

# Spatial environment and types of childhood

Baldo Blinkert

Institut für Soziologie der Uni Freiburg



**FIFAS**

Freiburger Institut für angewandte Sozialwissenschaft

# Content

I. Frame of reference of the „Freiburg Children Studies“

II. Methods

III. Results

IV. Proposals for cities

V. Ideas for future research

# Attributes of an action space

- relative free of danger, safety (Gefahrlosigkeit)
- accessible for children (Zugänglichkeit)
- utility value for children (Gestaltbarkeit)
- chances for interaction with other children (Interaktionschancen)

# „Staged childhood“ – outdoor and indoor

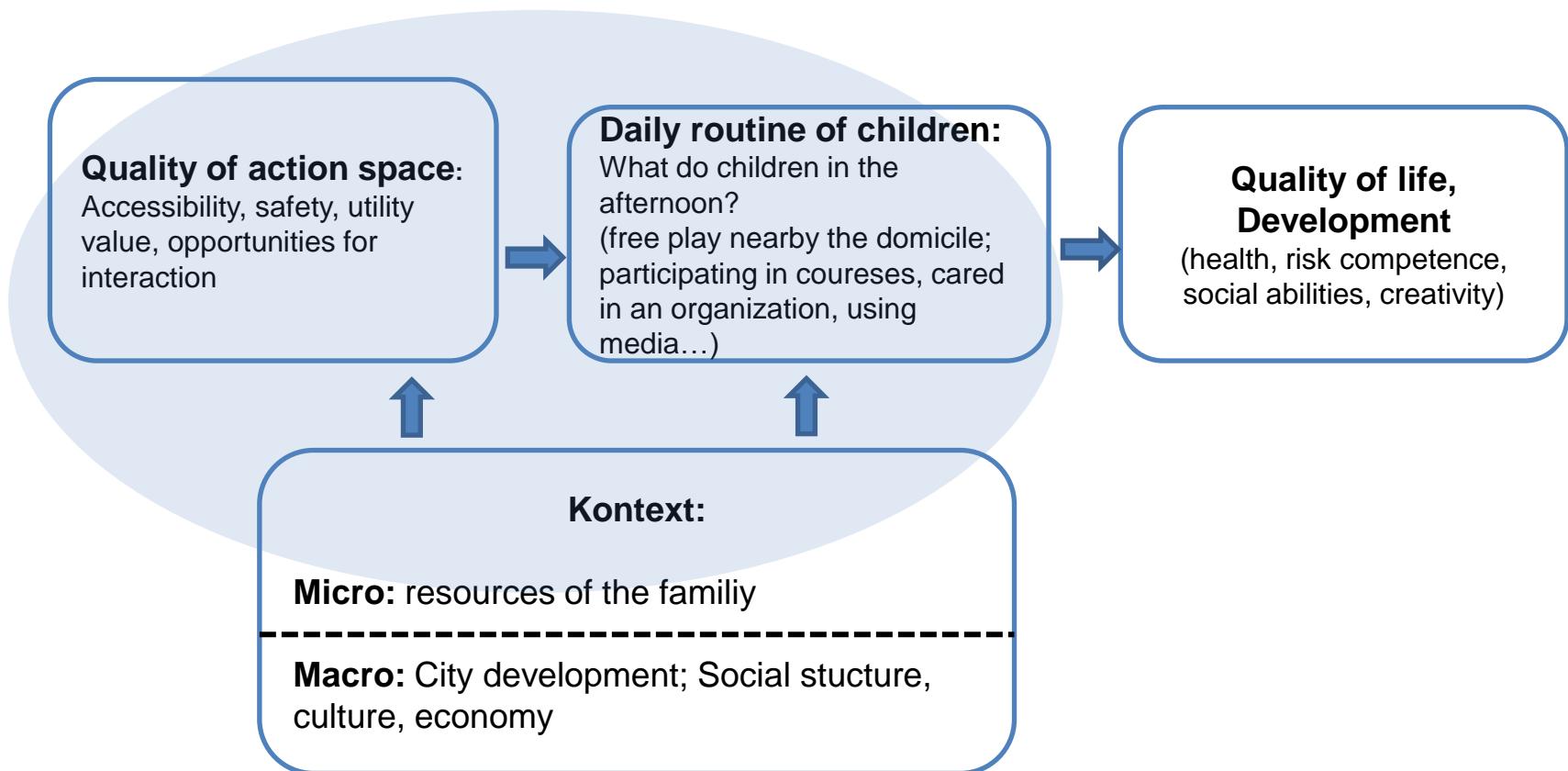
Conventional playground: expensive but rather boring



