

GENDER-DIFFERENCE PERCEPTION OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACES

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ABSTRACT

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, people have the right to live in a healthy, comfortable, and pleasant environment that is adapted to their needs. Not only urban planners, urban engineers, or developers, but the whole society are starting to deal with the issue of public space in cities more intensively. However, most of the discussions mainly concern the height and density of buildings within the city and do less about the resulting changes in urban space, which will affect the entire city and its parts. Spatial planning aims is to create such public spaces that are attractive and usable for all social groups, regardless of gender, age, social affiliation, culture, or religion, but also restrictions on mobility. Gender differences in perception are very often a neglected factor in the creation and shaping of public space, especially in small towns. In general, women are more sensitive to the quality of urban space. From previous surveys, it can be determined that women use public spaces more often than men, mainly due to the predominance of walking to work, accompanying children to school or extracurricular activities, to shopping, etc. The criteria for choosing public spaces for women range from the quality of the surface material of paved surfaces (allowing movement even in high heels) to the feeling of security in each place. The element of safety and the perceived personal feeling of security throughout the day is very important.

Keywords: public space, urbanism, city, gender, sustainability, urban planning

INTRODUCTION

The settlement consists of a group of houses and buildings, which is separated from other settlements by free undeveloped space. The term settlement is a designation of a cluster of buildings, houses, or homes that serve people for permanent living. From the urban point of view, the settlement has its social, spatial, and functional structure. There are two basic types of settlements in the Czech Republic - towns and villages, and the type is associated with both the size of the settlement and the nature of the development, as well as the way of life. The city as a settlement is the centre of concentration of the most efficient economic activities in the defined area. It is difficult to distinguish an urban settlement from a rural one. A city can be defined as a group of many houses in residential and public buildings, arranged in streets, whose inhabitants form a cultural and social unit. A city in the Czech Republic can be a municipality with at least 3,000 inhabitants if so, determined by the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies after the statement of the government.

Urban public spaces should respect urban, spatial, and historical contexts and create an environment for social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Public space is a

space of society and a space of social communication. The public spaces are classic public spaces: squares, agora, streets, parks, public buildings. These are parts of the earth's surface or artificially created space of buildings that are accessible to anyone and without restrictions [1, 2]. Public space and its use are significantly affected in the long run by the emerging digital era [3] and in the short term by the epidemiological situation and restrictions in the context of the occurrence of coronavirus disease SARS-CoV-2.

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, people have the right to live in a healthy, comfortable, and pleasant environment that is adapted to their needs. [4, 5]. The basic documentation is Agenda 2030, which defines 17 global goals of sustainable development (SDGs). In our case, this is specifically objective 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities [6, 7].

People also have the right to freely use the equipment of public spaces, in comfort and security from disturbing noise and pollution. People also have the right to freely use the equipment of public spaces, in comfort and security from disturbing noise and pollution. In history, public space has always been associated with masculinity. Middle-class women were not allowed to draw too much attention to each other, they were not allowed to behave and dress too defiantly, to stop, to linger unnecessarily, and to look around in the 19th century. In the 19th century, public space was used only by working-class women and prostitutes. Emancipation is closely related to the gradual development of trade and advertising. Urban space is very often not compact but is based on the idea of a divided city, which the city seen as separated into men's spaces and women's spaces.

From previous surveys, it can be determined that currently, women use public spaces more often than men, mainly due to the predominance of walking to work, accompanying children to school or extracurricular activities, shopping, etc. In general, women are more sensitive to the quality of urban space [8]. The quality of public space in terms of security is an important issue in urban planning and urban design. Perceptions of security are very closely linked to urban greenery [9].

