



The situation of children in the spaces of selected metropolitan courtyards in the context of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of reproducing cultural capital

ABSTRACT: Agnieszka Janik, *The situation of children in the spaces of selected metropolitan courtyards in the context of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of reproducing cultural capital*. Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, no. 29, Poznań 2020. Pp. 211-235. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X. e-ISSN 2658-283X. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14746/ikps.2020.29.10>

The article addresses the subject of social and cultural inequalities in relation to the situation of children in degraded spaces of selected courtyards in one of the smallest housing estates in Wrocław, Poland, Przedmieście Oławskie. The aim of the research was to diagnose and describe the specific situation of these children and to analyse it in the context of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of reproducing cultural capital.

The first part presents theoretical threads relevant for further interpretations and covers the concepts of marginalisation and reproduction of cultural capital as perceived in P. Bourdieu's theories. The second part discusses the methodology of qualitative research, embedded in an interpretive paradigm and based on: ethnographic research strategy, the approach to research with children and the mosaic approach. The third part presents the results of research showing the specificity of the physical and socio-cultural environment of the studied courtyards. On the one hand, the dimensions of its marginalisation and the processes proving the reproduction of poor cultural capital were indicated; on the other hand, examples of artistic interventions in this type of marginalised environment were presented as exemplifications of breaking the mechanisms of cultural reproduction.

KEY WORDS: cultural capital, reproduction of cultural capital, child and childhood studies, courtyards/backyards, child

Introduction

According to Fred Mahler, marginality or marginalization denotes the experience of individuals and social groups that are worse off than other groups. Their position is less privileged, which implies an uneven distribution of power between them and other groups. These differences may be apparent in access to economic, social, cultural or political resources. An example of experiencing marginalization may be the different level of intellectual property held by: educated and illiterate people, urban and rural communities, colonizers and the colonized.¹ Experiences of marginality vary depending on the specific socio-cultural and economic conditions in which the groups function, as well as the specificity of the individuals' understanding of their situation. However, there are certain experiences of marginality common to different groups. According to F. Mahler this includes situations in which the said groups have: fewer rights and more duties, fewer choices and more limitations; a lower economic position and fewer economic, educational, professional or leisure opportunities.² The understanding of marginality proposed by Jerzy Kwaśniewski is also worth noting. He described it as a "state of eradication", preventing groups and individuals from participating in the institutional social order.³ The phenomenon of marginalization is also characterised by spatial dimension. The courtyards of one of the smallest housing estates in Wrocław, Przedmieście Oławskie, described in this paper, are an example of a marginalizing environment, both in the physical and socio-cultural sense.⁴ In this context, the residents, including children,

¹ F. Mahler, *Marginality and Maldevelopment*, [in:] *Insights into Maldevelopment. Reconsidering the Idea of Progress*, ed. J. Danecki, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa 1993, pp. 192–193.

² *Ibidem*, p. 193.

³ J. Kwaśniewski, *Postrzeżenie marginalizacji oraz strategii środków kontroli społecznej*, [in:] *Kontrola społeczna procesów marginalizacji*, ed. J. Kwaśniewski, Wydawnictwo INTERART, Warszawa 1997, pp. 7–8.

⁴ The results of the research presented and discussed in the article were conducted by the author as part of her doctoral dissertation entitled *External spaces and*

who use these spaces experienced marginalization. On the other hand, these courtyards were also a special area of research as a result of the interventions, workshops and art projects conducted in them, which created unique opportunities for children to experience art. The aim of the article is to show the situation of children in selected, degraded courtyards of Przedmieście Oławskie in Wrocław with reference to the specificity of the processes taking place in them: on the one hand, the processes of marginalization, on the other hand, artistic activities. It is also important to point out that artistic activities can overcome socio-cultural inequalities. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of reproduction of cultural capital is a perspective that enables a deeper understanding and a more insightful look at the situation of children in a degraded environment. The above issues are described in the following sections of the article.

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of reproduction of cultural capital

P. Bourdieu's research interests focused on such categories as: culture, action, social inequality. The sociologist put forward a bold thesis, stating that cultural practices and symbols, ranging from style of dress, artistic taste, eating habits, to philosophy, science and religion, embody certain social interests and functions and, consequently, actually reinforce social differences and division.⁵ This means that everyday activities, such as gestures or body posture, represent the participation of social groups and institutions in the struggle for the right to establish the rules of what we define as "normal"; they make up the concept of "habitus". Also, sophisticat-

play areas from the perspective of children's experiences and cultural practices – a thesis written under the supervision of dr. hab. Wiktor Żłobicki, PhD, Prof. of the University of Wrocław and the assistant promoter dr Kamila Kamińska-Sztark, defended in December 2018 at the University of Wrocław.

