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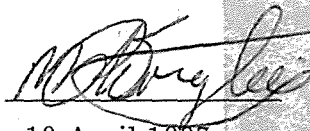
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THE EVOLUTION OF IDEAS  
AND PRACTICE CONCERNING  
THE PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S  
PLAYSPACE

(with a special reference to  
New Zealand and Palmerston North)

A Thesis Presented In Partial  
Fulfilment Of The Requirements  
For The Degree Of Master  
Of Philosophy In Social Science  
At Massey University.

Martin Paul Wrigley

March 1987

## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to explore the historical processes underlying the allocation and use of public space for children's play in nineteenth and twentieth century industrial society and examine how the processes have influenced the New Zealand situation.

The form of publicly provided playspace in New Zealand borrows extensively from overseas ideas and practices. The origins of playspace were a response to the conditions existing as a result of industrialisation in the late nineteenth century. The convergence of two streams of thought; the first the use of play as a tool for social integration of migrant children in the United States; and secondly the development of an urban parks system to alleviate the industrial blight of the cityscape in the United Kingdom; led to the establishment of recreation standards for the provision of children's playspace. The transportable nature of these ideas and practices resulted in children's playgrounds developing in New Zealand between 1920 and 1970 in a largely similar way. During this same period ideas concerning child constructed playgrounds and safety were evolving overseas. Such ideas when adopted in New Zealand have influenced the appearance and internal design of New Zealand playgrounds. However, in terms of function and form these changes have only been superficial.

Within New Zealand the social mechanisms for determining the allocation and design of playgrounds has constrained the use of playgrounds often to the disadvantage of different societal groups. The thesis concludes with a review of this issue.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
CHAPTER 1 PLAYGROUNDS - A SIGNIFICANT URBAN SPACE	1
-Thesis objectives	2
-Geography - space and society	3
-Thesis organisation	11
CHAPTER 2 PALMERSTON NORTH - AN EXAMPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S PUBLIC PLAYSPACE	14
CHAPTER 3 CHILDHOOD - PERCEPTIONS IN THE PASSAGE OF TIME	24
-Children without childhood	24
-The dawn of childhood	28
-The impact of urbanisation and industrialisation upon the young	29
-Childhood and citizenship	33
CHAPTER 4 THE PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S PUBLIC PLAYSPACE	36
-The public parks movement of the nineteenth century	36
-Education - the means to public provision of children's recreation space	41
-The politics of children's recreation space - the Boston experience	42
-Children's recreation beyond Boston	45
CHAPTER 5 THE STANDARDS OF CHILDREN'S RECREATION PLANNING	49
-A standards approach to children's recreation	49
CHAPTER 6 INHERITANCE WITHOUT INNOVATION - EARLY YEARS IN THE NEW EALAND CHILDREN'S RECREATION EXPERIENCE	59
-A British heritage	59
-Local authorities the forefront of children's recreation	62
-Elements making up the early New Zealand playground	67
CHAPTER 7 AN ATTEMPTED ADVENTURE IN DESIGN	72
-Adventure playgrounds - a recent innovation?	72
-The direction of adventure playgrounds	74
-A New Zealand perspective on adventure playgrounds	77
-New Zealand's adventure playground debate	80

CHAPTER 8 A SAFE NEW ZEALAND?	83
-The two faces of playground safety	83
-Safety in the traditional playground	83
-Early safety standards - a safeguard against liability	86
-Recent trends in safety	91
-Possible implications of the application of standards to New Zealand playgrounds	95
CHAPTER 9 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLAYGROUND PLANNING	98
-Public participation - a theoretical perspective	99
-Public participation position in recreation planning	103
-Recreation research in New Zealand	105
-Public participation in playground development in Palmerston North	110
CHAPTER 10 PLAYGROUNDS AS DYNAMIC SPACE?	117
-Gender geography, social change and playspace	123
-A changing industrial society	124
-Where to from here?	128
BIBLIOGRAPHY	136
APPENDIX A	



LIST OF FIGURES

2-1 Playground and Park Locations -1925, Palmerston North	16
2-2 Playground and Park Locations -1960, Palmerston North	17
2-3 Playground, Park and Primary School Locations -1982, Palmerston North	18
8-1 Structured Adventure Playground, Westown School, New Plymouth	89