Happy children and happy parents



# Basic idea of the „Freiburg Children Studies (FCS)“

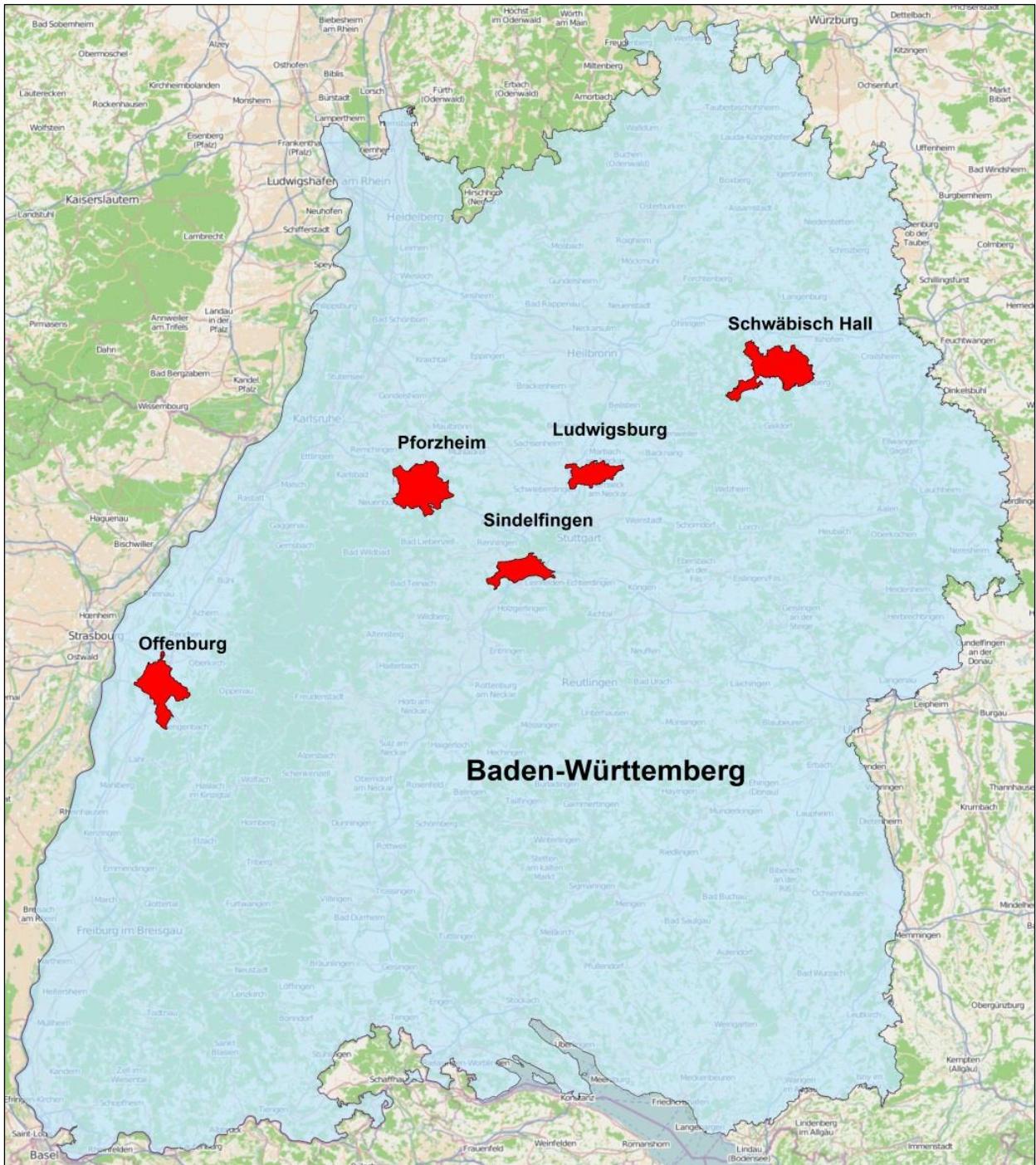


# Study „Raum für Kinderspiel!“

sponsored by  
Deutsches  
Kinderhilfswerk

## Inhabitants of the participating cities

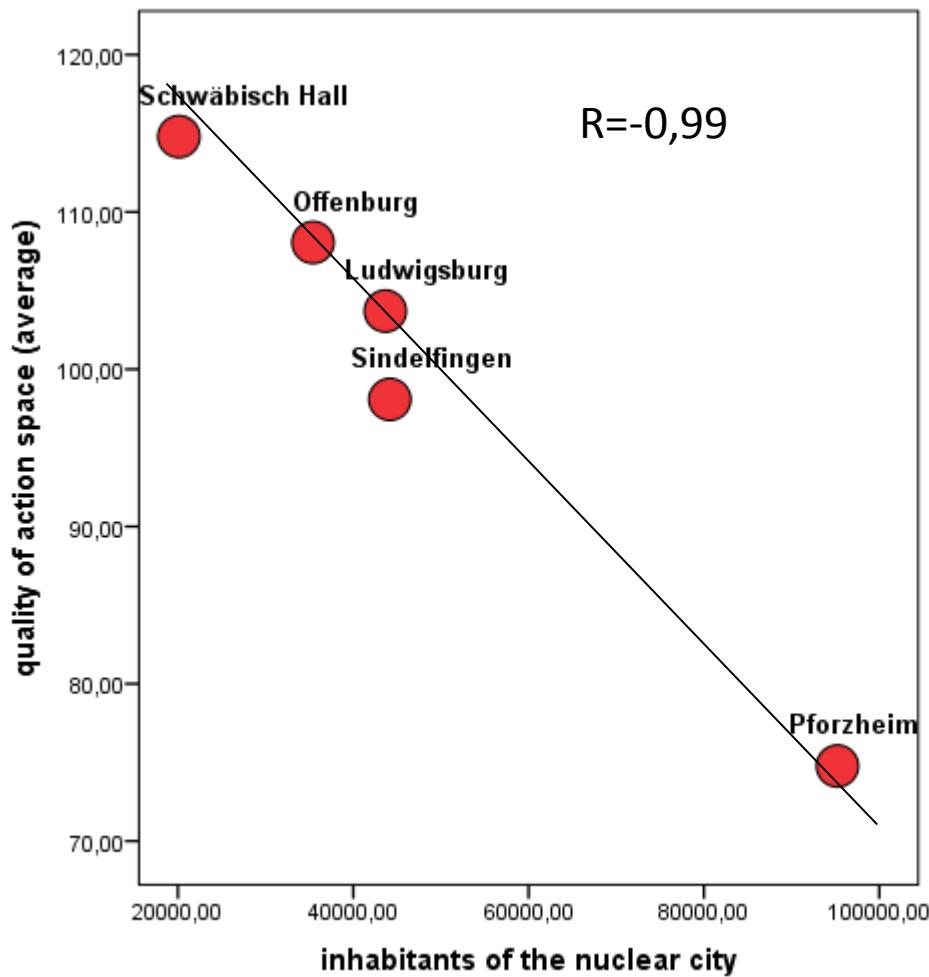
Schwäbisch Hall	37.000
Offenburg	58.000
Sindelfingen	60.000
Ludwigsburg	88.000
Pforzheim	118.000