METHODOLOGY AND OBSERVATION

The main goal of the presented contribution is the analysis of the gender-perception based on the results of emotional maps of the town of Chotěboř (Czech Republic). Primary data and emotional maps were obtained by bringing down panelists (citizens and visitors to the city) within the TAČR ETA programme - project TL02000559 Safe and secure cities for pedestrians and senior citizens. Emotional maps are cartographic outputs that allow you to display human feelings, thoughts or experiences in space, and the creation of emotional geodata [10]. Chotěboř could be described as a typical Czech town of smaller size, equipped with basic offices and institutions, modern, living a rich cultural and social life, sports and is also a city of greenery [11].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the answers of the respondents, two significant polygons of public spaces are marked, where people take their free time (Figure 1). The first area (Polygon 1) is the square of the town of Chotěboř (Figure 2). This space is used and preferred mainly by women (69 %). It should therefore be adapted to their needs. In general, the square is frequented by residents. These localities are generally positively perceived and widely used by citizens.

Figure 1: Places where people spend their free time



Figure 2: The square of the town of Chotěboř (Source: Google Street View, 2018)



The second polygon is used by both men (49 %) and women (51 %). It is a sports complex. In the area of the summer stadium, there is a football field, a tartan running oval, a field with an artificial surface, a skate park, and a workout field. There is also a winter stadium nearby. These localities are generally positively perceived and widely used by citizens. Most panelists like this place because they go play sports with family or friends

