



# The experience as a method for green space valuation and planning at small scales

---

**Presentation for MP4 partner meeting  
Emmen, June 2010**

Andrej Christian Lindholst

The Interreg IVB  
North Sea Region  
Programme



Investing in the future by working together  
for a sustainable and competitive region



**European Union**

European Regional Development Fund





# Experiences as a method in planning: Why?

---

## A unique layer of information about:

- Recreational experiences
- Recreational zones
- Recreational potentials

## Multiple purposes, including:

- Site analysis
- Identification of improvement potentials
- Valuation of recreational value and quality





# 2010 Definitions

## EXPERIENCES IN RECREATIONAL GREEN-SPACES

NAME	SHORT DEFINITION / INTERPRETATION	IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS/ACTIVITIES
<b>NATURE</b>	Sensation 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'.
<b>RICHNESS IN SPECIES</b>	Sensation 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.
<b>SERENE</b>	Sensation of an undisturbed peacefulness, to be on one's own, in safety and withdrawn in one with nature/surroundings.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.
<b>SPACE</b>	Sensation 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.
<b>REFUGE</b>	Sensation 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'
<b>PROSPECT</b>	Sensation 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'
<b>SOCIAL</b>	Sensation 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'.
<b>CULTURAL</b>	Sensation of cultivated, man-made surroundings formed by history and culture.	Historical features and buildings, Sculptures, statues, fountains, cafés, 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



# Scientific background: Experiences as ‘body’ and ‘language’

- An experience is a ‘**memorable personal sensation**’, a ‘state in the mind/body’: Created by sensations, perceptions, feelings, moods, thoughts, attitudes, preferences, 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. a shelter).
- The categories are partly **inherent in our ‘body’** and partly **adapted through learning**.





# Scientific background (Swedish connection)

---

- **Interviews** with user groups about recreational purposes for visiting green spaces: Identification of typical recreational purposes for visiting green spaces.
- **Surveys / Photos** (questionnaires to different user groups): Identification of different areas that are used for different experiences.
- **Statistical analysis** and **literature reviews** conclude that recreational green spaces are experienced in 8 main categories.
- The eight categories cover – by and large – **all recreational purposes** behind visits in green spaces.





# Scientific background:

## 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.





# Links in the method development

- ‘Swedish connection’: Since 1980s work have been done in different projects: Main references: A. M. Berggren-Bärring, Patrick Grahn, and Ulrika Stigsdotter.
- Nature and Health report, Denmark (2008). Analysis of experiences in green spaces in ten municipalities.
- Analytic tool in master-thesis and PhD-work (e.g. Jasper Schipperijn).
- MP4: Current method development through ‘test applications’ for valuation and planning in different cases.







# What experience?







# What experience? Playground in Local Park





# What experience? A bridge





## At least two scales to map:

- Small scale: Mapping of experiences in a single area (e.g. a park or housing area or sub-scale)
- Large scale: Mapping of experiences in a metropolitan area or in a city district.

## At least two methods for mapping:

- On-site mapping (by interpretation)
- Register-based mapping ('objective' measures)

*Does register-based mapping corresponds to the on-site experience more than on-site mapping?*







# Sct. Jørgens Park, Odense



## Dominant experiences

### *'Nature-like'*

- Nature 1
- Serene 1
- Rich in species 1

### *'Culture-like'*

- Refuge 2
- Prospect 2
- Social 1





## SPACES AND EXPERIENCES IN SKT. JØRGENS PARK

SPACE	EXPERIENCE							
	Nature	Rich in species	Serene	Space	Refuge	Prospect	Social	Culture
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

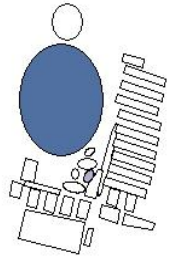
2 good

3 full

- not present

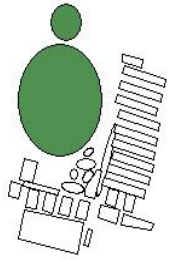
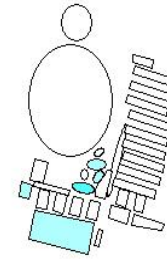
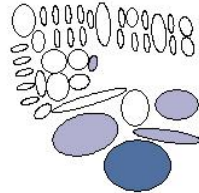