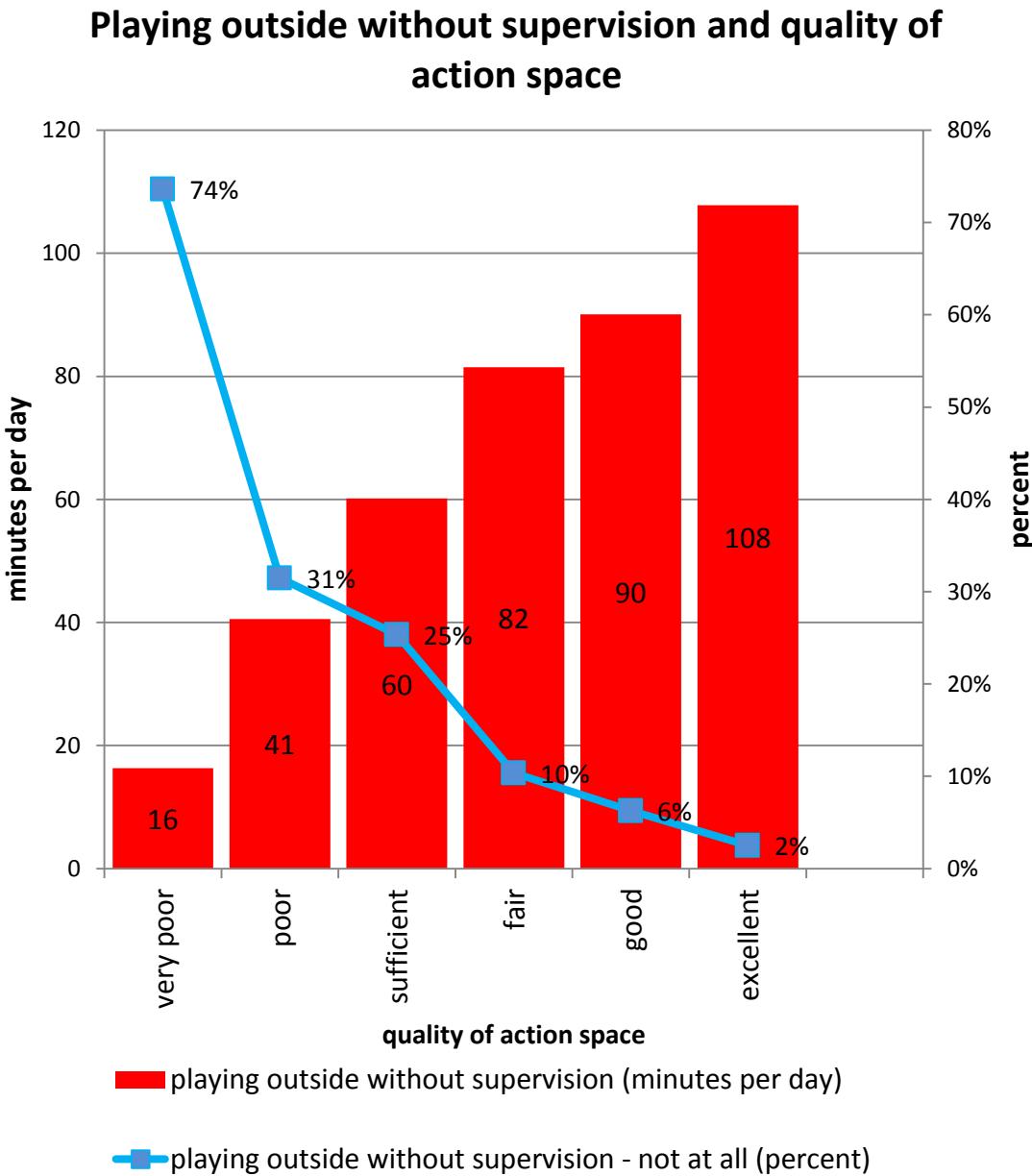
## Multimethod approach

- Surveys on all parents of children 5 to 9 years
- Structured diaries for 3 working days concerning selected activities of children
- Observations to gather information about the attributes of the home surroundings
- Walking with children through the environment of their home

# Degree of urbanization and average quality of action space



# How long play children outside their home without supervision?



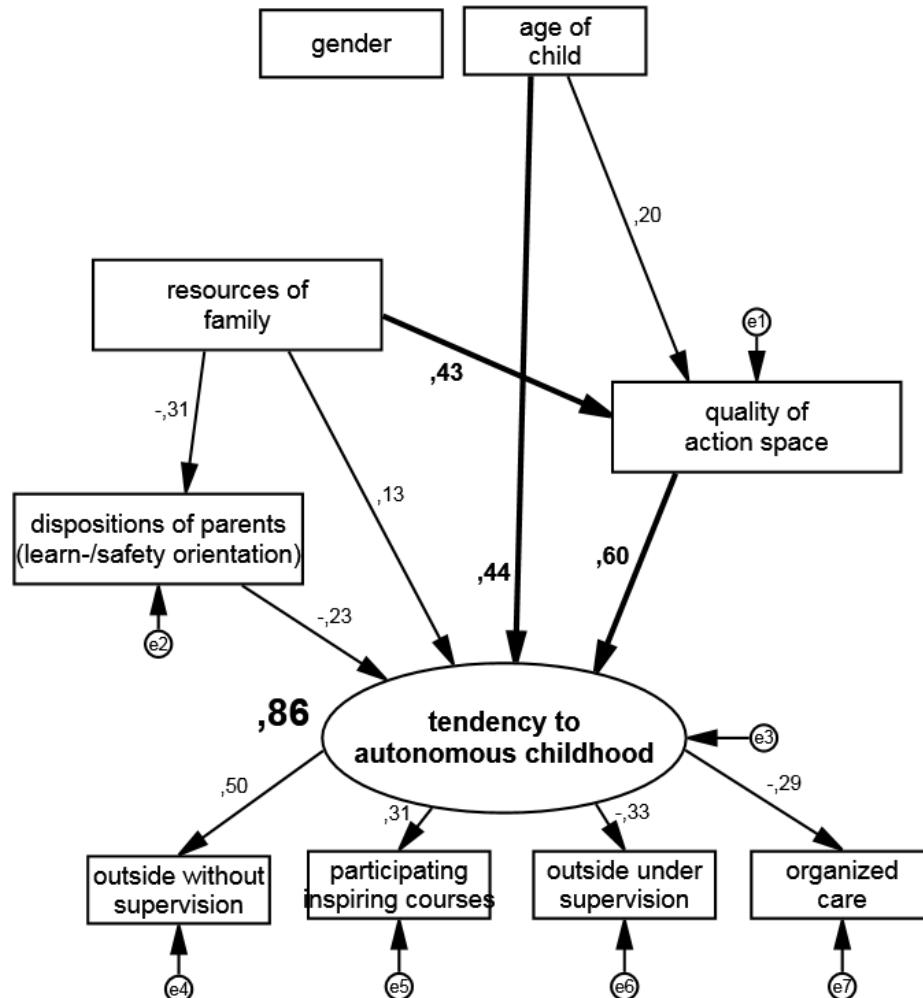
## „Autonomous childhood“

- Long outside without supervision
- Seldom supervised by parents
- Seldom cared in a care facility
- Often participating in inspiring courses (sport, music...)

Ranking of total effects (direct+indirect)	
1.	Quality of action space (0.604)
2.	Age (0.560)
3.	Ressources (0.429)
4.	Dispositions (-0.234)

