

# The role of urban parks for the sustainable city essay



The role of urban parks for the sustainable city Student name: Pham Duc Manh According to Anna Chiesura, some recent enquiries show that although nowadays people pay more attention to protecting the natural environment, there are less scientists and politicians who care for small green places of cities and for its benefits to citizens. Tyrvaïnen and Vaananen (1998) claimed that “ low appreciation of green spaces is also reflected in the recent cuts in the maintenance of budget of many towns”. Nevertheless, it is generally believed that natural assets and components not only make the quality of life of municipal dwellers better but also provide the citizens with many kind of services such as the purification of air and water, social and psychological services and so on. According to recent studies, urban park brought many positive impacts on the well-being of citizens such as the reduction of the stress, the enhancement of mental health. Moreover, it also brought us other social merits.

For example, Coley et al (1997) believed that “ nature can encourage the use of outdoor spaces, increases social integration and interaction among neighbours”. Above all, economic advantages can be provided for both municipalities and municipal dwellers by the functions of urban environment. However, there are several negative impacts of parks on people’s attitudes such as the feeling of insecurity related to vandalism and fear of crime in uninhabited areas. This paper will focus on the important of urban environment for the prosperity of urban dwellers and for the sustainable cities. Despite there are many different definitions of sustainable cities, it is generally believed that environmental indicators and the quality of life are the central criteria of the variety of definitions of sustainable cities.

Besides that, other criteria such as “ amount of public green spaces per inhabitant”, “ public parks” and “ recreation areas” also considered as vital factors to make citizens of the city live better. In this article, the relation between urban parks and sustainable city will be considered through the inspection of the values of urban environment as a key element of development of sustainability. To gather basic data, a survey which was being distributed on all day in different parts of the parks, was established in the most common park of Amsterdam 1865. Those who participate in this survey selected randomly, had to respond the variety of questions in questionnaire which was selected in range of several issues to suit the target of this article such as motivation of nature, emotional dimension and recognized benefits and communal gratification of the number of green space in cities. Although the survey considered as primarily exploration, results give attractive information to city-planners and the urban developers about the effects of municipal green area for the happiness and quality of life of urban dwellers.

The data which were collected have been used to analyse and explain based on quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. Results obtained from Motives for nature show that decision makers may use these information to issue strategies that suit public demands and expectations. According to Figure 2, it can be clearly seen that “ To relax” came top in Motives for nature, with 34. It is believed that this is a good way to forget the daily routines and enjoy the fresh air. “ To be in nature” had the second largest frequency with 254. “ To escape from city”, “ To be with children”, “ To meditate” were in the next positions, 154, 95, and 84 in that order.

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However, as far as Table 1 in this article, although differences of gender were not found, differences of age were detected. For instance, young people prefer to meet others and play sport while adult and older visitors like relaxing, staying with their children and observing nature. To study the emotional aspect of nature based on experiences, the benefits of people's cognition and their prosperity as well. Participants were asked several questions which included multiple choice formats and 1-5 points questions such as " which feeling does nature evokes you? ", " how important are these feelings for your daily well-being? " respectively. Figure 3 illustrates the answers of the emotions experienced. Specifically, Freedom had the highest frequency with 299.

This is followed by Unity with nature, with 199. Happiness, Unity with my self and Luck were in the next position, 163, 159 and 154 in that order. Like the previous research, although no significant differences in gender, there is a high correlation to age. In addition, two components recreation and spirituality took into account in the table 2. The results illustrated the cognition of the emotional experience as a vital contribution to people's prosperity. Furthermore, to investigate the reasons whether the natural experience acknowledged as crucial for the prosperity of citizens in general or not, participants were asked to convey the personal opinions and show appraisal in open questions.

Table 3 shows the main points and the relation of debates. It is claimed that the natural environment compensates the stresses which happens in the daily life and restores psychophysical stability for urban dwellers. Thanks to proof of experimental survey, Hartig et al (1987, 1991) stated that " natural  
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environments are a powerful source of restorative experiences”. Besides that, Thompson (2002) also commented that “ for many people in cities, the park is a place where nature may have a metaphysical or spiritual dimension”.

59% of people who took part in the survey show their displeasure with green space in the urban place presently. From what has been discussed above, it is recommended that more and more criteria about public places and green open spaces should be included in sustainable criteria for urban development. Results indicated that survey aimed at finding the motives and recognitions of citizens of a Dutch urban park. Although the role of urban parks did not show, some comments may be illustrated such as meeting the demands of citizens and different motivations related to different age.

Chiesura, A.

(2003). The role of urban parks for the sustainable city. *Landscape and urban planning* 68 (2004, pp. 129-138).