

## THE SOCIAL RESONANCE OF URBAN LANDSCAPES AND THE INFLUENCE OF GREEN SPACES ON COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

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**Abstract:** *Urban landscapes serve as dynamic backdrops to the daily lives of city dwellers, shaping not only the physical environment but also the social fabric of urban communities. In particular, green spaces—parks, gardens, and other natural areas—have emerged as critical elements in fostering a sense of collective identity, offering spaces for social interaction, recreation, and reflection. This paper explores the social resonance of urban landscapes, focusing on how green spaces contribute to the formation of collective identity within urban contexts. Drawing on theories of place-making, social capital, and environmental psychology.*

**Key words:** *communication, urban landscapes, collective identity.*

### INTRODUCTION

Urban landscapes serve as dynamic backdrops to the daily lives of city dwellers, shaping not only the physical environment but also the social fabric of urban communities. In particular, green spaces—parks, gardens, and other natural areas—have emerged as critical elements in fostering a sense of collective identity, offering spaces for social interaction, recreation, and reflection [7]. This paper explores the social resonance of urban landscapes, focusing on how green spaces contribute to the formation of collective identity within urban contexts. Drawing on theories of place-making, social capital, and environmental psychology, the study examines how green spaces function as symbolic and functional sites of belonging, offering a sense of community cohesion and cultural continuity. By facilitating both individual and collective engagement [1,13] with the natural environment, these spaces act as mediators between the urban and the natural, fostering a collective sense of place that transcends individual experience [2,15]. Through case studies of diverse cities, the research highlights the role of green spaces in fostering inclusivity, supporting civic participation, and promoting social well-being, ultimately contributing to the construction of urban identities that reflect both the physical and social landscapes in which they are embedded. This paper argues that the integration of green spaces in urban design is not only crucial for environmental sustainability but also for the cultivation of resilient, inclusive, and vibrant urban communities [10,14].

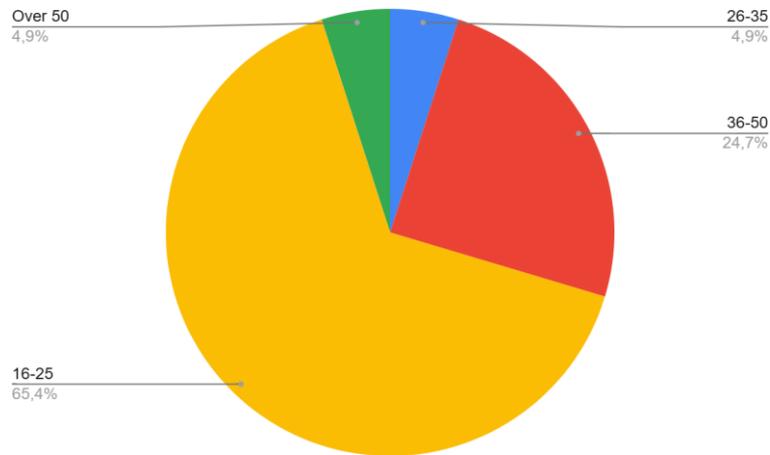
### MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, we used a mixed methodological approach, including the bibliographic method and the questionnaire method to obtain a thorough and well-grounded understanding of the subject under study.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

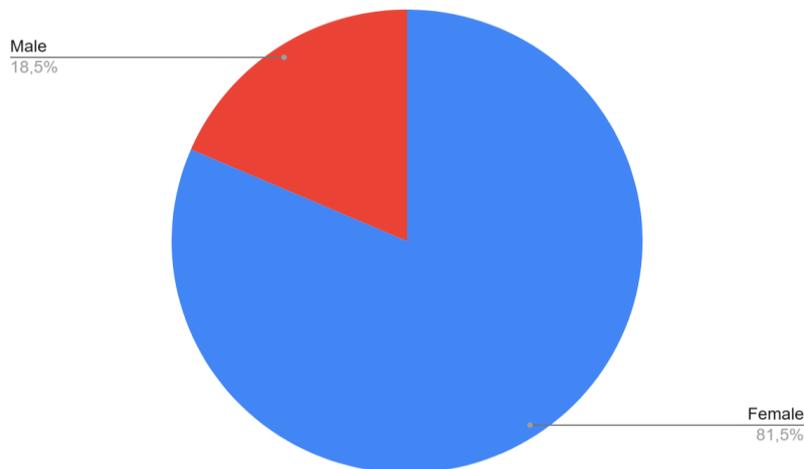
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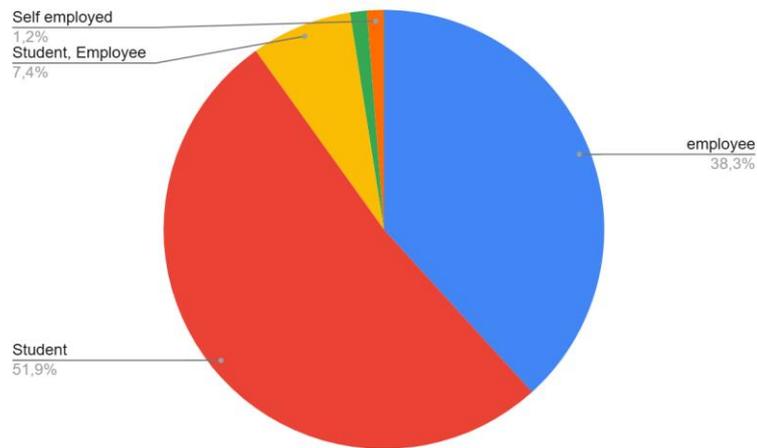


