The experience as a method for evaluation and planning

Agenda

1. The experience perspective: background and definitions

2. Learn the method and the individual experiences to know

3. Apply, discuss, evaluate and develop the method

FACULTY OF LIFE SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Links in current method development

- 'Swedish connection'

  Mainly research by: A. M. Berggren-Bärring, Patrick Grahn & Ulrika Stigsdotter.

- Nature and Health report, Denmark (2008). Analysis of experiences in green spaces in 10 municipalities.

- Analytic tool in master-thesis and Ph.D.-work.

- Test applications for planning in:

  City of Gothenburg, Sweden

  Municipalities in Denmark (Copenhagen and Odense)

Experiences: 'body' og 'language'

- An experience is a 'state in the mind/body', created by sensations, feelings, moods, thoughts, interpretations and reflections.

- Environmental psychology: Humans experience the surroundings in certain 'categories'.

- Evolutionary speaking the categories have a function and therefore a value (e.g. shelter).

- The categories are both inherent in our 'body' and adapted through learning.

- Is it possible to make a useful and applicable 'language as a method for valuation of and planning in recreational green spaces?

Scientific background

- Interviews with user groups about recreational purposes for visiting green spaces
- Identification of typical recreational purposes for visiting green spaces
- Identification of different areas that are used for different experiences (surveys and photos)
- Statistical analysis and literature reviews conclude that recreational green spaces are experienced in 8 main categories.

Berggren-Bärring & Grahn (1995) og Grahn & Stigsdotter 2010

2010 Definitions

Experiences in recreational green-spaces		
Name	**Short definition / interpretation**	**Important characteristics**
Nature	Experience of the free growing, untouched, vital, an encounter with nature on its own conditions.	No visible man-made facilities or traces, no visible or audible urbanity. 'Nature areas'.
Richness in species	The experience of richness in plants, insects and/or animals.	Presence of different or special plants, flowers, insects and/or animals. Possibility to gather mushrooms, fruits etc.
Serene	Experience of an undisturbed peacefulness, to be on one's own, in safety and withdrawn in one with nature/surroundings.	No artificial noise (e.g. transport), few or no other humans, no garbage, no paths/transport corridors.
Space	The experience of an independent, inter-connected and special 'universe'.	No cross-cutting paths or disturbing features. At least two types: A 'hall of old beech trees' or 'an open horizon' at a lake/the sea.
Refuge	Experience of safe and provided surroundings and facilities for expression, play and interactions with other people.	Demarcated and uncluttered space/place by trees, bushes, fences. Play facilities, tables/benches, meet animals. 'Play ground'
Prospect	Experience of open and free surroundings for expression and activity.	Open and accessible space with grass/sports fields / gravel fields. Supporting facilities such as light, changing rooms. 'The common'
Social	Experience of organized and entertaining scene and get together with other people.	Provided and arranged facilities, services, activities, café, restaurants, benches, tables, barbeque and entertainment. 'A social scene'.
Cultural	Experience of cultivated, man-made surroundings formed by history and culture.	Historical features and buildings, Sculptures, statues, fountains, canals, flower stands, well-cut bushes, formal elements. 'Historical city park'.

Mapping of strength: 0: not present, 1: weak experience, 2: good experience, 3: a full experience

Experiences as a method for valuation and planning: Assumptions

- The **experience is more important** than the physical characteristics.

- The eight experiences cover – by and large – **all recreational purposes** behind visits in green spaces.

- If sought after experiences is present in a green space it will **increase the recreational value** and the **recreational use**.

Some known relations

- 'Nature-like' experiences ('nature', 'serene', 'rich in species') is positively related with our mental health (stress relief and restoration).

- Experiences of 'nature', 'serene' and 'refuge' are the most sought after 'everyday experiences'.

- Other experiences are sought after in weekends and other special occasions. Visitors are also willing to travel longer.

- Different user groups seek different experiences.

Experiences as a method for valuation and planning: midway impressions

- Difficult to quantify the number and strength of experiences (don't do this). The method is qualitative in nature.

- It takes time to learn the individual experiences to know.

