematic, purposeful action, constantly directed to its continuous and dynamic development (mental and physical).

The organism of the modern child is constantly exposed to various (positive or negative) environmental actions. It's not only the air temperature, lighting, and composition of water, food, surrounding plants and animals, but also a space within the limits of the apartment (bed, chair, table, room, ...) and beyond its borders (floor, entrance, house, specialized, public buildings and facilities, courtyard, town in whole). All these conditions, listed above. separately and together, significantly dependent of human impact, significantly affect the physical and mental development of every child.

We define children's subculture as a dynamic, social, psycho-cultural autonomous formation, with its moral and legal norms, speech apparatus, its folk heritage and game complex. However, manifestations of children's subculture are not limited to these characteristics. Often they expressed to the impact on outer environment, the creation of architectural forms, a special modification (murals, vandalism) architectural elements.

Besides, there are four physiological stages of child development, which have ambiguous effect to the formation of personality and which has a considerable influence exactly to space solution.

*First stage* is the development of the main functions, associated with the movement (from birth to first year). During this period confidence in people considered normal: mutual love, affection, mutual recognition of parent and child meet children's needs in communication and other vital needs[5] Immediately after birth a baby receives its own place in the form of cradle or crib, where parents lay him. But the effective exploration of the world, on which came a child, require from a child annual and exceptionally large volume of independent work. [6] During this period, child requires rapid transformation of space, that is why this space is first of all **convenient for adults**, as in this period a child is in complete dependence from them. There is a rapid development of a child and the space around her changes for one year and may vary from the proper place (crib, cradle, changing table) and sometimes to their own room.

**A second stage** of development performed with more complex motor functions, where there ripening of sensory areas takes place, (between one to three years). Autonomy, self-confidence. A child looks at itself as on to independent, but still dependent from parent's person. During this period, a space should be **easily accessible** (in terms of a child) and **safe**.

**At third stage** of ripening serves emotional area (in period of 3-12 years) a child requires a space to express their emotional state. This period is characterized by increased activity. Live imagination, active explore of the world, imitation of adults, the inclusion of sex-role behavior, initiative is manifested. A sense of obligation and commitment to achievement, cognitive development, communication skills appeared. Setting before itself the real problems and solving them, orientation of imagination and play on the best prospects active assimilation of instrumental and substantive action, focus on the task [5]. This space, except accessibility and safety, must carry an academic nature.

**As the fourth stage** of ripening appears thinking activity (after twelve years). This is a life of self, development of temporal perspectives – plans for the future self-determination in matters of: how to be? And who am I going to be? An active search and experimentation in a variety of roles occurs. This is a phase of training

the formation of ideology. Features a clear polarization in sexual behaviors. There is a formation of identity, taking the lead in peer groups, and if necessary, submission to them. In this period of architectural and spatial resolution of the environment, in which child stays, these features must be taken into account.

Today in Ukraine "Children's space" within the apartments is purely arbitrary and is determined rather practicality convenience, than takes into account the needs, a child's sex, space for a child within the apartment (Fig. 1) – it is primarily a space, that a child may perceive as their own, ranging from the little things: drawer, chair, table, bed, private bathroom, feeding chair, a seat at the table in the kitchen, watching television and so on. With each stage of child development, this space is changing (increasing, decreasing, mutually replaced).

Most families live in apartments, the area of which is less than this rate of one person. While in general terms the average affluent residential supply 41% of families below the norm of living space, provided by the Housing Code – 13.65 sq.m per person; 15.5% had less than 9 square meters per person, and 9.1% – less than 7.5 square meters per person. [7] In this regard, there is the problem of ensuring child / children their own space within the limits of the home.

An important role in shaping the child's living space plays parents who are arranged at their discretion, equips, determine the child space within an apartment or house. Architects effect on space within the limits of the apartment comes down to valuation areas that should be allocated per person regardless of the age, but does not require it to submit. Due to the housing problem in Ukraine (85% of the urban population is not able to improve their living conditions) [7], often this space is minimized.



il. 1 Child space within: a) flat: <http://www.liveinternet.ru/tags>, b) room: <http://furniturelab.ru/kak-obustroit-odnokomnatnyuy/>



il. 2 Examples of informal child space outside own home: <http://smesh-naya.livejournal.com/17896.html>, <http://bibo.kz/zabavnie-foto>

Positive in this respect, for example, is a Canadian experience. The family which wants to rent apartments can rent a one-bedroom apartment provided that they have no children. If you have children, this apartment is definitely should be two, and if children are heterosexual – three room. This ensures that children’s space are not only within the limits of the apartment, but also within their own room. Lacking of own space in the room, these children often begin to look outside it own home. (Fig.2) Young children go beyond a threshold of the native house only with adults, first sitting in a wheelchair or in the hands of parents, then – on foot. When a child is walking well and fully independent adults try to secure that the child on walking left to reach it. A harmonious unity of interests of the adult and child – to be mutually achievable in the space of the world – typical for the first years of life. The older the child becomes, the more she wants to drop out of sight and adults, respectively, of their control.