⁵ D. Schwartz, *Culture and Power. The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1997, p. 6.

ed aesthetic judgments, manifested in the form of various forms of capital, are expressions of socially regulated means of social division distributed according to class.⁶

As Bourdieu pointed out, individuals and social groups, by gathering various kinds of goods of material, social, cultural and symbolic nature, strive to preserve and strengthen their positions in the social order. In this way they build their capitals, whose various forms should be understood as manifestations of power.⁷ The sociologist distinguished three types of capital: economic, cultural and social. Cultural capital is the most important for my further analysis, as it denotes cultural dispositions received by individuals within the framework of their social origin, acquired education, class affiliation or position in an institution.⁸ This capital consists of "cultural goods received through different family pedagogical activities, depending on the group and class from which they originate".⁹ Thus, cultural capital is transferred through family habits, especially in the form of language or school capital.¹⁰ It consists of various resources and skills, which include: education, ethical preferences, general cultural knowledge.¹¹ This capital can manifest itself in three forms. The first is its embodied state, which occurs in the form of long-term dispositions of the body and mind, such as: good manners or knowledge of cultural and social conventions. The second form is objectified capital, which is made up of cultural goods, for example: possession of dictionaries, paintings, instruments or books indicating the artistic taste of their owner. The third form is institutionalized capital, manifested in the form of certain and rela-

⁶ L. Koczanowicz, *Wspólnota i emancypacje. Spór o społeczeństwo postkonwencyjne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej Edukacji TWP, Wrocław 2005, p. 83.

⁷ D. Schwartz, *Culture and Power...*, op. cit., p. 73.

⁸ P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, *Reprodukcja. Elementy Teorii Systemu Nauczania*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 47.

⁹ P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, *Reprodukcja. Elementy...*, op. cit., p. 107.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 182.

¹¹ D. Schwartz, *Culture and Power...*, op. cit., p. 75.

tively permanent “objectifications”, exemplified by formal education obtained at a prestigious university. Such a distinguishing achievement attests to the value of the cultural capital held by an individual and, at the same time, by the fact of its acquisition, is to guarantee the ability to maintain this capital.¹²

Bourdieu pointed out that in modern societies cultural capital has the greatest impact on social stratification, and its unequal distribution in an objectified and institutionalised form among different social classes is the key dimension of inequality.¹³ Cultural capital, governed by the laws of accumulation, exchange and other market laws, contributes to determining the social position of individuals and groups and their chances of accessing other forms of capital, goods and services.¹⁴

Around the research methodology

The interpretations presented in the article are part of the interdisciplinary research on children and childhood, which Barbara Smolińska-Theiss described as extensive and multithreaded studies. In her opinion, they constitute a great, internally diverse and heterogeneous output: “they have their dynamics, grow out of specific social and cultural contexts, create different currents of exploration”.¹⁵ I considered the outdoor spaces and playgrounds of children as the subject of my own research. The aim of the research was to diagnose and describe the specific situation of children in selected, degraded spaces of Przedmieście Oławskie in Wrocław in the context of Bourdieu’s concept of reproduction of cultural capital. The specificity of this situation consisted of the socio-cultural and

¹² P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, *Reprodukcja. Elementy...*, op. cit., p. 47.

¹³ D. Schwartz, *Culture and Power...*, op. cit., p. 77.

¹⁴ P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, *Reprodukcja. Elementy...*, op. cit., p. 346.

¹⁵ B. Smolińska-Theiss, *Rozwój badań nad dzieciństwem – przełomy i przejścia*, [in:] *Dzieciństwo – witraż bolesny*, ed. E. Jarosz, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego „Chowanna”, Vol. 1(34), Katowice 2010, p. 14.

physical environment of the courtyards and the processes taking place in them. A significant element of the socio-cultural environment was, on the one hand, the process of marginalization, and on the other hand, artistic activities related to the celebration of the title of European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016.

I have embedded my own research in the qualitative paradigm, giving it an interpretative character. As Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln pointed out, qualitative research is seen as “a field of multiple interpretative practices”.¹⁶ The word “qualitative” implies the study of such issues as: socially constructed reality, socially created experiences and the meaning given to them.¹⁷ I based my own research on the strategy of ethnographic research by attempting to “immerse” in the context of the lives of the respondents.¹⁸ Research of adults took the form of ethnographic field methods and consisted of the observation of the backyard life “minute by minute”, using hidden and participatory observation, free conversations¹⁹ and qualitative research interviews.²⁰ In my research of children, I used the strategy of “research with children” as proposed by Mary Kellett. Within this strategy, children often act as co-researchers or actively participate in activities planned and organized by adults. In this way, adults, throughout the entire research process, find themselves in the position of co-learners, learning from children.²¹ In my research with children I used not only observation and free

¹⁶ N.K. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, *Wprowadzenie. Dziedzina i praktyka badań jakościowych*, [in:] *Metody badań jakościowych*, Vol. 1, ed. N.K. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2009, p. 28.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

¹⁸ Cf. L. Atkins, S. Wallace, *Qualitative Research in Education*, Sage, London 2012, p. 148; I. Kawecki, *Metoda etnograficzna w badaniach edukacyjnych*, Wydawnictwo Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Sztuk Pięknych, Łódź 1994, p. 46.

