

Summary

Samuel Butter drew a universe in Erewhon, published in 1872, in which man will act solely as a machine for making another machine. Now this scenery becomes part of reality. Play, wine, and dance, together with emotion and instinct, are all essential to human existence, and that could be seen as a resistance to becoming a machine. The celebration of Dionysus by ancient Greeks is said to be the origin of the playful side of human existence. J. Huizinga's theory from his book *Homo Ludens* suggests that play is fundamental to the progression of human history and is connected to the development of civilization. If play is necessary for humans, then a city must also provide spaces for play. Finding the footprint of how inhabitants build structures for play and how these constructions alter the urban form can help us better understand the city and ourselves.

The research question is how human beings create, use, and adapt the form of human settlement to fulfill the playful side of their existence. Given that we are currently at a turning point from physical settlement to a virtual world, investigating historical and ongoing strategies could inspire the construction of virtual reality. Furthermore, this research aims to identify how spatialized activities associated with human play are situated and negotiated within urban environments.

To address this question, the term “playground” will be employed to refer to play areas, and a narrative of diverse forms of play will be utilized for this study based on research in sociology. Historical examples of playgrounds in Europe and China will be compared to learn what features are shared and what sets them apart. These

different types of playgrounds provide bases for how human play activities can be spatialized and exist in settlements. After examining the possibility of this taxonomy, two cities, Turin and Nanjing, will be analyzed from the standpoint of urban morphology to determine the relationship between those playgrounds and urban form.

The study will be divided into three parts. Following the sequences of Hypothesis, Theoretical verification, and Empirical study.

Part 1 will attempt to form a hypothesis about whether a city may be a location of enjoyment and play for citizens to escape from ordinary life. From reviewing various mainstream theories about how a city was created and what influences the urban form, the reasons could be politics, military, economy, aesthetics, and technology. Aside from these reasons, could play be a factor of the complexity of urban form? The sociological viewpoint demonstrates the importance of play in human civilization. If play is essential for humanity, then cities must equally provide areas for it. The categories proposed by Roger Caillois (1958) will be adopted to frame this research. He distinguishes four different sorts of games: competition, chance, simulation, and vertigo. These categories will serve as a guide to locating the evidence of how humans developed their play areas. In the end of part 1, a theoretical framework (*PLAYGROUNDS IN THE CITY*) inspired by the 'Guide Psychogéographique De Paris' will be proposed, indicating these four different types of playgrounds as part of urban fabric in the map.

Part 2 will use play places in historical and contemporary cities as examples, both in European countries and China, to provide evidence for the hypothesis in the first chapter and examine the possibility of this category for playgrounds, and due to the particularity of playgrounds for children, it will be added as another type of playground for this framework.

After presenting evidence to support the hypothesis, PART 3 will establish a comprehensive methodological framework for understanding urban play spaces, integrating insights from the Conzenian structural analysis, the Italian School's context-sensitive typologies, and the French School's focus on social practice. This interdisciplinary approach has been employed to examine and guide the development of play areas in Nanjing and Turin, revealing the relationship of urban form with different types of playgrounds.

Overall, this study delivers a perspective for analyzing urban play places in historical context, morphological coherence, and social functionality. Its outcomes will offer actionable strategies for creating play spaces that enhance the urban experience through multidimensional integration.