

Urban Green Spaces and the human well-being

Introduction

The positive effects of green spaces and areas are well documented. Plenty of physical and mental benefits, especially during COVID19 Pandemic. Knowing this, an effort should be made to design these spaces accessible and safe for everyone.

Yet looking at different lived experiences, the opposite seems to be true. The intersection between space and gender is subtly influenced by underlying power dynamics. This leads to general questions such as: who are Cities and its green spaces designed and planned for? Whose Experiences and needs are taken into account?

Definition Urban Green Space: Parks, playgrounds and residential greenery.

Research Questions

What role do urban green spaces have concerning the human well-being how come not everyone benefits the same?

How does gender influence the lived experience of shared urban green spaces?

Aim of Work

Exploring and looking closely at planning processes and understanding how gender impacts lived experiences.

Gaining insights into planning processes and projects, designing urban green spaces safer and accessible for all.

Benefits of Urban Green Spaces

“Urban green space, [...] can promote mental and physical health and reduce morbidity and mortality in urban residents by providing psychological relaxation and stress alleviation, stimulation social cohesion, supporting physical activity, and reducing exposure to air pollutants, noise and excessive heat.”¹ (Braubach et al., 2017:187).



Abb. 1: Uritrottoir, Paris.



Abb. 2: Campus, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen.

Methodological approach

1. Survey

- ❖ General overview:
 - Gain a sense of the field and people's lived experiences
- ❖ 8 participants (4 Women, 4 Men) of 4 different age groups.

Do you ever feel unsafe in green spaces in the city?		
Antwort	Anzahl	Brutto-Prozentsatz
Yes, often (AC01)	1	12.50%
Yes, occasionally (AC02)	3	37.50%
No, never (AC03)	2	25.00%
Have never considered it (AC04)	2	25.00%
Kommentar	Ansehen	

Particularly at night, since the lighting is often inadequate but also sometimes even during the day when a group has gathered and looks unfriendly.
 Ich dunkel nicht mehr so sehr vor allem wenn alkoholisierte Männer sichtbar bzw anwesend sind und ich sie als bedrohung empfinde

Abb. 3: "The City" survey.

2. Participant Observation

- ❖ Reflexive positionality is of central importance, as this allows one's own power and privileges, but also prejudices or presuppositions, to be made visible.
- ❖ Rosenthal (2015).

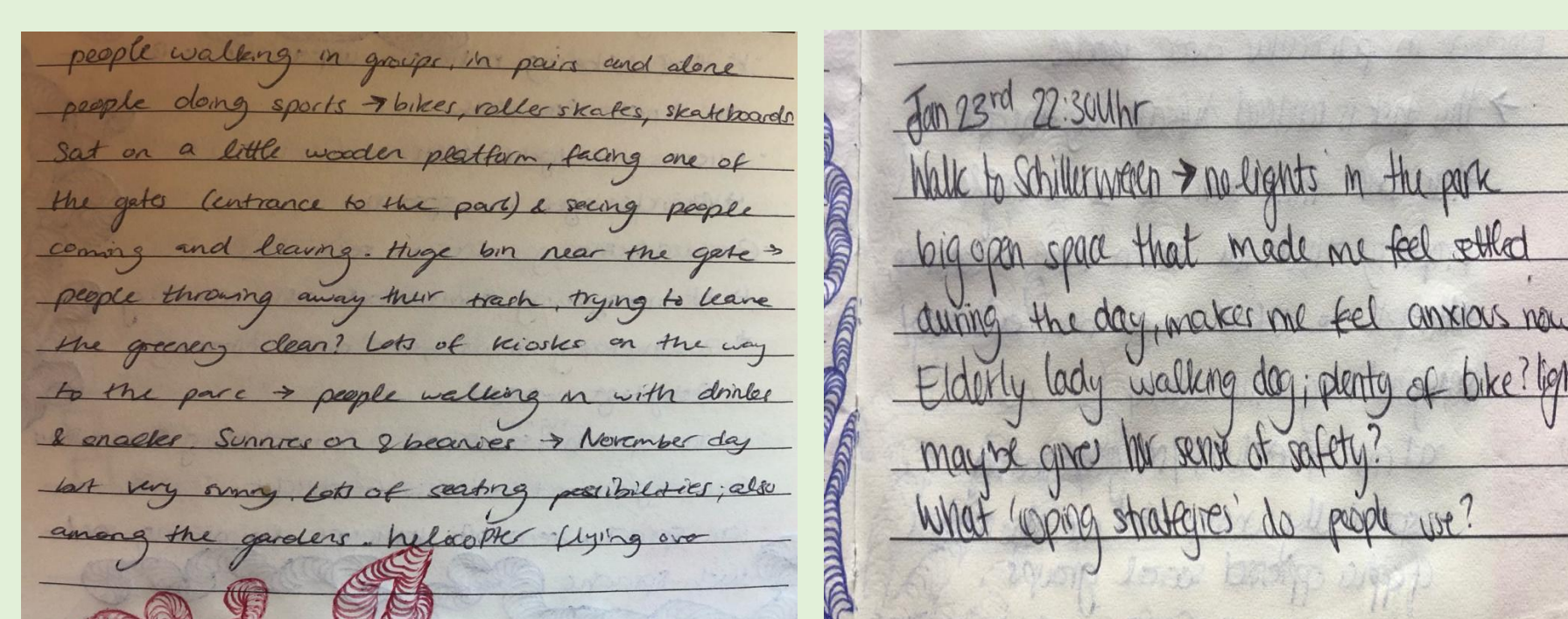


Abb. 4&5: Field Notes.

3. Interviews

- ❖ Semi-structured interviews online and in person.
- ❖ (Breidenstein et al., 2013).

User group	Women
Necessities	High need for safety and cleanliness Other Sports interests than men
Health aspects	Increasing the sense of well-being through social contacts and recreation Physical activities e.g. sports contribute to the improvement of physical and mental health
Requirements for Urban Green Spaces	Possibilities for types of play/movement Retreat possibilities (delineated subspaces) on the one hand, manageability/visibility on the other: clear path concepts, visual contact with the street or residential buildings, fast "escape routes" and many exits Path Illumination Cleanliness of the areas Toilets

Abb. 6: Part of the lesson Plan of M.A.: "Urbanes Baum und Waldmanagement".

Preliminary Results

- ❖ Health and well-being benefits are numerous
- ❖ Women feel less safe and seen
- ❖ Access denied and Movement and freedom is restricted
- ❖ Women often not regarded during planning processes

- ❖ “[...] space itself can become a form of control, of limitation of women’s mobility-but also a site of women’s actualization, of breaking out of gender constraints and achieving power.” (Wrede 2015:10).

Next Steps

- ❖ Interviews
- ❖ Further Analysis
- ❖ Transcription of work

Research Outlook

- ❖ More data collection
- ❖ Review more categories (age, race, class, sexuality, disability)