Explained variance: 86%

Determinants for autonomous / heteronomous childhood

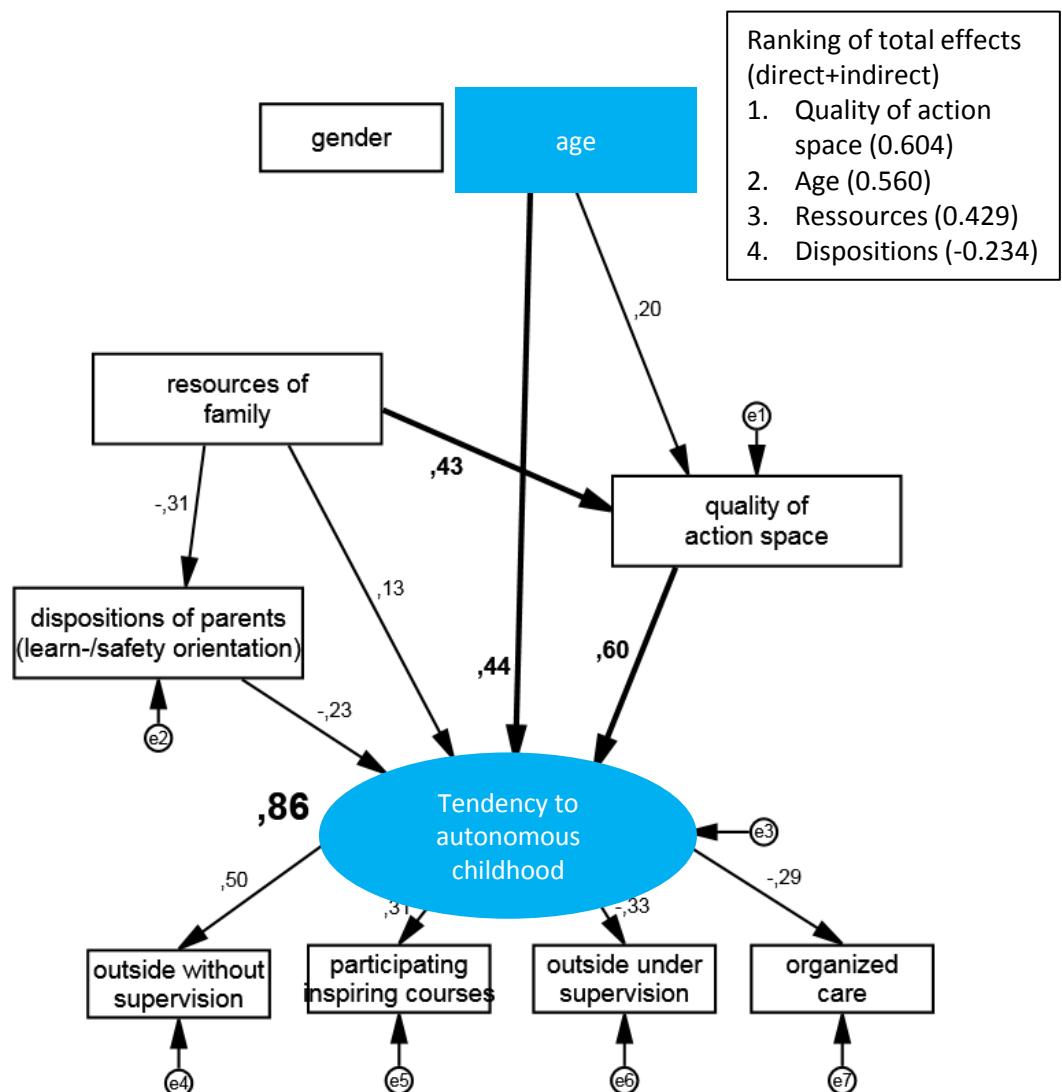
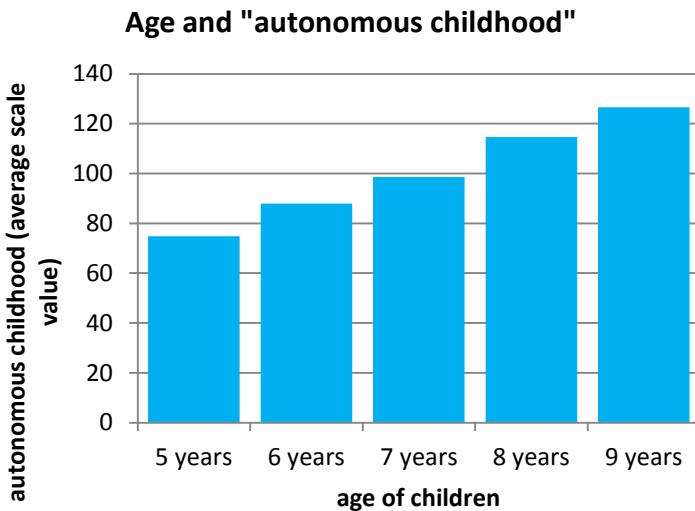


GFI=.982

Scale free least squares

N=1650 children (only cases with valid values and when observations on the environment have been conducted)

## Determinants for autonomous / heteronomous childhood

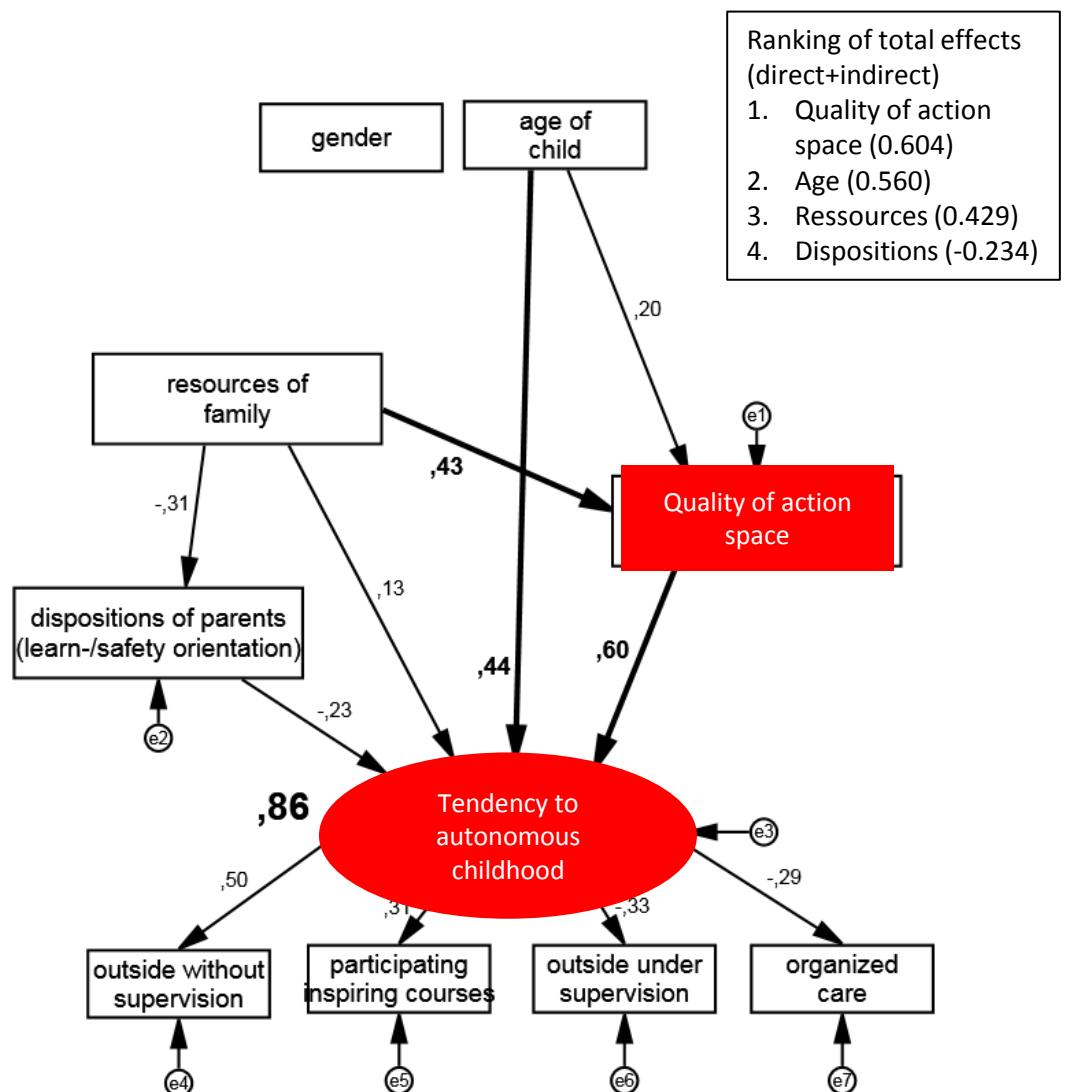
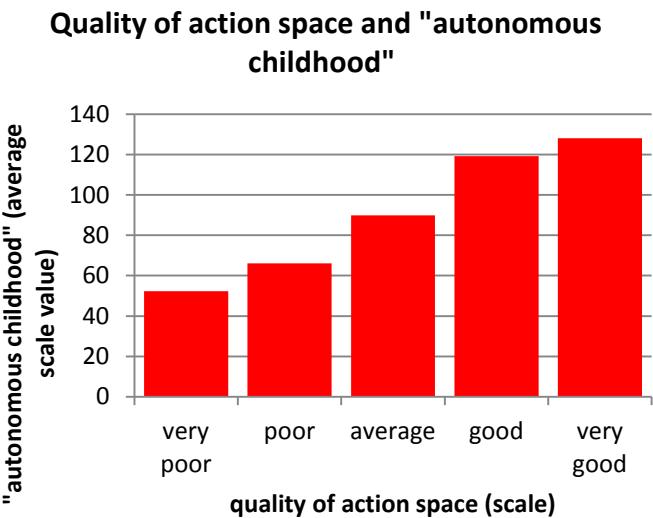