¹⁹ M. Angrosino, *Badania etnograficzne i obserwacyjne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2010, p. 129.

²⁰ S. Kvale, *Interview. Wprowadzenie do jakościowego wywiadu badawczego*, Trans Humana Wydawnictwo Uniwersyteckie, Białystok 2004, pp. 31–33.

²¹ M. Kellett, *Rethinking Children and Research. Attitudes in Contemporary Society*, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, New York 2010, p. 88.

conversation, proper ethnographic field research, but also elements of the mosaic approach. The basis for collecting this type of data included organized meetings, during which children performed the tasks I had planned, inspired by such methods and techniques as: guiding tours, creating albums and mandalas.²² The environment of my own research included deliberately selected courtyards of Przedmieście Oławskie, distinguished by impoverishment of the socio-cultural environment and degradation of physical space. In the selection of courtyards for research I used the concept known as a “flaner’s walk”. A contemporary flaner is a person who strolls through the city without a clear plan and purpose, choosing the path according to his/her current interest; he/she gets to know the city in a multisensory way, randomly and transiently.²³ I entered the spaces of Przedmieście Oławskie without a specific plan, open to random situations, my own subjective interests and observed events. While visiting the housing estate, I gradually got used to the new environment and its inhabitants. As time passed, certain spaces began to take on a special meaning for me and transformed into “scenes of everyday life”. On this basis I made a subjective choice of courtyards which became spaces of my research.

In total, I have conducted more than one hundred and fifty hours of ethnographic fieldwork, which covered about one hundred children and eighty adults. Thirty-three of the respondents took part in organized classes with children; the classes lasted a total of about fifteen hours. Most of the field research was conducted in three selected courtyards of Przedmieście Oławskie between June 2016 and mid-December 2016 and between June 2017 and October 2017.

From the beginning, all data collected during the research was systematically processed. I extracted fifty-five fragments of the text

²² Por. A. Clark, P. Moss, *Listening to Young Children: The Mosaic Approach*, National Children’s Bureau, England 2011; A. Clark, *Spaces to Play: More listening to young children using the Mosaic approach*, National Children’s Bureau, England 2005.

²³ B. Jałowiecki, *Czytanie przestrzeni*, Konsorcjum Akademickie: Wydawnictwo WSE in Kraków, WSliZ in Rzeszów, WSZiA in Zamość, Kraków-Rzeszów-Zamość 2012, p. 68.

with a total volume of one hundred and forty-seven pages from the extensive transcription material. Then I further processed the text, dividing it into segments and encoding it. I analysed the data in terms of the key concepts revealed in the respondents' statements. This is what is known as data coding in the literature and consists in creating categories without prior reference to the theory.²⁴ The whole analysis was time-consuming and the analytical activities became more and more complex as the research progressed. In accordance with the assumptions of ethnographic research I was aiming at: grasping the sense of the researched "social world, together with the relations and practices existing in it".²⁵ As Liz Atkins and Susan Wallace pointed out, in the final phase of the analysis, I posed a question about the image emerging from the analysed data and how it can be interpreted.²⁶ The results of the final analyses and interpretations in relation to the description of the situation of children in the surveyed courtyards of Przedmieście Oławskie and in the context of Bourdieu's theory of reproduction of cultural capital are presented later in the article.

The physical and socio-cultural landscape of the surveyed courtyards of Przedmieście Oławskie

The physical landscape of the examined courtyards of Przedmieście Oławskie was not encouraging. The courtyards were usually surrounded by devastated tenement houses with destroyed facades and plaster falling off the walls covered with graffiti. Within the larger courtyards there was little greenery. Instead, there were grey garages, outbuildings, residential buildings or service and workshop buildings. The space was divided into smaller parts, or quarters, by walls of different heights. The free spaces were usually

²⁴ G. Gibbs, *Analizowanie danych jakościowych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2011, pp. 90-91.

²⁵ L. Atkins, S. Wallace, *Qualitative Research...*, op. cit., p. 163.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 164.

filled with parked cars, sometimes not used for years and slowly turning into wrecks. The smaller courtyards were usually deprived of any infrastructure. The surfaces were unpaved; they were largely made up of: compacted soil, sand and scattered pebbles, as well as smaller and larger elements of concrete slabs; there was rubble in some places. There was a lot of garbage, especially around the overfilling containers, which emitted a bad smell in the summer. The whole thing made a depressing impression.