- The identification/interpretation is relative / sensitive to place and time.

- Knowledge in advance is important (e.g. mapping the social experience)

- The eight experiences are not the only aspects of importance (e.g. aesthetical aspects).

- An experience perspective is one way of talking about the users' experiences (or to define green space services).

At least two scales

- Small scale: Mapping of experiences in a single area (e.g. a park or housing area)

- Large scale: Mapping of experiences in a metropolitan area or in a city district.

Thematic e-maps
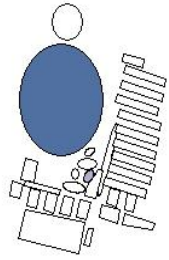
Serene
- 3 til 3 (0)
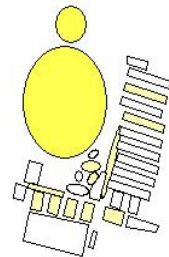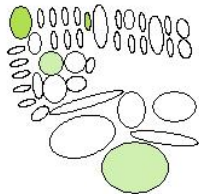- 2 til 2 (2)
- 1 til 2 (5)
- 0 til 1 (71)
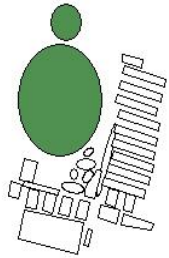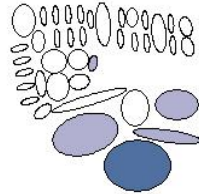
Nature
- 3 til 3 (0)
- 2 til 2 (4)
- 1 til 1 (3)
- 0 til 0 (71)
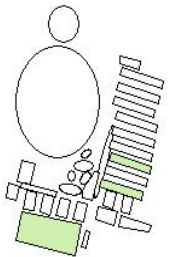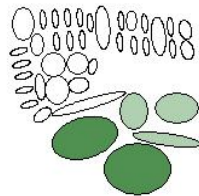
Rich in Species
- 3 til 3 (0)
- 2 til 2 (2)
- 1 til 2 (5)
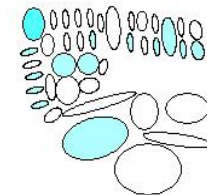- 0 til 1 (71)

Space
- 3 til 3 (0)
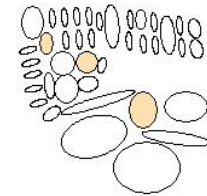- 2 til 2 (2)
- 1 til 2 (17)
- 0 til 1 (59)
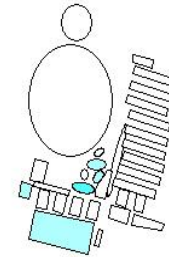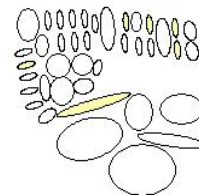
Refuge
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- 2 til 2 (2)
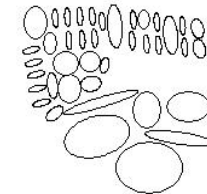- 1 til 1 (17)
- 0 til 0 (59)
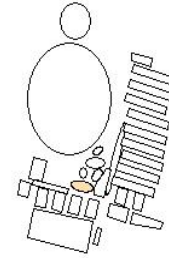
Prospect
- 3 til 3 (0)
- 2 til 2 (0)
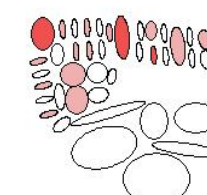- 1 til 1 (4)
- 0 til 0 (74)
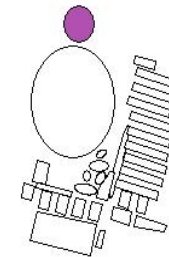
Cultural / History
- 3 til 3 (0)
- 2 til 2 (1)
- 1 til 1 (0)
- 0 til 0 (77)
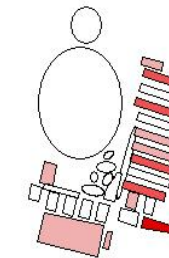
Social
- 3 til 3 (1)
- 2 til 2 (7)
- 1 til 2 (20)
- 0 til 1 (50)