GFI=.982

Scale free least squares

N=1650 children (only cases with valid values and when observations on the environment have been conducted)

## Determinants for autonomous / heteronomous childhood

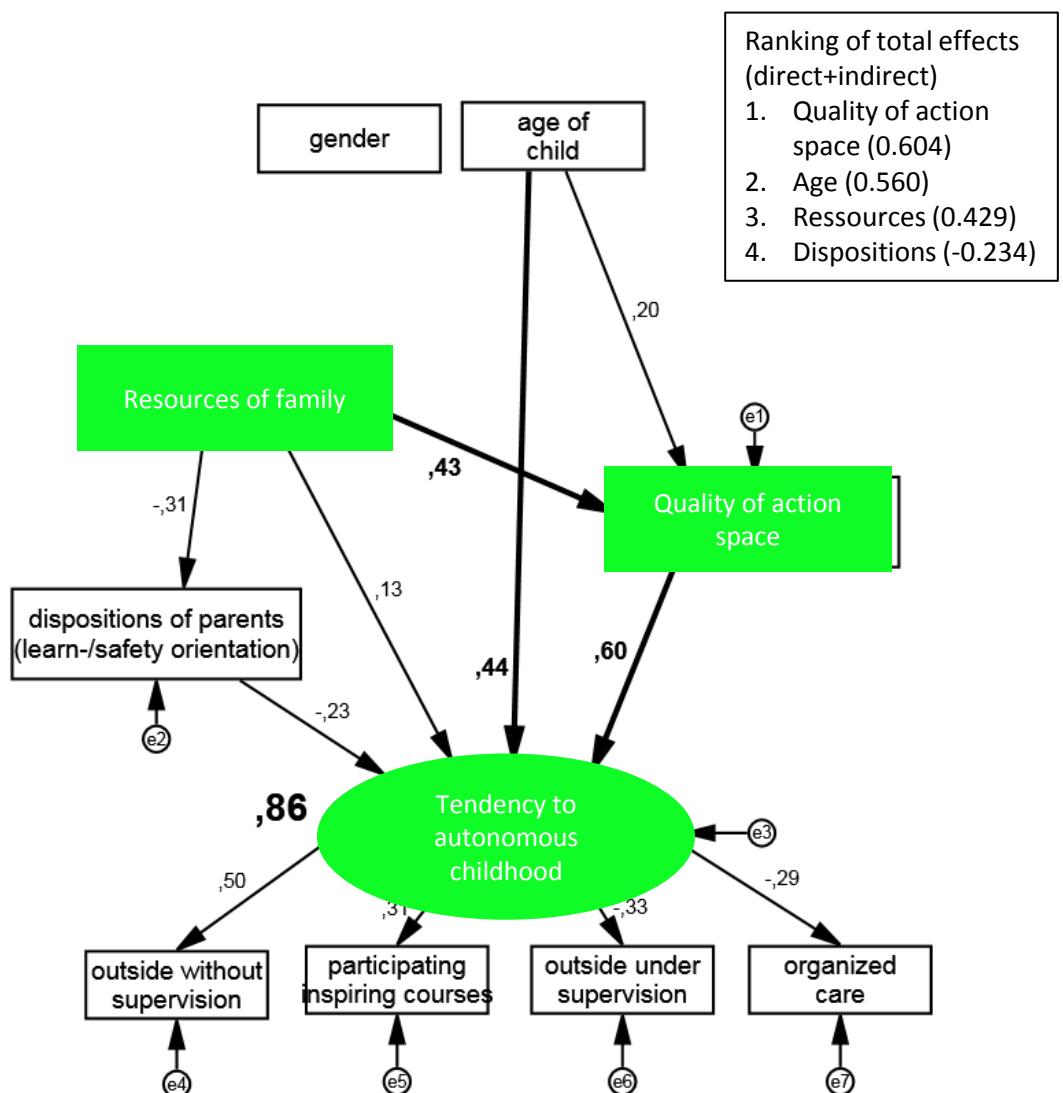
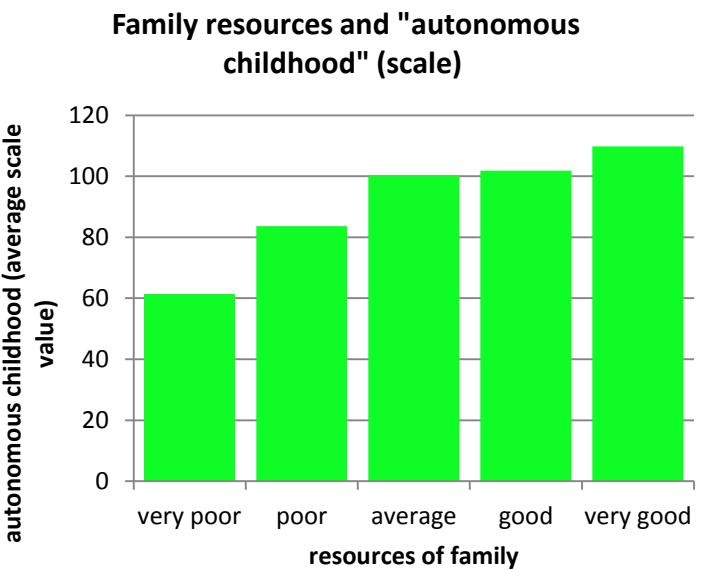