The socio-cultural image of the surveyed courtyards did not inspire optimism either. Many researchers stressed the numerous problems faced by the residents of the estate. The authors of the "Wrocław Social Diagnosis" indicated that the local community felt a small sense of security and expressed dissatisfaction with the place of residence, which was probably related to: security risks, poor state of infrastructure, lack of cleanliness, numerous social problems.²⁷ The authors of the Local Revitalization Program (LRP) also pointed out the accumulation of numerous social problems in this housing estate. In their opinion, they were reflected in a number of negative attitudes of the residents: "low activity of local communities (e.g. no NGO, no housing estate council²⁸ or informal groups), lack of identification with the place of residence and at the same time a sense of responsibility for it, numerous acts of vandalism, addictions articulated in public space, homelessness, etc."²⁹ The authors of the LRP stressed the high unemployment rate as compared to the average for Wrocław and the significant number of people benefiting from social assistance, including financial aid.³⁰ In their opinion, the environment of Przedmieście Oławskie was cha-

²⁷ M. Błaszczuk, S.W. Kłopot, G. Kozdraś, *Problemy społeczne w przestrzeni Wrocławia. Raport z badań socjologicznych nad mieszkańcami miasta. Wrocławska Diagnoza Problemów Społecznych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR, Wrocław 2010, pp. 173–184.

²⁸ The Housing Estate Council of Przedmieście Oławskie has been operating since 2017, <http://osiedle.wroc.pl/index.php/przedmiescie-olawskie-samorzad/przedmiescie-olawskie-rada-osiedla> [15.12.2017].

²⁹ Local Revitalization Program, pp. 28–29, <http://www.wroclaw.pl/lokalny-program-rewitalizacji/lokalny-program-rewitalizacji-na-lata-2016-2018> [20.02.2017].

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

racterized by poverty and learned helplessness, which, together with negative patterns of behaviour, was inherited by multigenerational families.³¹ Based on the results of my research, it should be noted that the inhabitants of the surveyed courtyards indicated the following problems: the appropriation of space by “courtyard gangs”, the presence of louts, hoodlums and homeless people in the courtyard; consumption of drugs and alcohol parties; lack of care for order; vandalism, general dirt and disorder.

It should also be noted that Przedmieście Oławskie has been known as the “Bermuda Triangle” to many residents of Wrocław – a notorious, dangerous and forgotten part of the city “where anything can happen”. Despite the ongoing revitalization processes, the construction of new seals and the influx of new residents, the estate is still identified with crime, demoralization and pathology. Agnieszka Włostowska has described one of the main streets of the “Triangle”, R. Traugutta St., in the following manner: “Ravines of dark streets with cobblestone roads and shabby tenement houses, dirty kids with mischievous glances running around, groups sipping various drinks in the gates, the sounds of drunken brawls”.³² This type of environment created an everyday living and playing space for the children who spent their free time in the courtyard.

Keeping in mind the above characteristics, it is worth noting the considerations on public spaces undertaken by Małgorzata Michel. In an attempt to explain the mechanisms of marginalization and exclusion of children and youth in degraded areas of big cities, the author has conducted an interdisciplinary analysis of urban space. In her analyses she referred e.g. to the division into “inclusive” and “exclusive” spaces. While the former give the residents a sense of “being in the right place” and promote their well-being, the latter make people “feel out of place”. Exclusive spaces are intended for a selected group of people, and those who do not belong to them

³¹ Ibidem, pp. 28–29.

³² A. Włostowska, *Usługi, warsztaty, przemysł ulicy Traugutta we Wrocławiu*, [in:] *Przedmieście Oławskie we Wrocławiu*, ed. H. Okólska, H. Górską, J. Wagner-Głowińska, Muzeum Miejskie Wrocławia i Wydawnictwo GAJT, Wrocław 2013, p. 125.

may experience threats and unfriendly behaviour.³³ Thus, the examined backyards of Przedmieście Oławskie can be considered as an example of an exclusive space. This is indicated by the feelings and reactions of the residents of the housing estate who emphasise: the lack of the feeling of safety and experiencing acts of verbal violence. Residents also pointed out the appropriation of courtyard spaces by courtyard gangs, manifested through vulgar behaviour and alcohol consumption. Children also experienced the excluding function of some spaces in the courtyards. One such example was the “car park”, not so much associated with an actual place for parking cars, but rather an unwanted place: “We don’t go there” (Julek, 6.5 years old). This space was inaccessible for children, arousing a sense of fear and danger: “We don’t go there” (Iga, 6 years old); “I’m afraid to go there, they accost me there” (Piotrek, aged 6).

The situation of children in the surveyed courtyards of Przedmieście Oławskie – analyses and interpretations

With reference to Bourdieu’s theory, cultural practices and symbols, manifested both in the style of dress and artistic taste, as well as in the ways of spending free time or acquired education, embody certain social functions – defining what is perceived by individuals as “normal”, testifying to their “habitus”, reinforcing social differences and divisions. In the context of the socio-cultural and physical environment of the surveyed courtyards, as outlined above, it should be pointed out that they were generally characterized by poor cultural capital determined by the low cultural dispositions of individuals living in those spaces and manifesting such behaviours as: consumption of alcohol, lack of care for the space and its, often vulgar, appropriation. The impoverishment of cultural capital was

³³ J. Painter, C. Philo 1995 after: M. Michel, *Gry uliczne w wykluczenie społeczne w przestrzeni miejskiej. Perspektywa resocjalizacyjna*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2016, p. 166.

revealed by numerous social, cultural and economic problems, as described above. Bourdieu suggests that such dispositions were acquired by individuals as a result of their local origin.³⁴ This phenomenon can be described by the stigma of the “bad address”. According to Maria Skóra, spaces are assigned different values; places become a determinant of social prestige and aspirations. This means that both elegant and neglected areas shape the mosaic of the city, discovering the class diversity of their inhabitants and emphasizing the inconsistency of the local community. In this sense, a place of residence can be a stigma.