Sct. Jørgens Park

Nature-like

- Nature 1
- Serene 1
- Rich in species 1

Culture-like

- Refuge 2
- Prospect 2
- Social 1

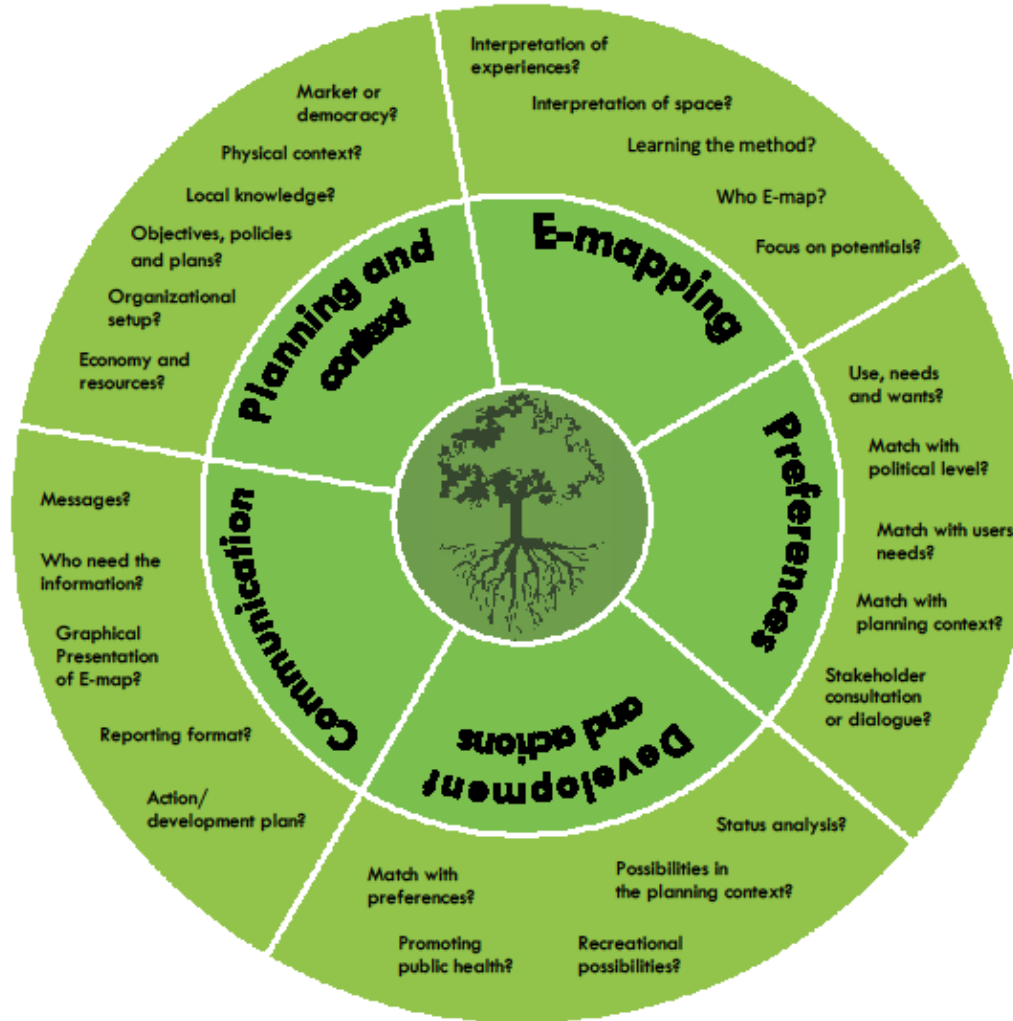| Space	Spaces and experiences in Sct. Jørgens Park							
	Experiences							
Space	Nature	Rich in species	Serene	Space	Refuge	Prospect	Social	Culture/history
1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-
2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
5	-	-	-	(1)	-	(2)	(1)	-
6	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
9	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
12	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Experiences: 1 weak   2 good   3 full   - not present

Application of the method

Planning pie
in five slices