Figure 3: Places that people like but want to improve

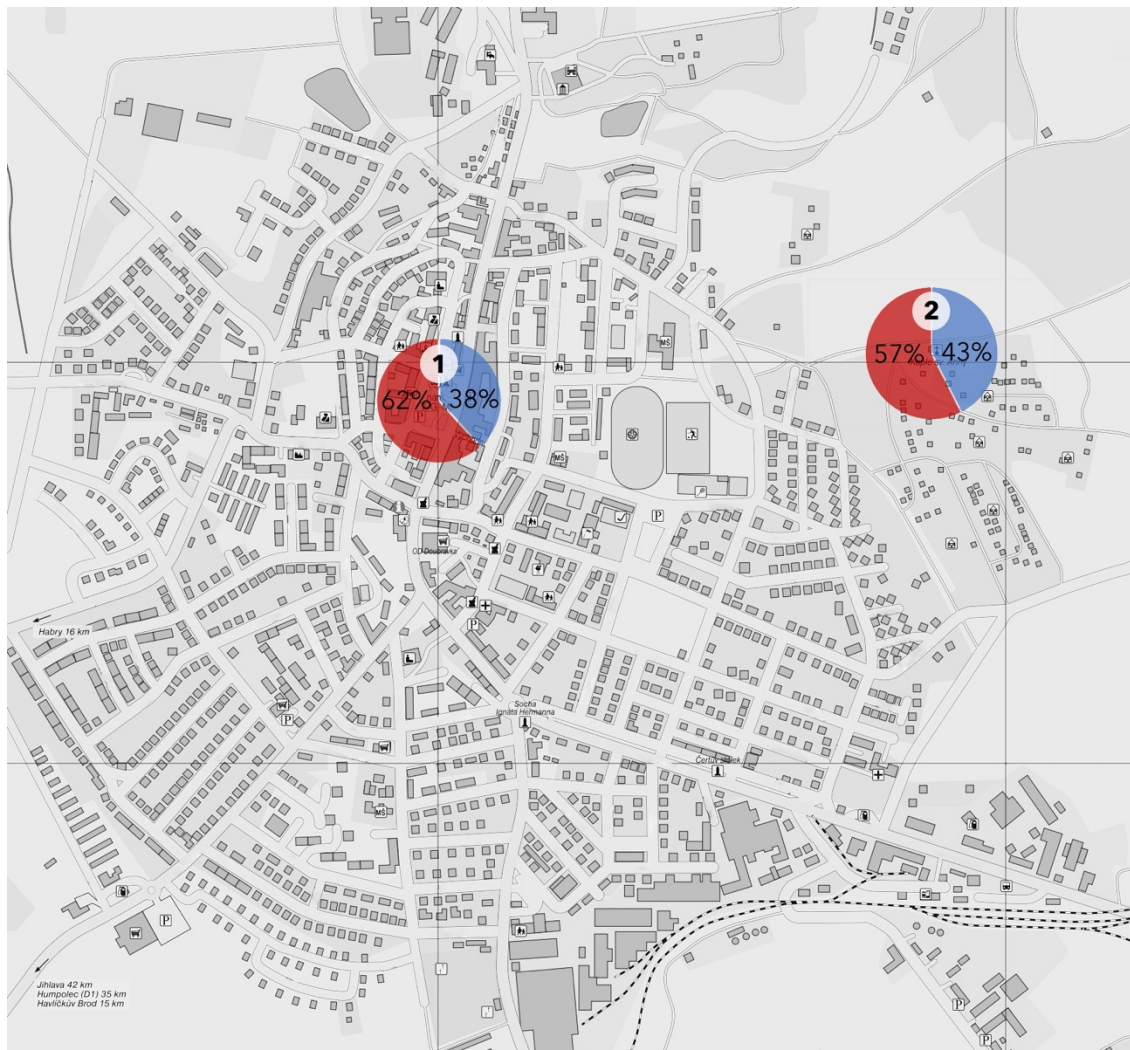


Figure 3 shows the two most common polygons that define areas that panelists like but would like to improve. In both cases, the proportion of women (62 % and 57 %) predominates in the perception of public space.

Within polygon 1, it is again a town square. The questionnaire survey shows that the square would need minor modifications to make it more user-friendly. But it is necessary to maintain the maximum possible amount of greenery. It is also advisable to keep bus stops to prevent further depopulation of the city center. However, it would be appropriate to reduce car traffic and add urban furniture, especially benches and rubbish bins. Younger panelists would also prefer to set up free Wi-Fi in the square area.

The second polygon that people like but would like to improve it is the natural area near Sv. Anny called Třešňovka (Figure 4). Orchards are a traditional part of the Czech and

European landscape. In addition to fruit production, they have other functions in our country. They prevent water and wind erosion, retain water and increase the aesthetic value of the landscape. In the restored orchard you will find several varieties of cherries that replace the original, dead trees. The old trees, which were still in good condition, have been preserved. Among the game elements could be finds a rope center, xylophone, and stilt roots. Everything is complemented by benches and a picnic table. Minor terrain models around the benches were made later. There are also insect features in the area, such as a beetle and an insect hotel. A blue meadow has been preserved in the lower part of the complex, as well as a toboggan run leading from the chapel.

Figure 4: St. Anne's Orchard called Třešňovka



CONCLUSION

The central objective of this study is to provide a gender analysis to the perception of the city's public space. Public space is primarily for people and should be a habitable space, or a purposefully used one. Public space is one indivisible whole, departmental parcelling of public space is inadmissible, e.g., current practice of uncoordinated traffic solutions, traffic signs, parking, greenery, pedestrian crossings, cycling routes and lanes, placement of advertisements, public transport stops, public lighting, sorted waste, benches, etc. In the past, it often happened that the quality of public spaces was at the expense of transport and technical infrastructure. In the city, for example, narrow sidewalks, barriers or unnecessarily wide lanes for cars were created. In general, urban public space should be accessible, attractive, and usable for all social groups, regardless of age, social affiliation, culture, or religion, but also restrictions on mobility. Accessibility, mobility, health and hygiene are things that concern not only women but also other overlooked groups. A city designed for women is a city that is more accessible and open to all. The quality of public spaces is very strongly correlated with the quality and satisfaction of people's lives. Quality public spaces are of great importance to the inhabitants of towns and villages. In addition to the possibility of rest and leisure, they are of social importance for their users. Its inhabitants are easily

identified with a city or municipality in which there are enough quality public spaces. People like to stay and stay in such a city.

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