GFI=.982

Scale free least squares

N=1650 children (only cases with valid values and when observations on the environment have been conducted)

## Determinants for autonomous / heteronomous childhood



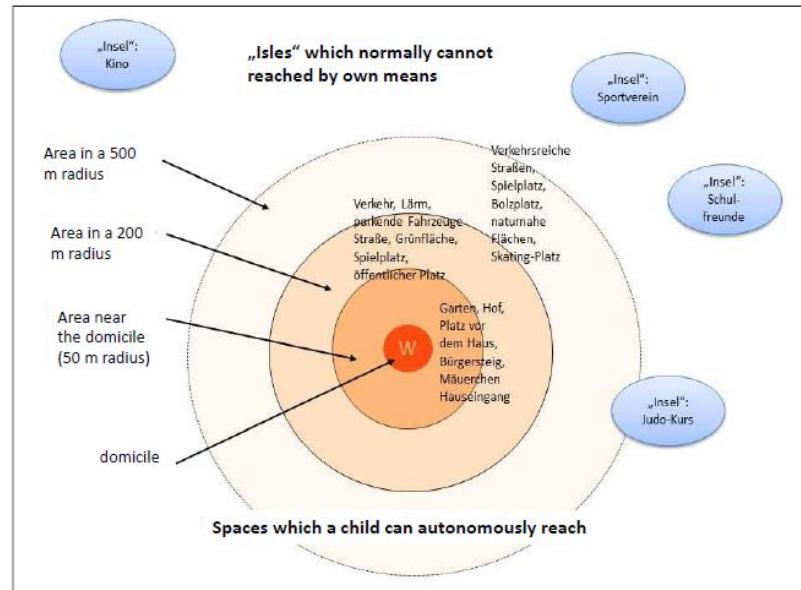
GFI=.982

Scale free least squares

N=1650 children (only cases with valid values and when observations on the environment have been conducted)

# Items of the „Freiburger Soziotopen Test (FST)“

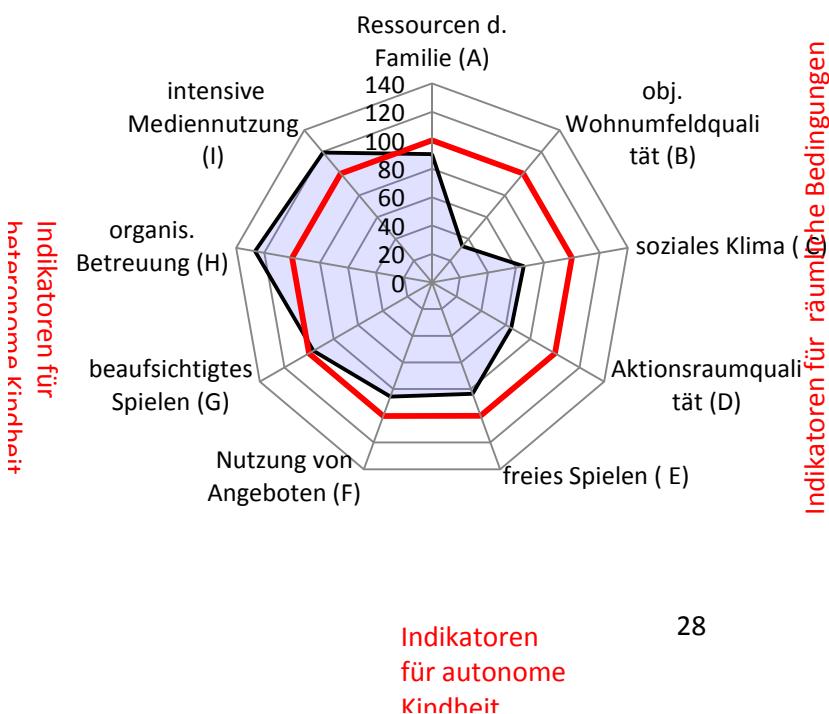
Type of domicile	200 m zone	500 m zone
own property rent	Play street 30 km/h More than 30 km/h	No busy streets Busy streets
ground floor 1. Story 2. Story higher	Not on a street Width of street lesser than 6 Meter 6 Meter and more	Pure residential area Mixed area Industrial area
one family more families	Low noise Medium noise High noise	Natural areas (park, water) No natural areas
Area near the home (50m zone)	3 and lesser parking motor cars 4 to 9 10 and more	Large playground/ soccer place No Large playground/ soccer place
Garden or backyard usable Garden/backyard No garden/backyard		
Front garden usable Front garden not usable No front garden		
Place in front of the building No place		
Distance entrance – street 30m and more 5 to 30 m Less than 5 m		



# Profiles for city districts

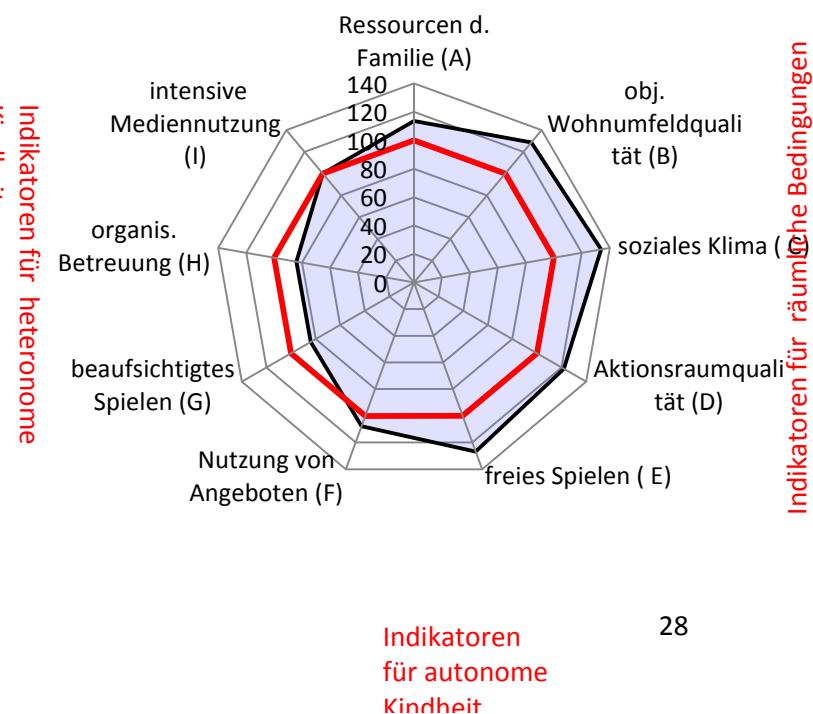
## Offenburg

Inventargebiet 1  Insgesamt (alle 5 Städte)



## Offenburg

Inventargebiet 10  Insgesamt (alle 5 Städte)