**Figure 1. Respondents' age**

In the survey, we analyzed the age distribution of respondents to better understand demographic diversity. The results are presented in Figure 1, providing an overview of the predominant ages among the participants. 16-25 years: This category represents the majority of respondents, 65.4% of participants being included in this age range. This percentage suggests a significant interest of young people in the topic of the survey. 36-50 years: The next largest category is that of respondents between the ages of 36 and 50, which constitute 24.7% of the total. This indicates considerable participation by middle-aged adults as well. 26-35 years and over 50 years: Both categories are equally represented, each with 4.9% of respondents. This shows a lower engagement of these age groups in that survey. Also 81,5% of the respondents were women and just 18,5 were men, as can be seen in Figure 2.

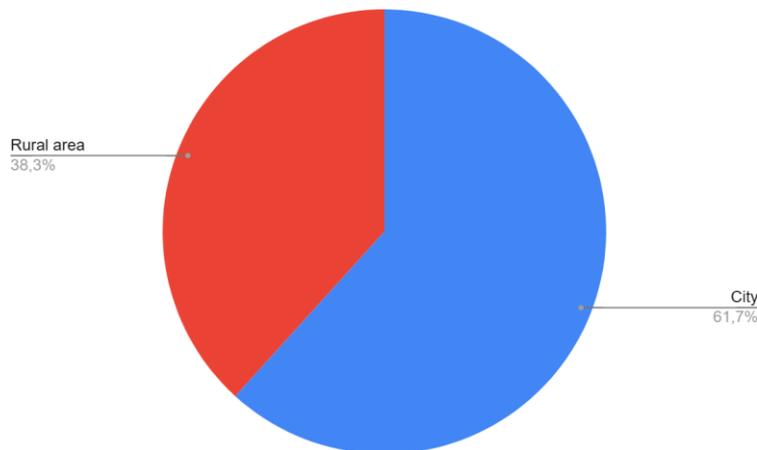


**Figure 2. Respondents' gender**



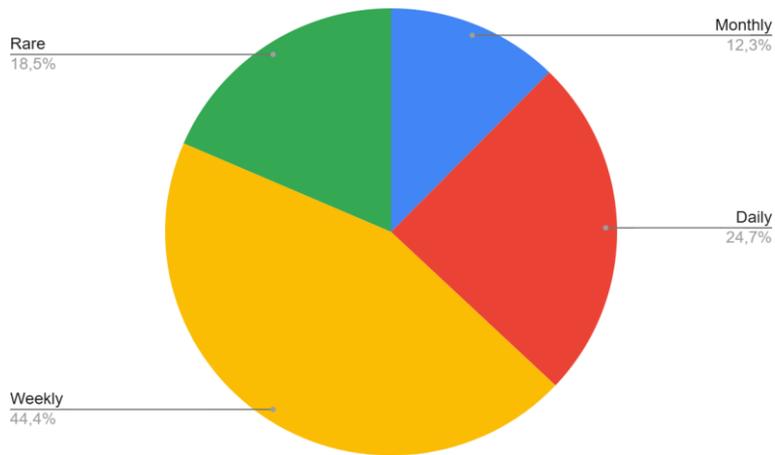
**Figure 3. Respondents' Occupation**

In analyzing the occupation of the respondents, it is evident that students make up the largest demographic group. They account for an impressive 51.9% of the total respondents. This significant percentage indicates a strong interest or involvement of students in the subject matter of the survey or study. On the other hand, self-employed individuals represent the smallest segment of respondents, contributing only 1.2% (Figure 3).