In the light of the above deliberations, it is worth noting B. Smolińska-Theiss’s research on the childhood of new middle class children in Poland.³⁵ It is not so much a theoretical reference to the analysis of the situation of children playing in the backyards of Przedmieście Oławskie, but the extent to which children’s chances and opportunities for development depend on their social and cultural affiliation, indicating the gap between their educational opportunities. Smolińska-Theiss used the notion of “high quality children” in her analyses, referring to the parental approach of investing in children. The term describes a post-modern childhood dominated by market influences, the pursuit of success and money.³⁶ The opposite of the term “high quality children” is the term “low quality children”, i.e. those who do not have the opportunity to benefit from family support and their basic needs are not met. Therefore, it can be concluded that the children I examined, coming from Przedmieście Oławskie, were an example of the latter. These children were deprived of family capital that could serve them to build valuable educational and life plans and help them acquire important competences and knowledge, ensuring well-paid jobs and professional success. Their families did not provide them with high quali-

³⁴ M. Skóra, *The stigma of “bad address”. Social risks of revitalization processes in Polish cities*, [in:] *The city: a learning experience*, ed. K. Kamińska, A. Szerlag, Wydawnictwo LIBRON, Wrocław 2011, p. 21.

³⁵ B. Smolińska-Theiss, *Dzieciństwo jako...*, op. cit., p. 281.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 224.

ty nutrition, clothing and interesting playful activities. In the context of Bourdieu's concept of reproduction of capital, it can be pointed out that children from these courtyards had unequal opportunities to access economic, social and cultural goods and thus were largely deprived of opportunities for development and good education. Due to the unequal distribution of cultural capital, these children were disadvantaged as compared to other social groups. They had limited opportunities of spending their free time – generally determined by the spaces offered by the courtyards – and limited access to intellectual and cultural goods, which was not provided by parents and guardians who left them in the backyard for the entire day. In general, they did not have the opportunity to: engage in higher culture, participate in foreign travels, acquire sporting, musical and language skills, or engage in civic and political activities. They did not go to summer camps, and usually spent their time in the backyards. As a result, they would have little chances to get into a good university. Therefore, it can be assumed that most of these children would not have the opportunity to change their position in the social structure, and they would reproduce the attitudes of their parents and guardians, their low educational aspirations or unambitious life goals. This type of situation concerning children, who had fewer economic, educational or leisure opportunities, is an example of their experience of marginality. Moreover, according to Bourdieu, one of the forms of cultural capital includes cultural goods, e.g. dictionaries, paintings, instruments or books indicating the artistic taste of their owners. Children spending their time in the backyards did not use such attributes. This could be the result of the specificity of their activities, such as running, playing football, activity games, which were determined by the specifics of their environment. On the other hand, not using such attributes could indicate a lack of interest in such forms of spending free time as: reading books, playing instruments, developing interest in art, which is an example of low cultural capital.

An important element describing the situation of children in the surveyed backyards includes their activities in these spaces. The

results of research show that children often took up such activities as: running, shouting, kicking a ball around, kicking stones, climbing the roofs and walls of garages, loud conversations and laughs, strolling around, playing hide and seek, fighting, playing war. This is confirmed by the statements of the respondents: "I like to play outside with my friends, e.g. tag, but I also run around the staircase" (Damian, age 8); "Well, we like to play war best" (Tomek, age 8); "Sometimes I fight with my friends, but it's just for fun" (Damian, age 8); "We go up on the roofs, these, here. Climbing the roofs is great fun" (Wiktoria, age 7). It also happened that children got into conflicts with adult users of the backyard spaces, who tried to force them to "behave themselves", by saying: keep quiet, play politely and calmly, stay in one place. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital includes "good manners" and knowledge of cultural and social conventions, which constitute its embodied forms. Children's games, such as climbing the roofs of garages, throwing stones, shouting and running around were considered by the adult inhabitants to be uncultured and inappropriate – they did not fit into the accepted cultural and social conventions and did not reflect the expected behaviour regulated by social norms. Some of the residents stressed that children were "bratty" and "left to themselves to do what they wanted". This was indicated by statements of the residents of the estate: "The children are left to themselves, no one watches over them" (Respondent 3, age ca. 60–65); "They think they can just let the children out into the backyard and not care about anything" (Respondent 1, age 45); "They don't watch over the children!" (Respondent 2, age ca. 50). Children responded to such disciplinary behaviour in their own way. They broke the unwritten rules – they did not listen to the instructions of adults. At the same time, they escaped the outraged gaze of other residents and literally ran away from the accusations shouted at them, using their knowledge of the area and the routes they themselves marked out. Thus, on the one hand, they did not show "good manners" but, on the other hand, they avoided social sanctions imposed by adults from their position of power. This type of behaviour of adults and children can also be