Indikatoren für heteronome Kindheit

Indikatoren für autonome Kindheit  
Indikatoren für räumliche Bedingungen

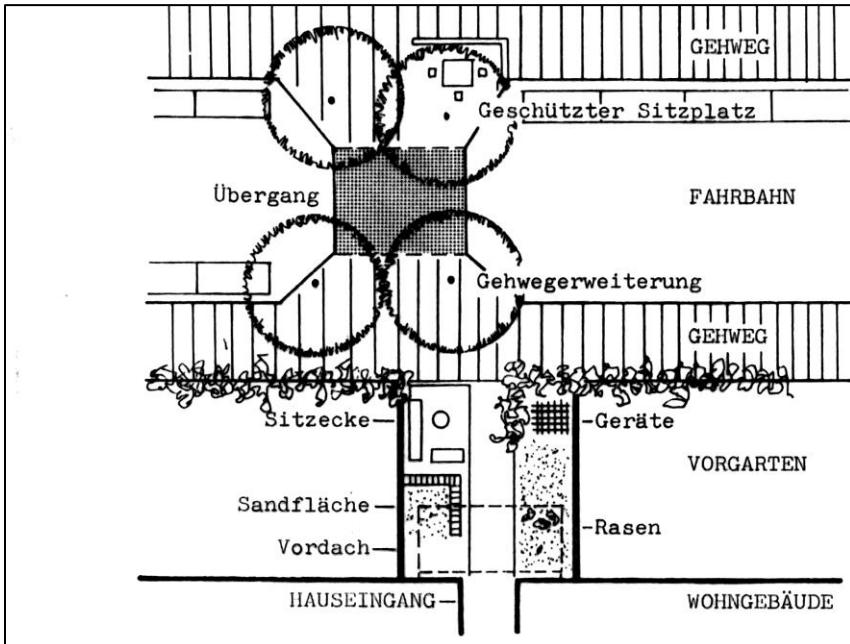
Indikatoren für räumliche Bedingungen

# Childfriendliness „beyond playgrounds“ – a public place in Freiburg (Augustinerplatz with „Bächle“)



# Reduction of danger

## By a transition zone



## By playstreets



Increase of the utility value of playgrounds by a transformation of a conventional playground in a „narrative place“ (R. Sennett)