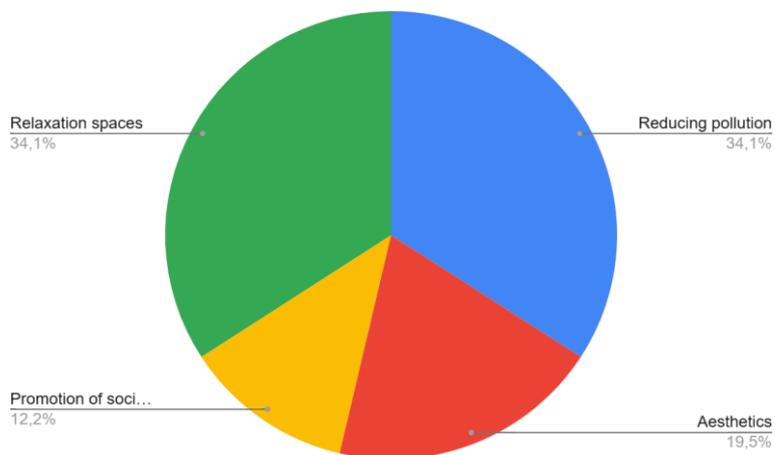
**Figure 4. Respondents' Background environment**

The majority of respondents, totaling 61.7%, came from urban areas. This indicates a significant representation from cities and towns, suggesting that the survey had a strong urban reach. The urban demographic likely influences the overall results due to the distinct lifestyle, access to services, and socioeconomic factors characteristic of urban environments. The remaining respondents were from rural areas.



**Figure 5. Respondents' answers regarding visiting the parks**

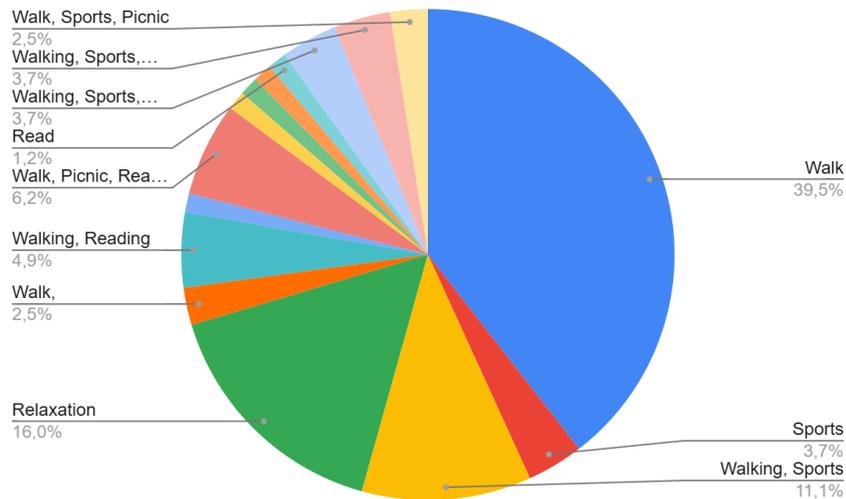
We asked participants how often they visit the parks. The results showed that most respondents choose to walk weekly, which underlines the importance of these green spaces in everyday life. A significant percentage of 24.7% of respondents say they visit the parks daily. This suggests that parks are central to these people's daily routines, whether for relaxation, exercise, or socializing. Most participants reported visiting the parks weekly. This frequency indicates regular and planned use of parks, showing that they play an important role in weekly recreational activities. 18.5% of respondents rarely go to parks. These individuals may have various reasons, such as lack of time, limited access to parks, or other leisure preferences. These data reflect the diversity in the use of parks and suggest that, although most frequent them relatively often, there is still a significant segment of the population that does not fully benefit from these spaces.



**Figure 6. Respondents' answers regarding the aspects of urban landscapes that have a positive impact on the community**

Relaxing environments and pollution reduction are seen as the most significant benefits of urban landscapes, followed by aesthetics and the promotion of social activities (Figure 6). 34.1% of respondents believe that urban landscapes contribute positively by providing spaces that are relaxing. This suggests that green spaces, parks, and other calming areas are seen as essential for mental well-being. Another 34.1% feel

that urban landscapes help reduce pollution, which likely refers to the role of trees, plants, and sustainable urban design in improving air quality and mitigating environmental issues. 19.2% of respondents emphasize the importance of the aesthetic value of urban landscapes. Beautiful and well-maintained urban spaces can enhance the visual appeal of a city and create a sense of pride among residents. 12.2% of the respondents believe that urban landscapes encourage social activities, likely through public parks, squares, and open spaces that provide opportunities for interaction, recreation, and community-building.