perceived through the prism of the “process of social distribution of the neighbourhood space”, described by Anita Gulczyńska in a socio-pedagogical study devoted to the everyday life of teenagers living in impoverished urban environments. By observing and analysing the everyday life of teenagers in one of the districts of Łódź, the author drew attention to the notion of negotiating public space by its users. As she noted: “It is a process of social allocation and use of space by its inhabitants, which takes place through social negotiations between representatives of different categories”.³⁷ Distribution is a process in which the rights and needs of different groups clash. In reference to the situation in the surveyed backyards of Przedmieście Oławskie, it would seem that adult users who have an advantage over children would find it easy to enforce their rationale. However, this was not the case, and children, using their own methods, avoided disciplinary sanctions. Thus, mutual negotiations took the form of a strategy of “eliminating children from the yard”, on the one hand, and defensive tactics expressed in the effective avoidance of sanctions, on the other hand.

According to Bourdieu cultural capital also consists of ethical preferences and the values expressed by individuals. In this context, it is worth pointing out the essence of socio-cultural aspects affecting the everyday backyard environment of children. It may come as a surprise that all the surveyed children over the age of five demonstrated a pejorative attitude towards the homeless living in the studied spaces or people searching through rubbish bins, called “ecological divers” by some residents. With regard to the “uninvited guests”, children used the common and offensive term “wino”. A statement made by Maja (aged 6) may serve as an example: “I don’t like winos, rotten apples, garbage, and winos. I don’t like it when someone sits in my staircase”. This kind of behaviour of children could be a reflection of the environment’s opinion about the negative social role of these people. According to Bourdieu, this

³⁷ A. Gulczyńska, *Chłopaki z dzielnicy*. Studium społeczno-pedagogiczne z perspektywy interakcyjnej, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2013, p. 67.

kind of behaviour could be a reproduction of the cultural capital available in the backyard and acquired through family or environmental habits in the form of language capital. In order to explain the mechanisms of such behaviour of children, it may be useful to refer to the specifics of the socialization environment of backyards. According to Jolanta Zwiernik, these were internal courtyards surrounded by walls, i.e. spaces relatively isolated from the environment, enabling children of different ages and genders to gain experience together, exercise physical fitness and resourcefulness, as well as shape communication and social competences. In such spaces, children jointly acquire experience to perform future social roles.³⁸ Thus, the specificity of the backyards and their relative isolation from other educational environments may have been conducive to the reproduction of negative patterns of behaviour displayed by their users.

When analysing the situation of children in the surveyed backyards, it is also worthwhile to refer to the children's general cultural knowledge, constituting an important element of cultural capital. Knowledge understood as the competence of recognizing symbols and codes contained in space is of great importance here. As Bohdan Jałowiecki pointed out, in the course of space exploration, individuals acquire knowledge of the code enabling them to read the meanings of symbols and signs contained in material spatial forms, i.e. understanding the symbolism of a square, street, building. Such codes can be defined as a natural language belonging to the culture and common heritage of people.³⁹ The children playing in the backyards did not show a significant level of such knowledge: they did not know the codes and symbols that would allow them to understand and read the cultural heritage of their local environment. While the children were well acquainted with hiding places

³⁸ J. Zwiernik, *Dziecięca codzienność w przestrzeni podwórka*, [in:] *Pedagogika wczesnej edukacji. Dyskursy, problemy, otwarcia*, ed. D. Klus Stańska, M. Szczepska-Pustkowska, Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warszawa 2011, p. 413.

³⁹ B. Jałowiecki, *Czytanie przestrzeni...*, op. cit., p. 20.

and shortcuts between different areas of the estate, they were not aware of the existence of such architectural gems as: 19th century tenement houses with rich ornamentation, the former Oławska Gate, the Webskych palace, i.e. the building of today's Ethnographic Museum.

It is also worth considering what kind of skills were acquired by children while playing in backyards or what opportunities for shaping skills were created by children in the backyards. The results of research showed that these were skills that enabled children to survive in their environment, the so-called "survival skills". Children learned: to move around independently in the backyards, to use the available places and opportunities to play, to cope, to take care of themselves and not to hurt themselves despite the lack of adult care. This type of behaviour is evidence of the children's independence and their ability to organize their own time in their immediate surroundings. However, in the context of the theory of reproduction of cultural capital⁴⁰, these behaviours can be interpreted in a different way: children have not so much learnt to be self-sufficient in their immediate environment, but rather acquired skills that enabled them to function efficiently in the social class environment to which they belonged. Thus, it can be concluded that their independence and the ability to cope could only be used in the environment they were familiar with, i.e. in their own neighbourhood.

