



# PERCEPTIONS OF SPACE IN COMMUNITY-ORGANIZED PUBLIC PLACES

**MASTER THESIS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Publicly accessible community places have materialized by very different processes than typical public places. They represent a bottom-up answer to shaping of cities by neoliberal capitalism. Community places allow people to change them accordingly to their needs and preferences. Therefore, they tend to be used for functions not typically included in public space like learning and production. These new activities and behaviors foster different perceptions and feelings about places. This text first looks at the development of urban design considerations, and concludes that they usually don't include subjective perceptions. Then, two similar case studies in different contexts are researched and analyzed using the place (physical environment), person (perceptions and feelings), and process (creation and organization) frameworks. By investigating the links and connections between the three elements it is hoped that this research will provide practical recommendations for urban designers and knowledge for community activists.

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# INTRODUCTION

Public places are important assets for our cities. They provide opportunities for people to come together and engage with the community. They are social equalizers, points of contact with diversity and generators of social space. Public places are formally created and modified by urban designers, planners and architects. These fields are continuously expanding and now include numerous dimensions of public life, social activities and physical space. But people are not just their behaviors and relationships. They are complex individuals with vivid internal worlds. Cities can be seen as systems of overlapping subjective experiences. The emphasis on visual and spatial planning in place-making disciplines does not typically include considerations about the feelings people have about places. To truly design for people means not only to shape the appearances and activities of public spaces. This kind of holistic design should also consider a multitude of lifeworlds in the city and include people's memories, attachments, familiarities and mutual dependencies. In the last decades, many studies have expanded the understanding of cities in social and psychological dimensions. In order to produce successful public places, it is important to learn from this body of knowledge and translate it into design recommendations. A new layer of considerations about urban spaces must be incorporated in the fields of place-making.

This research studies publicly-accessible community-organized DIY urban gardens. Focus of research are the subjective perceptions and feelings about space, which are analyzed by drawing on elements of environmental psychology and sociology in order to figure out how people feel in the environment and why. The paper aims to develop recommendations for how to manipulate physical environment to foster positive emotions about places.

# CHAPTER 1

## THEORETICAL APPROACH

The following chapter analyzes urban design paradigms since the nineteenth century. Each paradigm builds on the last, and expands the spectrum of considerations in urban design, spanning from visual and spatial, to humanistic and sociological aspects. Ideas did not always develop through linear evolutionary process. Instead, some appear to be cyclical in nature. This literature review organizes the concepts based on their similarities instead of their age.

### 1.1 CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

#### 1.1.1 PHYSICAL SPACE: FROM VISUAL TO SPATIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Physical considerations of space are most firmly associated with urban design. They existed as long as the urbanity itself and they alternate between the dominance of visual and spatial considerations. Visual considerations of space are defined here as those, which derive from perspective experience in three dimensional space. Spatial consideration include more abstract principles of planning, which are historically communicated by a two dimensional plan. Camillo Sitte was the first to use scientific analysis to understand the visual feel, shape and look of the city on the street level (Baker, 2011). Later on in modernism, the first person experience was largely forgotten and focus shifted to spatial planning with the emphasis on traffic, geometric purity and efficiency.

Visual considerations about space are more immediate and obvious than spatial, because they are more rudimentary. Simply sensing the space (about eighty percent of all sensory input is visual), requires less effort than understanding how it was made or how it works. In fact, sensing is done automatically, often subconsciously, and is an essential part of human experience. It is possible to imagine, that before the emergence of the

civilization, humans rarely moved past their own immersive visual perspectives. But signs of planned spatial thinking already appeared hand in hand with the first cities (e.g. Uruk). Since then, the visual and spatial approaches coexist.

Division of those two terms here is made for the purpose of clarity of concepts. While spatiality is inherently three dimensional, it is often useful to reduce it to a two dimensional plan in order to simplify when organizing space. This makes it more abstract and necessarily changes the scale it deals with. While visual considerations might be about ornaments, styles or experiences in space, spatial thinking tends to focus more on functionality, principles and geometry. It includes hidden dimensions, which are not immediately obvious and only accessible after some cognitive work.

It seems that the dominance of one approach over the other has been alternating through the history. After orthogonally planned Ancient Egyptian cities, most Ancient Greek cities, at least until the Hellenistic era, were irregular in plan. Of importance were visual considerations such as views and proportions. Ancient Romans were great spatial thinkers. They managed to achieve high levels of geometric purity in most of their cities, with the famous exception of their capital. Such regularized plans disappeared in the Middle Ages, when there was a shift towards three dimensional experiences in extemporarily grown cities. In renaissance, the decidedly geometric schematic diagrams, representing ideal cities, came back to the foreground. This continued through Baroque on a larger scale, when cities were expanded according to grand schemes and when urban fabric became serialized.

