

Patterns of Public Green Space Availability in Residential Neighborhoods: A Spatial and Historical Analysis of Damascus City

Authors: Rahaf, Yousef¹, Seloua, Benkaid Kasbah², István, Valánszki¹

¹*Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Garden Art, Department of Landscape Protection and Reclamation.*

²*Hungarian University of Agricultural and Life Sciences (MATE), Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Garden Art, Department of Garden Art and Landscape Design.*

The availability of public green spaces (hereafter PPGS) in residential neighborhoods has been associated with many benefits in the literature. However, recently, the social role of these spaces as an arena for social interaction and community bonding, as well as a medium to construct positive attachment and connection to neighborhoods, has been increasing through interdisciplinary research. Most of this research focuses on countries from the Global North¹, while countries from the Global South, are short on research on the availability of PGS within its residential neighbourhoods. This study aims to contribute to filling this gap, by focusing on analyzing the different patterns of PGS availability within the residential neighborhoods in one of the Major cities in the Middle East, Damascus city. It aims to investigate the variations in PGS provision in light of the neighborhood's urban development background and current situation. Content analysis of the city's urban growth was conducted in this study to define the political, economic, and urban planning context of the neighbourhoods' development, from the late 19th century till modern times. In addition to spatial analysis of PGS (percentage of PGS, PGS share per capita) in each neighborhood. The results identified 5 groups of residential neighborhoods demonstrating different urbanization contexts (traditional, planned pre-mid20th, planned post-mid-20th, mixed, informal) and many variations of PGS availability (average, below-average, low). The results showed a significant correlation between the availability of PGS in the neighborhoods and their geographical location; disparities between northwest neighborhoods and southeast ones, and between PGS provision and the urbanization process; disparities between planned neighborhoods and informal ones. The study findings demonstrate the current situation of PGS availability in residential neighborhoods, in one of the major cities in the Middle East, and how it is both influenced and influencing the multi-aspects of residential disparities these cities are facing today. These findings are crucial to capture the different dynamics between people and their neighborhoods, and their attachment to the city, on a wider scale.

¹ Global North and Global South are terms that denote a method of grouping countries based on their defining characteristics with regard to socioeconomics and politics. See UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for context.

Authors Biography

Rahaf Yousef is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning, and Garden Art, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences. She comes from an architecture background with academic and professional knowledge in regional and urban planning. Her research explores people-place relationships within urban environments through the lens of green space. She participated in numerous workshops and research projects in Syria, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Italy, Greece, Germany, Czech, and the UK. She is a member of YSU_ Young Syrian Urbanists, Syrbanism.

Seloua Benkaid Kasbah, Landscape Architect, Ph.D. Candidate, Teacher Assistant, and Teacher at Hungarian University of Agricultural and Life Sciences (MATE), Faculty of Landscape Architecture and Urbanism, Institute of Garden Art and Landscape Design, Department of Garden Art and Landscape Design. Teacher at the GYIK-Creative Kids Workshop Gallery, Budapest, Hungary. She focuses her research on Designing Sculpture Parks Experiences. E-mail: benkaidkasbasalwa@gmail.com

István Valánszki, PhD, head of department (Department of Landscape Protection and Reclamation, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences), associate professor, BSc program coordinator (BSc in Landscape Management and Garden Construction Engineering), landscape architect, teacher of engineering, landscape protection expert. He has been involved in several national and international projects and author of more than 200 publications, mainly related to ppGIS, cultural ecosystem services and green infrastructure.