# Thematic E-map - Gothenburg



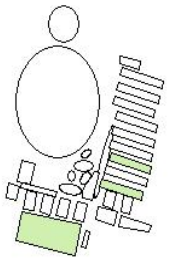
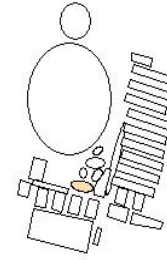
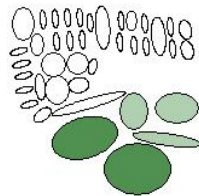
Serene

3 til 3	(0)
2 til 2	(2)
1 til 2	(5)
0 til 1	(71)



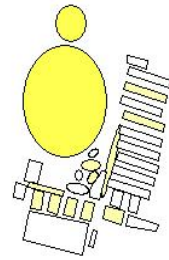
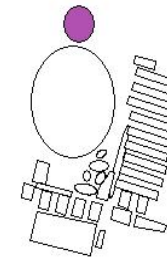
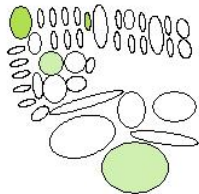
Nature

3 til 3	(0)
2 til 2	(4)
1 til 1	(3)
0 til 0	(71)



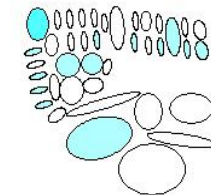
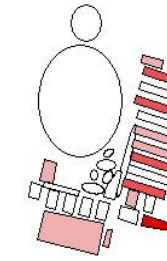
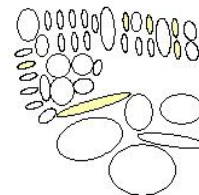
Rich in Species

3 til 3	(0)
2 til 2	(2)
1 til 2	(5)
0 til 1	(71)



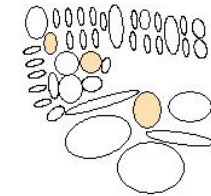
Space

3 til 3	(0)
2 til 2	(2)
1 til 2	(17)
0 til 1	(59)



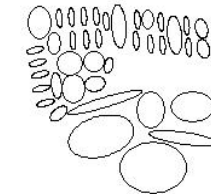
Refuge

3 til 3	(0)
2 til 2	(2)
1 til 1	(17)
0 til 0	(59)



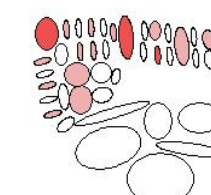
Prospect

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)