The lack of interest of the children in taking care of their own, closest environment is also worth noting. This is another phenomenon that can testify to the reproduction of poor cultural capital of children living in the backyards of Przedmieście Oławskie. Dirt and disorder reigned the surveyed areas. The environment was neglected and often devastated. During the research I did not observe any actions by adults or children expressing concern for these spaces, for example: removing dog excrements, garbage, cigarettes, putting the objects in order or performing activities that could beautify the yard, such as planting. It can be assumed that in the future these

⁴⁰ P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, *Reprodukcja. Elementy...*, op. cit., p. 135.

children will also show a lack of interest in their immediate surroundings and, consequently, will not engage in changing them. Thus, the children will not be prepared to improve their living space, but rather to replicate the negative behaviours manifested by the community to which they belong.

In order to further explain the mechanisms of reproduction of cultural capital taking place in the backyards of Przedmieście Oławskie, it is worth quoting Tomasz Szlendak's reflections on the "vicious circle of class reproduction" and inheritance of social position in the family.⁴¹ By analysing the research on social mobility in Poland, the author concluded that the social structure in Poland is stiffening and the inheritance of social positions is increasing. This process characterizes two extreme groups in particular – the wealthy and the poor. The possession or lack of property is strongly connected with the level of education. As T. Szlendak points out: "Thus, social positions are most strongly inherited in the families of, on the one hand, well-off entrepreneurs, middle-class managers and non-technical intellectuals, and on the other hand, among the poorest strata".⁴² Moreover, an important assumption related to the reproduction of social position is the thesis cited by Szlendak about the inheritance of poverty, not so much directly, but rather as a result of inheriting certain patterns concerning educational aspirations. This means that children brought up in poor families will become poor adults because their parents did not show any motivation to study, which is nowadays considered to be the most significant factor resulting in a higher income. It is not difficult to guess that poor parents cannot afford to educate their children, which in turn would allow them to "break the vicious circle of poverty".⁴³ In this context, some families living in the examined backyards of Przedmieście Oławskie can be described by the mechanisms of social inheritance: "Uneducated, poor parents, focused on multid-

⁴¹ T. Szlendak, *Socjologia rodziny. Ewolucja, historia, zróżnicowanie*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2012, p. 235.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 235.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 236.

mensional survival, living in accordance with the values, norms, attitudes shaped over years, in the contemporary market reality, provide their children with «inadequate» cultural capital, with «inadequate» language capital at the forefront”.⁴⁴ Thus, children who speak an unauthorized language and have an unauthorized capital have less chances of good educational achievements at the very beginning of their school career. They also have little opportunity to break out of their early childhood environment.⁴⁵

Examples of artistic influences in the surveyed backyards

During the period of my research, Przedmieście Oławskie was a platform of artistic influence carried out by the IMPART Festival Office of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016. This organization intervened artistically in the environment of Przedmieście Oławskie, reaching directly to the courtyards and their users and inviting them to participate in various actions and projects. These actions were both temporary and long-term in nature. As Konrad Miciukiewicz noted, artistic works and activities create a critical counter space and are an “expression of difference” for the products of capitalist practices. At the same time, artistic works create “a platform for dialogue between the dominant representations of space and the historically rooted, ethnically and culturally diverse spaces of representation that are experienced every day”.⁴⁶ This role is also played by alternative cinemas, jazz clubs, or representations of cities in literature that contradict urban plans. In the context of the analysis of the situation of children in the courtyards of Przedmieście Oławskie, this type of platform for dialogue, rooted in the local specificity, included projects, workshops and events

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 236.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 236.

⁴⁶ K. Miciukiewicz, *Miasto jako społeczna reprodukcja przestrzeni i kontrprzestrzeni miejsc*, [in:] *Pedagogika miejsca*, ed. M. Mendel, Scientific Publishing House of the Lower Silesian College of Education TWP in Wrocław, Wrocław 2006, p. 224.

proposed to children by artists as part of the celebrations of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016.

The “Hedgehog” project by Iza Rutkowska was an important example of an activity that enabled children to co-create art. As the author pointed out: “The project consisted of a series of animation activities with the use of an 8-meter high inflatable hedgehog made of durable, colourful material. The hedgehog was used for summer meetings, one could lie on it, jump on it or lie down on its sticky spikes”.⁴⁷ The artist conducted regular animation activities with children and adult residents of the courtyard, such as: sewing new hedgehog spikes together and watching cartoons and movies projected after dusk on the wall of the tenement house. The participants walked outside their backyard with the inflatable spikes and the hedgehog was “symbolically domesticated” in the open windows of one of the tenement houses. The artist decided to continue the activities based on her network of friendly contacts and together with the residents arranged a crowdfunding fundraiser for a trip for the children, which turned out to be a big, grassroots success.⁴⁸ In this way, the children participated in activities that used art and intervened in the backyards used by them.

