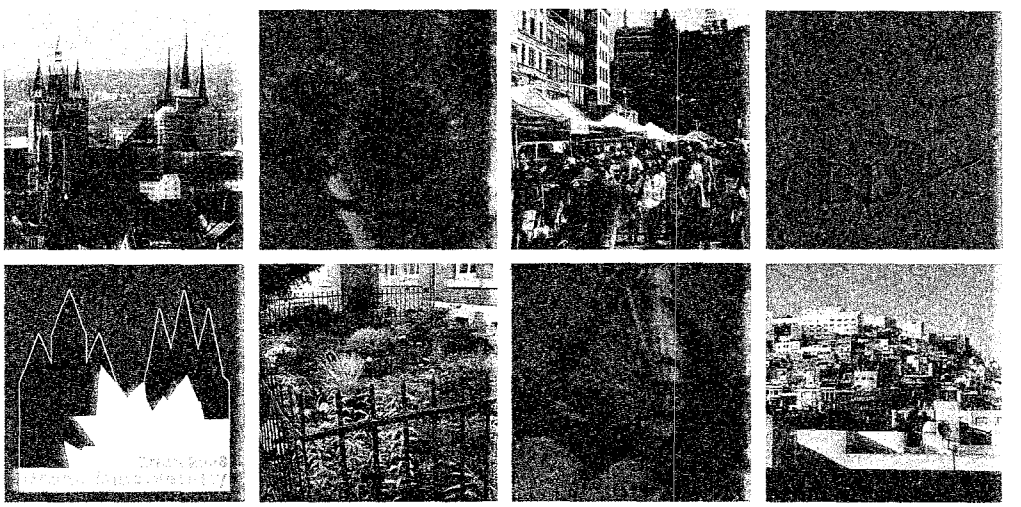
Norbert Müller, David Knight & Peter Werner (Eds.)

Book of Abstracts

Third Conference of the COmpetence NeTwork URban ECology

Urban Biodiversity & Design

Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity in towns and cities



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Topic 3 Social aspects of urban biodiversity

Urban green spaces: natural and accessible?

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The presence of semi-natural green spaces is seen as very important for inner-city residents, especially those living in areas threatened by social exclusion. Consequently, the UK Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard specifies that no-one should live further than 300m from the nearest green space. However, in many cites, semi-natural areas are absent from the places suffering from complex social problems. This paper investigates the provision of green space in areas of different levels of material deprivation and community disintegration in the Greater Manchester conurbation, UK. Green spaces were divided into three categories, based on the proportion of natural vegetation present, and then surrounded with 300m buffer using GIS. The number of addresses within the buffer was recorded in each green space category, together with their socioeconomic characteristics. Surprisingly, the results indicate no significant association between access to green space and material deprivation. Conversely, community disintegration has a strong negative correlation with presence of accessible green space (between -0.76 and -0.95 for the three green space categories, $p<0.01$). Therefore, while green spaces are evenly distributed in wealthy and poor areas, they are absent from the areas of social conflict where they could act as common, accessible ground for different communities.