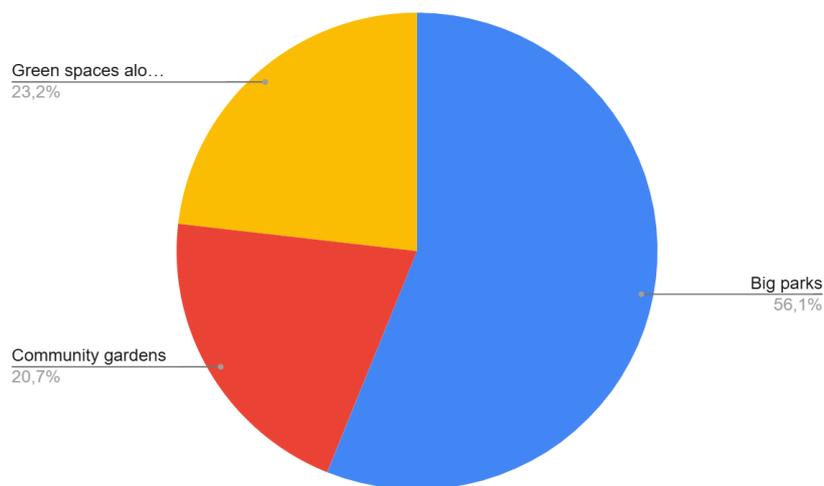
**Figure 7. Respondents' answers regarding the most frequent activities they do in the park**

According to the respondents' answers (Figure 7), walking is by far the most frequent activity, followed by relaxation, with other activities like sports, picnics, and reading also contributing to the park's role as a multifunctional community space.

The most common activity is walking, with nearly 40% of respondents stating that this is what they do most often in the park. This highlights the park as a popular space for physical activity and enjoying nature at a leisurely pace. Walking is an accessible, low-impact exercise that can be done by almost anyone, regardless of age or fitness level. Parks, with their pleasant and natural environments, provide the perfect setting for a walk, whether it's for exercise, fresh air, or simply to enjoy the surroundings. People may walk alone, with family, or with pets, making it a flexible and social activity. Additionally, walking in parks allows individuals to connect with nature, reduce stress, and improve mental health.

About 16% of respondents mention that they visit the park primarily for relaxation, indicating that parks are valued as places for rest and stress relief. This category includes a combination of walking with other physical activities such as jogging or exercising, emphasizing that many people use parks for both leisure walks and fitness activities. Parks offer a break from the hustle and bustle of urban life. With green spaces, calming sounds of nature, and open areas to sit or lie down, they serve as a sanctuary for people seeking to unwind. Relaxation in parks could mean sitting on a bench, lying on the grass, listening to music, meditating, or simply enjoying the scenery. The presence of plants, trees, and water features contributes to a tranquil atmosphere that promotes mental and emotional well-being.

Although a smaller percentage, respondents also engage in activities like having a picnic or reading, showing that parks serve as social and peaceful spaces for enjoying food or literature. Many parks offer dedicated spaces for more strenuous activities, such as jogging tracks, fitness equipment, or sports fields [4, 11]. People combine walking with these activities to stay fit. Some might walk as part of their warm-up for a more intense workout, while others might jog or cycle for exercise. The availability of open space also encourages group sports like soccer, basketball, or tennis [5, 9]. Parks are ideal places for family gatherings, meetups with friends, or even solo outings. The opportunity for a picnic, eating meals outdoors with loved ones, is a common and enjoyable activity. With picnic tables, grassy areas, and shaded spots, parks allow people to eat together, celebrate special occasions, or simply enjoy nature during mealtime [8]. And also reading in a park offers a peaceful escape, often with natural surroundings that provide the perfect backdrop for getting lost in a book [6, 12]. People might bring a blanket, find a quiet spot under a tree, and enjoy reading in a relaxed atmosphere. The calm environment of a park allows for greater focus and immersion in reading compared to a more distracting or noisy setting.



**Figure 8. Respondents' answers regarding which type of green space they preferred**

The respondents' preferences suggest a strong inclination toward larger, more expansive green spaces, with 56.1% choosing big parks as their preferred type of green space (Figure 8). This could indicate a desire for ample recreational areas where people can enjoy nature, engage in physical activities, or simply relax in a spacious environment. Big parks often offer diverse facilities like playgrounds, walking trails, and open areas, making them attractive to a broad range of people. On the other hand, 23.2% preferring green spaces along streets indicates a recognition of the importance of accessible green areas that integrate into urban life. These types of green spaces are often smaller and more immediate in their benefits, helping to improve air quality, reduce heat, and provide a quick, convenient escape from the urban environment, especially in densely populated areas. The 20.7% choosing community gardens highlights the appeal of more localized, interactive green spaces. Community gardens offer a sense of ownership and collaboration, where people can grow their own plants, vegetables, or flowers. They often foster a strong sense of community and social interaction, which may explain their moderate level of preference. Overall, the results show a balance between a desire for large, park-like spaces and a recognition of the value of smaller, more community-focused areas that integrate into everyday urban life.