Another example of artistic activities undertaken in the courtyard spaces were workshops, art classes and educational activities offered by Studio Komuny Paryskiej 45 located in a tenement house at one of the surveyed courtyards. The Studio was a place for artistic activities and exchange of experiences between the invited artists, animators and the local community. It offered classes for children conducted three times a week, as well as inter-generational workshops and activities for other groups. Concerts and exhibitions were regularly held there, also hosted and attended by children. At the entrance to the Studio, in the window located above the sidewalk, there was the Suwaczek Gallery, the smallest art gallery in

⁴⁷ I. Rutkowska, *Jeź*, [in:] *Wrocław – Wejście od podwórza*, Wrocław, Festival Bureau IMPART 2016, Wrocław 2016, p. 62.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

Przedmieście Oławskie, which presented works created by the children during the art classes.⁴⁹

It is also worth quoting a description of one of the events organized in the Studio, during which I had the opportunity to observe the impact of the artistic interventions on children. It was a vernissage of the works of a Wrocław artist combined with his performance of electronic music. The event was attended mainly by invited guests who were distinguished by their festive and sometimes extravagant clothes, generally representing the artistic community. Children using the Studio's offer on a daily basis were also invited to participate in the vernissage. Children, unlike adults, were dressed in everyday, backyard clothes: sneakers, shorts, baseball caps and T-shirts. I described this event in the following way in my field diary: "When the vernissage started, the children stood with the other guests – they chose to be more or less in the middle. During the short welcome and introduction by the artist, they were a little anxious: they wriggled, sometimes poked one another and silenced each other. However, their behaviour did not evoke any reaction from the audience (...) After a few minutes they decided to sit on the floor with their feet crossed. During the event, from time to time, they silenced each other, for example by whispering «tss» and putting their finger to their lips (...). After playing a few songs, the artist finished his performance and received a thunderous applause, also from the enthusiastic children. (...) The Studio Leaders invited the guests to ask questions. At some point, one of the boys took the floor and asked the following question: «Is painting important to you?». This question aroused the enthusiasm of the audience: laughter and thunderous applause. But before the confused artist could give an answer, the boy got up and shouted: «I love painting! For me, it is most important!» (Agnieszka Janik, field diary).

⁴⁹ The studio has been operating continuously since October 2015. The creators of its concept were: Kamila Wolszczak, Krzysztof Bryła and Natalia Gołubowska. In 2016 it was supervised by K. Wolszczak and K. Bryła in cooperation with Damian Kalita and Jacek Sterczewski, see: K. Wolszczak, J. Sterczewski, [in:] *Wrocław – Wejście od podwórza*, Festival Bureau IMPART 2016, p. 92.

The above shows the interpenetration of everyday, backyard experiences of children and their experiences with the world of art. Mutual silencing, demonstrating a willingness to respect the rules shared by other guests or expressing admiration during the culminating moments of the concert could testify to their awareness of participating in an important event and knowledge of social conventions – the rules of behaviour in this type of situation. This was a result of the children's previous experience of this type. It should also be noted that the boy's statement complimenting painting could be an expression of not so much his personal beliefs, but rather proof of his awareness of being in a specific situation, as well as cunning and intelligence. The question asked by the boy and the answer he himself provided seemed to positively surprise and amuse the gathered audience, which clearly made the boy happy. Encouraged by the audience, he proudly presented himself in front of the guests applauding him. His statement could testify to the possession of resources of cultural capital enabling him to behave properly in the situation he found himself in. The boy was aware of the circumstances of the event and of the importance of art for the invited guests; he also knew what art was and how he could use it in the context of the cultural event in which he was participating.

Conclusions

With reference to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, it can be stated that the situation of children in the surveyed backyards in Przedmieście Oławskie was generally marked by the low cultural capital of the backyards. Factors such as: the children's negative attitude towards socially excluded groups, the use of a specific language, lack of knowledge about their immediate environment related to its history or architecture, lack of respect and care for their immediate surroundings, and the acquisition of the so-called "survival skills" indicate the processes of reproducing poor cultural capital available to the children in their environment.

On the other hand, projects, workshops and artistic activities aimed at children, organised in their everyday living spaces, involving them and enabling them to experience art in different dimensions, showing other forms of spending free time than those they have been familiar with so far, are exemplifications of activities breaking the pattern of marginalization and reproduction processes. This type of artistic intervention, organised in the everyday environment of children in the surveyed backyards of Przedmieście Oławskie, combined with a supporting and educating school environment, is a key activity in the pursuit of improving the situation of children and enabling them to advance in social stratification. Thus, the importance of art in transforming the everyday reality of man and his immediate environment is underlined.

To sum up, the examples presented in the article, showing the situation of children in the surveyed backyards of Przedmieście Oławskie, testify, on the one hand, to the ongoing processes of reproduction of cultural capital; on the other hand, they show the importance of artistic intervention as an example of an action that allows to break the mechanisms of marginalization and reproduction of capital in order to increase the possibility of access to its various forms.

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