**Children and parents transforming a conventional playground**

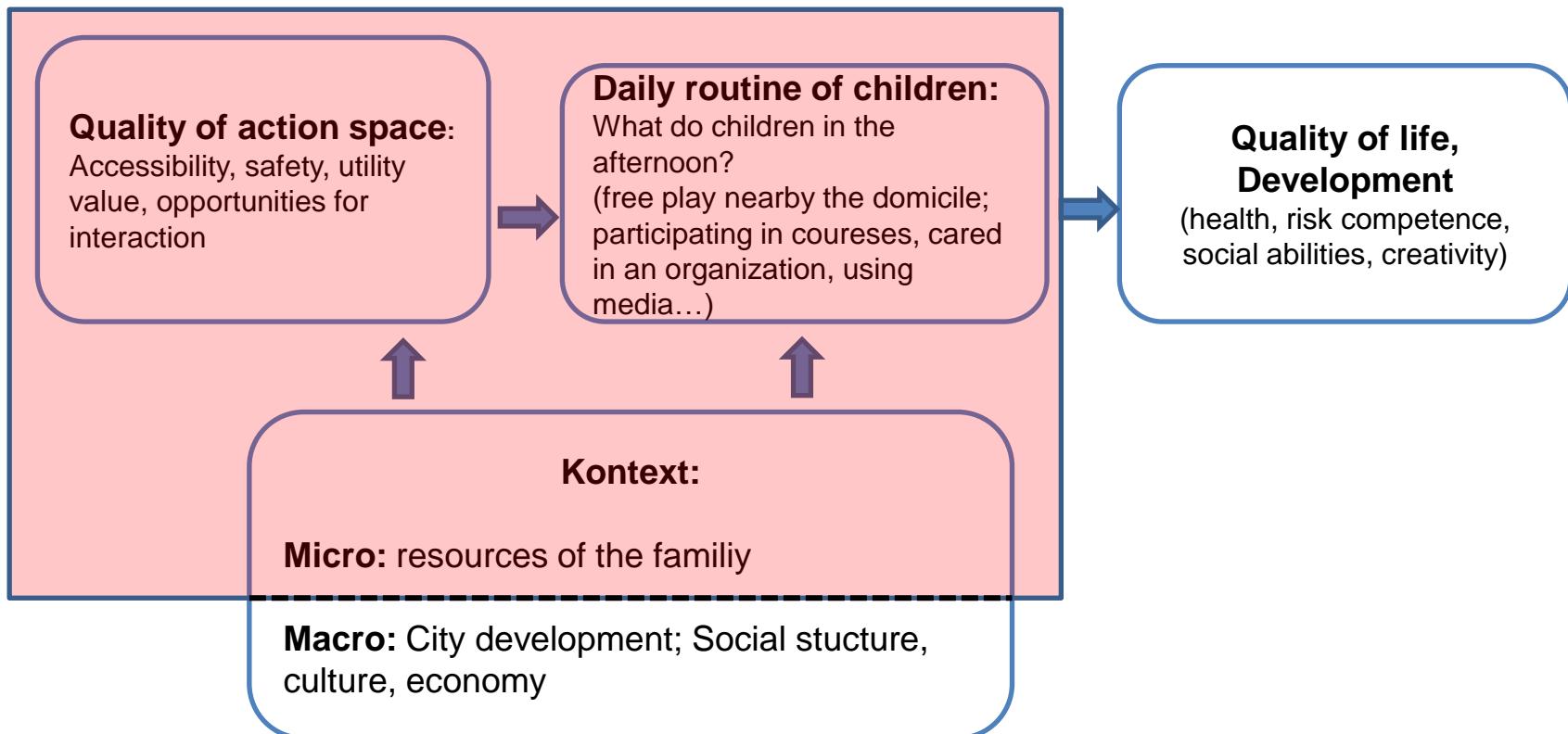


Pic 7

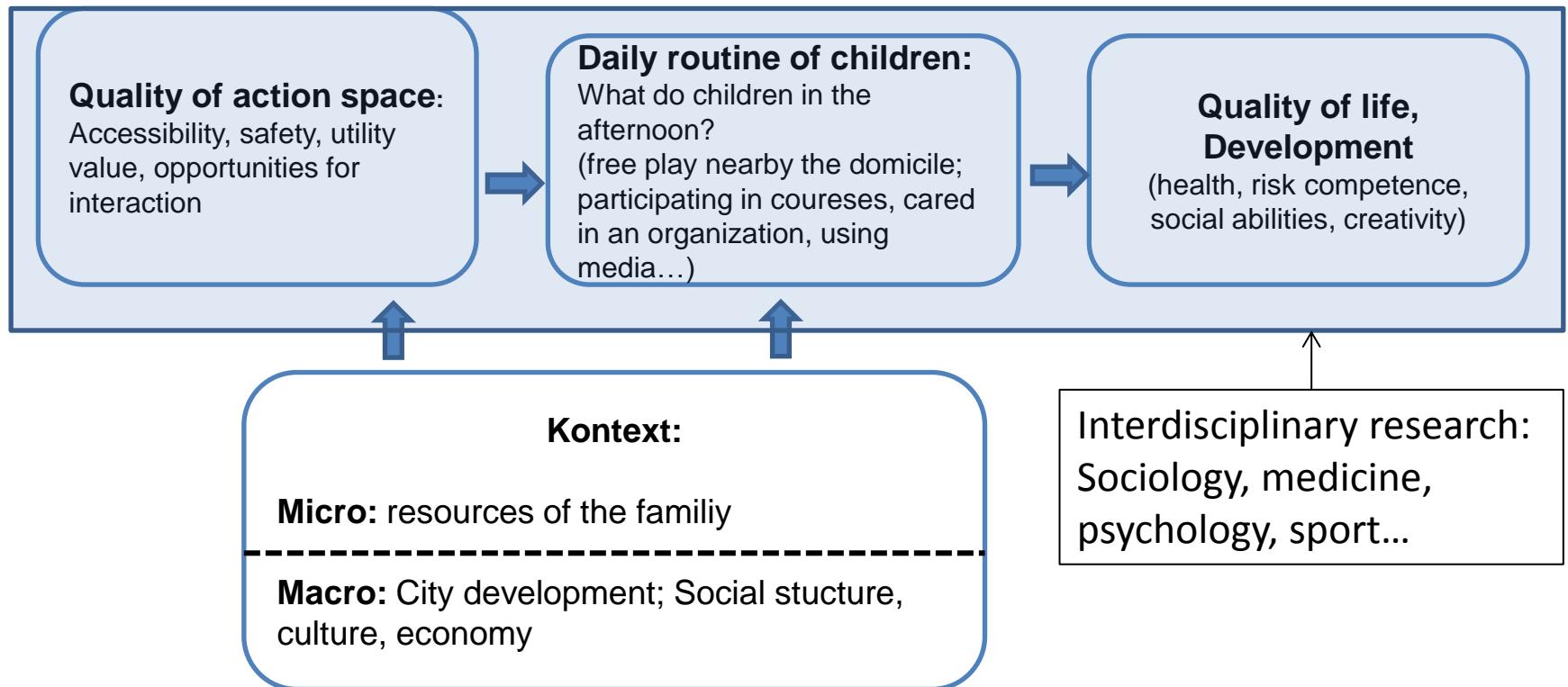
**A transformed playground in Freiburg (Mundenhof)**



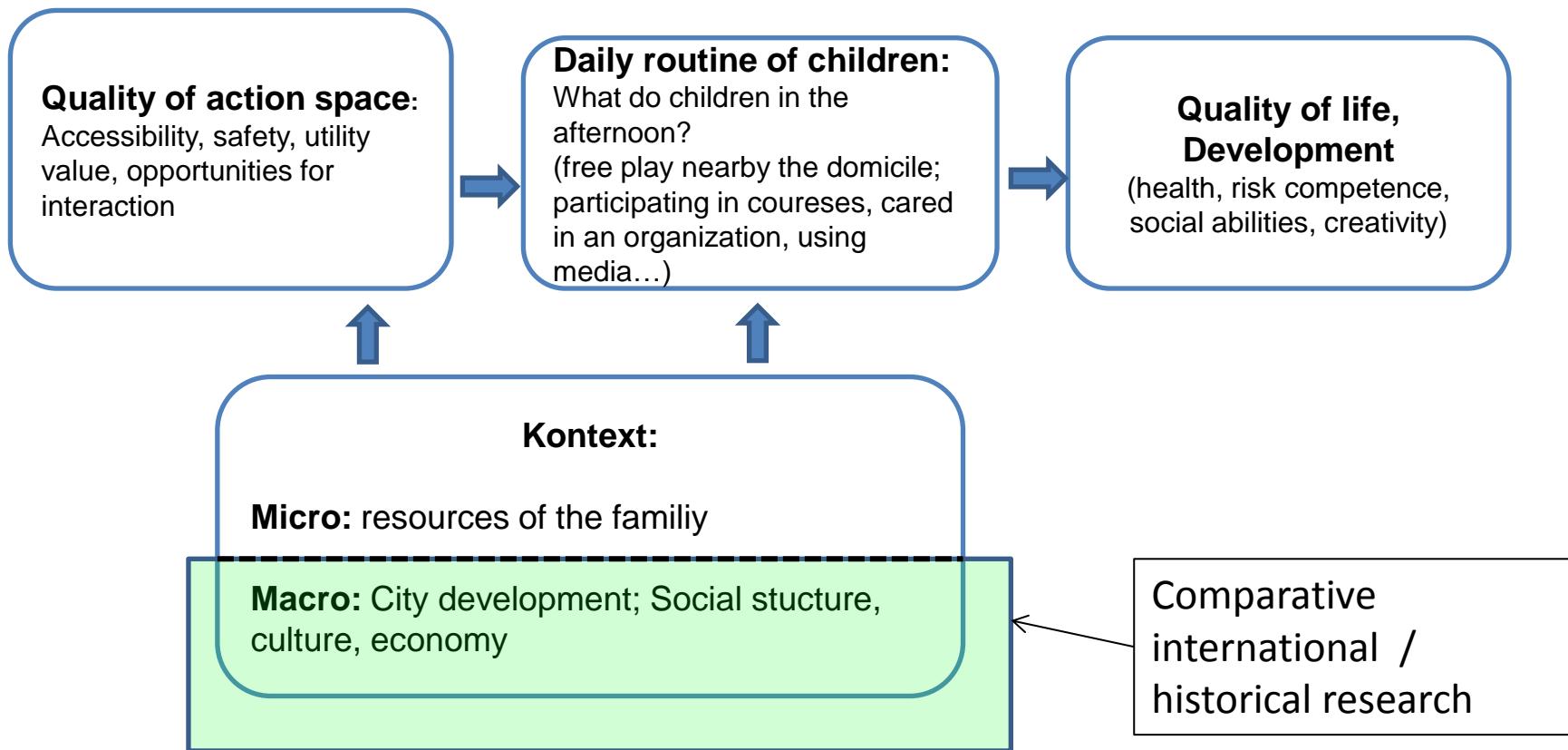
# Basic idea of the „Freiburg Children Studies (FCS)“ – empirical evidence



# Basic idea of the „Freiburg Children Studies (FCS)“ – open questions



# Basic idea of the „Freiburg Children Studies (FCS)“ – open questions



# Kontakt

- Email: [baldo.blinkert@soziologie.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:baldo.blinkert@soziologie.uni-freiburg.de)
- Homepage: <http://www.soziologie.uni-freiburg.de/personen/blinkert>