The open-ended responses gathered from the respondents reveal a clear and thoughtful vision for enhancing urban green spaces. The suggestions focus on several key areas: improving comfort, aesthetics, accessibility, and overall maintenance.

- more shade: Many respondents emphasized the need for increased shade within green spaces, likely due to the desire for more comfortable areas during warmer months. Adding trees or other shaded structures like pergolas can enhance the usability of parks and make them more inviting throughout the day.
- capable designers and thoughtful use: There was a suggestion for hiring skilled landscape designers to maximize the utility and aesthetic value of green spaces. This indicates that the design and layout of these spaces are important to the respondents, as well as ensuring the green spaces cater to diverse needs—whether for relaxation, play, or socialization.
- planting more flowering plants and attention to trees: Several respondents proposed more planting of flowering plants and the better care of existing trees. Flowering plants would enhance the visual appeal of green spaces, while well-maintained trees are valued for their environmental benefits, providing shade, improving air quality, and supporting local biodiversity.
- proper maintenance and specialized care: There was a consistent call for more specialized care and maintenance of green spaces, particularly for trees, shrubs, and flowers. Respondents seem to prioritize sustainability, suggesting the importance of regular upkeep and perhaps even professional horticultural expertise to maintain the spaces effectively.
- increased amenities for socialization: Some respondents highlighted the need for more benches and gazebos, which would encourage people to stay and socialize in the parks. These additions would create spaces for people to connect, fostering social interactions and helping parks serve as communal hubs where people can relax and take a break from their technology-driven lives.
- waste management and cleanliness: Suggestions for placing more garbage bins near benches and throughout the green spaces reflect a desire for cleaner, more pleasant environments. This would make it easier for visitors to dispose of waste responsibly, contributing to a more enjoyable park experience.
- diverse and well-maintained greenery: The desire for green spaces with a variety of flowers, shrubs, and trees shows that respondents value a diverse and rich natural environment. The suggestion that parks should be numerous, well-maintained, and varied in their plantings aligns with the broader theme of creating spaces that are both beautiful and functional.

The responses underscore a broad desire to enhance urban green spaces in ways that promote comfort, aesthetics, socialization, and environmental sustainability. Suggestions like more shaded areas, better-designed spaces, and greater maintenance reflect a desire to create green spaces that are not only beautiful and functional but also capable of fostering community connection and well-being. By implementing these suggestions, cities could strengthen the social and environmental value of green spaces, making them vital and enjoyable parts of urban life.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we explored the profound impact of urban landscapes, particularly green spaces, on shaping collective identity in cities. Green spaces, whether expansive parks, street-side greenery, or community gardens, serve as more than just physical spaces—they act as social catalysts that foster interaction, cohesion, and a sense of

belonging among urban dwellers. Our analysis reveals that large parks, with their vast open areas and diverse recreational options, play a significant role in providing a shared space for people from various backgrounds to connect with nature and each other. These parks contribute to the collective identity by offering spaces for relaxation, social gatherings, and community events, ultimately promoting a sense of shared public ownership and pride.

At the same time, green spaces along streets and community gardens also play crucial roles in strengthening the social fabric of cities. Street greenery enhances the accessibility of nature, providing visual and physical relief from the urban environment and improving overall well-being. Community gardens, on the other hand, offer residents opportunities for active participation, collaboration, and cultivation of both plants and social ties. These smaller, localized spaces nurture a unique sense of belonging and collective responsibility, reinforcing identity through shared care and investment in the environment.

Ultimately, the social resonance of urban landscapes is deeply tied to how green spaces function not just as aesthetic or environmental elements, but as social arenas where urbanites create meaning, form connections, and negotiate collective values. The presence and design of green spaces are integral to fostering a cohesive urban identity, bridging gaps between diverse groups, and cultivating a shared sense of place and community.

In conclusion, the integration of varied green spaces within urban planning is essential not only for environmental sustainability but also for social inclusion, communal engagement, and the reinforcement of collective identity. As cities continue to grow and diversify, the role of green spaces in shaping the urban experience will remain central to creating resilient, thriving communities.

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