The majority of the most exciting activities that suit the company yard for children of primary school age, it is not intended for the eyes of adults and organized in defiance of their orders. This visit of “scary” type places basement, attic, abandoned buildings, and games “with adventure” on construction sites construction of the “Staff” kindling fires, and trips to the landfill.

Children’s freedom of movement and choice of spatial location outside the home is always limited and controlled by adults. The last attempt to protect children from offensive displays the out-

side world or from existing physical dangers surrounding spatial environment. And in this vein crucial question that the area outside the building required the child to her enough to comprehend it, do not get lost and do not dissolve in it to satisfy your curiosity and to realize their desires. [8]

If we consider the children’s space in the city, it begins immediately outside the door Apartment: floor, entrance, house, yard and so on. This space can be divided into: a house, acity and specialized. A house (Fig. 3) and urban space can be equipped for the needs of children – organized space or unorganized. The Soviet legacy of organized children’s a space outside housing can be described from adjacent areas, preschool, school and after-school institutions, medicine, culture and sport, catering, specialized institutions.

During socialism, in Ukraine were built many facilities for children (kindergartens, schools, palaces of Pioneers, etc.) for mass collectivization. It had its own ideology, which is laid down by adults at the time. For this reason, most objects do not become popular and in the period of Perestroika (1985–1989rr.) were destroyed.



il. 3 Kids space within the city houses adjoining organized: [http://www.sibdom.biz/articles/Pridomovaya\\_territoriya\\_Dvor\\_novogo\\_pokoleniya/](http://www.sibdom.biz/articles/Pridomovaya_territoriya_Dvor_novogo_pokoleniya/), <http://www.odome.kz/stati/uyut-vozle-doma/>

Trying to protect children, adults unconsciously define or limit their space. Therefore they often give them to after-school institutions (art, music schools, etc.), to mugs, daycare, etc. This mistake choosing those mugs according to your taste, thinking that a particular occupation force children to be more successful, talented. Children are actually hostage by premises a closed space, not being able to spend their free time outdoors. [9]

To solve problems associated with the child finding in an urban environment, in 1996, UNICEF initiated a program "Child Friendly City" which aims to make the city comfortable for accommodation for all citizens, especially children, recognizing the interests of children as the highest priority. "Friendly City" can be seen as a model which aims to make the entire urban environment safe and healthy for the game in open space. Such city is focused on the needs of children, since their interests are represented poorly in urban planning and subjected to exclusion of this group (children) from public space. Children should be seen as part of population, entitled to a larger area of useful living environment for healthy development. Requirements can be considered as "humane", as well as to improve the quality of open space in urban areas- for example, less noise, air quality, network structure of space etc. – applies not only to children but also the total urban population. [9]

One of the important shortcomings of the initiative "Child Friendly City" – lack of issues existing assets, related to architecture, the internal and external space for children. Providing children in Ukraine with maintenance objects (kindergartens, schools, clinics, libraries, children's museums, child development centers, etc.) is in rather low level. Although today emerging new institutions for the development of creative children's skills: sports clubs, rollerdromes, pictures, childcare room, anyway it is not publicly available and not always correspond to children's interest. This leads to that children begin to look for their own space for games And not infrequently such places become cellars, attics, roofs, construction sites, ruins, etc.. Dangerous places.

## Conclusions

Any programs or initiatives, if they do not provide a comprehensive decisions of organizing children's space in a city – is not effective. Any functional activity aimed at the children's development, is insufficient without architectural and spatial decisions of places child presence in the city. Involving children to the development of such solutions only increases their effectiveness in future operation.

Only such an approach can be used on 100% of any functional initiatives and provide a truly comfortable children staying in urban society. The primary goal of creating space for children is not only the arrangement, but also creating the conditions necessary for their safety.

The problem of children in urban society and the main reasons for this situation are the lack of a comprehensive approach to the creation of children's space in the city. When you create a baby space in an urban environment is necessary and appropriate to consider this issue in terms of architecture.

In this paper, in particular, outline the problem of formation of children's space within the limits of apartment today, highlights the key needs that affect on this process of formation, and basic aspects specific to each period of child development, considered the

question of external – street (contents and conditions of formation in terms of safety) and external – public spaces, cause of disability, controllability and structuring discretion kids on it, an interplay of space and children.

On the other hand, a space in which children should be created for them by adults. And not always correspond to personal philosophy and children's vision. Design approach is somewhat does not agree with child's imagination on issues of functioning of the internal and external spaces, which implies that the value of space defined by its function rather than form and color. In other words, adults perceive space as a form, functionality and aesthetics, while children perceive space more functional than aesthetic.

In fact, in cities there are no relationships in the infrastructure facilities for children. Each such object is individually with created independent functional unit, there are no complete integrated solutions. The most important is to recognize that children need to be listening in order to understand their priorities within the complex of urban environment, and act as an interpreter of their needs and aspirations, often outside the traditional educational and economic agreements. The end result is necessary to ensure the future which is largely determined by the children themselves.

Only an integrated approach to infrastructure children's space in a city and involving children themselves to practical development of such solutions will enable to achieve a maximum positive results.

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