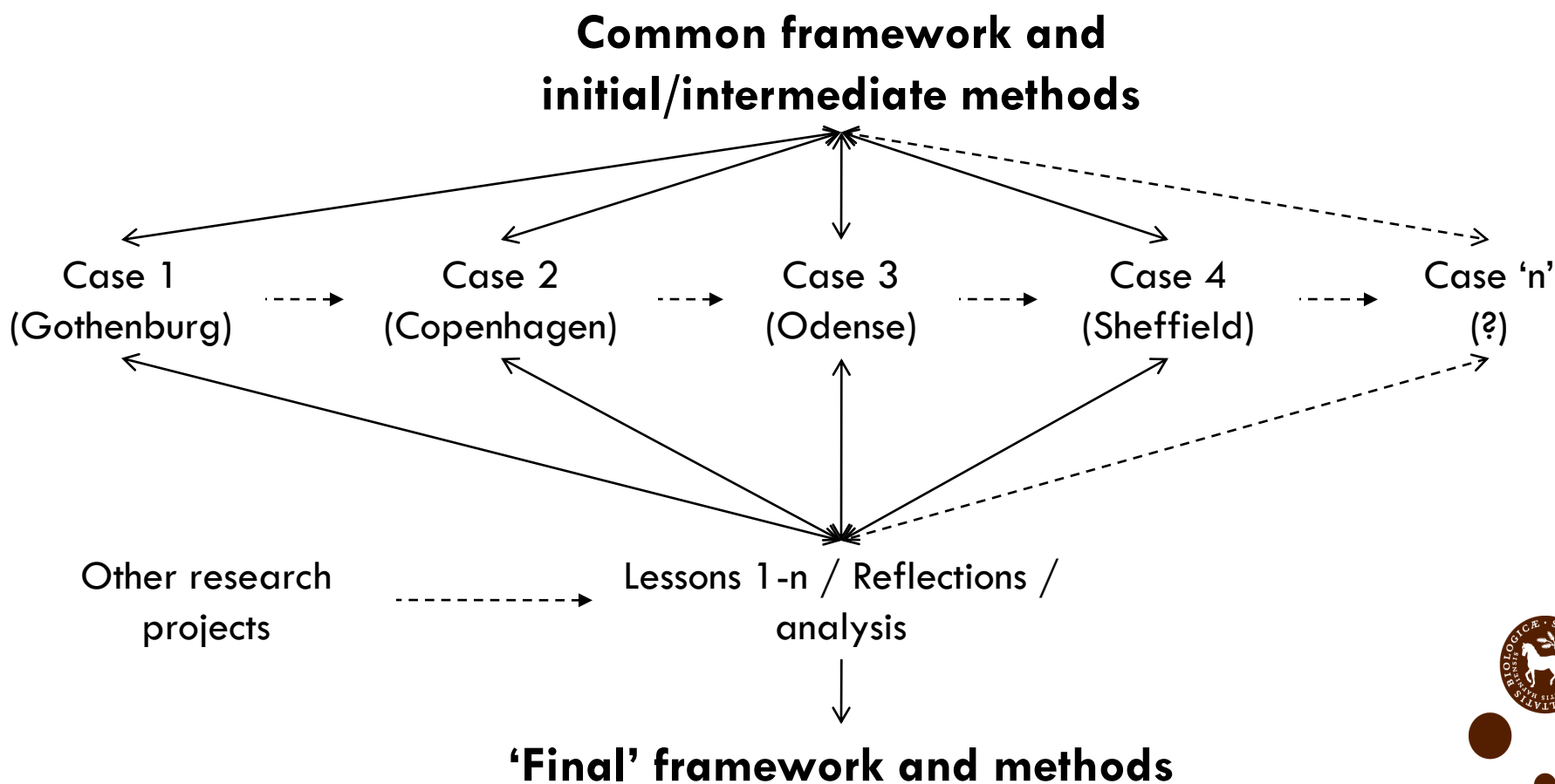
Social

3 til 3	(1)
2 til 2	(7)
1 til 2	(20)
0 til 1	(50)





# Organization of method development





# Method development: Organizing the case

## Workshop/event(s)

- **Introducing the E-perspective**  
What is the experiences?  
How can we identify them on the ground?  
Learning exercises / E-mapping
- **The local context**  
What is the objectives, needs and preferences?  
Planning methods and approaches?
- **Discussions and evaluations**  
Issues, impressions, usefulness?



## Workshop report(s)

- Background
- E-maps / report
- Participants' reflections
- Researchers reflections



## Lessons learnt

- Researchers' reflections and assessment of case/events

*Further cases are welcomed!*





# Sheffield workshop summary: Some pros and cons

- Focused
- Simple rationale
- Research based
- Analytical
- On-site analysis
- Quick snap-shot
- Good complement
- Aid to 'zone' the park
- Sustain dialogue
- Names do not fit experience
- Do not analyze the actual use
- What about different user preferences?
- Do not see what is positive/negative
- Limited analytical scope
- Broad categories
- Do not include all important areas
- Do not include all important aspects
- Valid snapshot if done only once?





# Intermediate method developments

## Initial method beliefs

- Easy to measure
- Piece of discrete information
- 2/3-step method:
  - 1) Identify 'rooms'
  - 2) Identify Experiences
  - 3) Calculate value

'E-mapping'

## Intermediate method beliefs

- Measurement issues
- Piece of embedded information
- Multiple step method:
  - 1) Analyze context
  - 2) E-map the green-space
  - 3) ...

'E-planning / valuation'





# The planning situation: Five interactive themes

- **Planning context** (e.g. policies, objectives, plans, resources, available site information).
- **Mapping of experiences** (e.g. as described above).
- **Uses, needs, and preferences** (e.g. integration of stakeholders in the analysis).
- **Action and development** (e.g. recommendations, action plans, scope for development).
- **Communication** (e.g. graphical representation, information for external or internal use).





# Method development: Midway hints

- Learning the method requires **guidance** from a skilled ‘e-mapper’.
- Mapping of experience is **not an exact** measurement method.
- Learning to E-map should take place in parks and open spaces with **clear and strong experiences**.
- **Consistent mapping** through time and space require guidance, repetition and dialogue among ‘e-mappers’.
- E-Mapping needs to be rooted in a **consensus** about interpretations and not personal ideas.
- Definition of experience zones should **be pragmatic**.
- An experience has only **recreational value** if it matches a visitor’s needs and/or preferences.
- The framework for the eight experiences is **an expert based language** not immediately suitable for direct communication with visitors.