The industrial revolution brought amazing technological and scientific advancements, but at the same time created miserable living conditions for most city dwellers. By the end of the nineteenth century, large-scale engineering projects focusing on sanitation and hygiene tried to alleviate problems in cities. Engineers were planning sewage and water systems and vaulting or regulating rivers. The fortifications in most European cities were removed, and cities, perhaps most notably Vienna, took on the tasks of building new infrastructure and developing housing on the new available space around the inner city (Schorske, 1981). Many oversized monumental public places and buildings were created in this period of early modernity and new anxiety disorders like agoraphobia were identified (Holmes, 2006).

Vehicular traffic at the turn of the century (even though still primarily pulled by horses) became abundant. Squares which were for centuries used for walking, now started to give way to carriages, omnibuses and electric tramways (Schorske, 1981). Urban planning was concerned with introducing the railway station to the inner city and organizing railway infrastructure on the periphery. Under these new conditions, traffic engineering became a profession. A new type of public space emerged: a traffic plaza (Collins et al., 2006).

New construction possibilities (e.g. The Eiffel Tower) and the invention of flight quite literally lifted the perspective to plan view (Barthes, 1979). City planning departments were dominated by engineers, who overlooked the three dimensional experiential perception on the ground, while creating huge city-wide masterplans from the god-like vantage point. The problem with the urban masterplan is, that it is a document which represents spatial features of the city, but is itself a graphical work. As such, it is tempting to consider it as an independent work of art. This two dimensional graphic may be artistically drafted and pleasant to look at, but when it gets built, it often becomes virtually invisible on the street level. Because the plan is the main document of architectural communication, there are many examples of the plan view bias (e.g. Brasilia).

Otto Wagner was a Viennese architect and planner who represented the spirit of the city-building of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. He gradually became a decidedly modern architect, whose ideas were dominated by transportation, efficiency, economy and the general facilitation of business needs (Schorske, 1981). His intention was to connect Vienna - a widespread metropolis into a working unit, deal away with historicism and nostalgia, and create an environment suitable for a rational, civilized, modern man (Schorske, 1981).

Camillo Sitte, another Viennese architect and planner from the same time formulated the opposite view on city-building. He argued against dull, regimented, monotonous and mechanical city and instead defended the expansion of historicism from buildings to public spaces to redeem man from modern technology and utility. He rejected the purely rational grid plans and called for more archaic places (Collins, 1986). He argued that artistic considerations have been forgotten in city-building and that they had to be reincorporated in the planning practice. Developing modern cities should not be governed by technicians or officials in municipal offices. Instead, it should

be a creative task. Sitte assumed the role of a “lawyer for artistic side” (Schorske, 1981).

The Ringstraße was the largest development area in Vienna at the time, and the first architectural competition in Austria (Schorske, 1981). Otto Wagner planned the most monumental parts, which included several magnificent public edifices. He connected the buildings with broad, straight boulevards and arranged them around extensive empty space. Sitte in his book used the Ringstraße as the principal negative example of what he considers a sterile, soulless, rational planning. Sitte criticized the automated application of a lifeless city plan. Even though he ultimately failed to meaningfully influence the Viennese Ringstraße development, he triggered an alternating switch in the history of urban considerations (Collins, 1986).

“What counts is the position of a spectator and the position in which he is looking. Only that which a spectator can hold in view, what can be seen, is of artistic importance.” (Sitte, 1889, p. 84)

Sitte brought the perspective from the schematic, often regional and geometrical masterplans back down to three dimensional urban space. His book “City Planning According to Artistic Principles” was the first significant methodical documentation on what is today urbanism (Baker, 2011). Sitte argued that streets and squares should fit the people (Collins, 1986). By talking about street life, human scale and personalization of urban experience, he made the first steps towards humanistic view on urban space. However, his recommendations are almost all visual. Sitte (1889) first analyzed many historical, mostly medieval public spaces, then looked at the present city-building practices and finally presented a set of recommendations. He maintained that key elements of successful cities are public squares. He observed that new squares in his time were grossly oversized. People feel lost in vast spaces. Places should be smaller and enclosed by buildings. Views out of the squares should be restricted (winding streets, irregular angles). He suggests that the centers of squares should be kept free of buildings and monuments, which have a more powerful impact if they are moved to the side. Sitte embraced the irregularities of the city fabric and argued against the functionalist grid plan. He praised the details and ornaments and spent a lot of time on the topic of volumetric compositions of buildings.

This is what has been traditionally conceived as urban design - to look at the urban place and to think how to make it more pleasant to the eye and mind.

The profession first developed from visual artistic principles (Jarvis, 1980). It started as an aesthetic-expressive process, what Lynch (1981) called “a playful and imaginative creation of possible form.” This approach requires the designers to play with their subjective worlds and employ their aesthetic and graphic skills to express their concepts (Mandanipour, 1997).

Decades after Camillo Sitte turned the attention back to the human level experience, modernism returned back to the masterplan. Examples of masterplans, too grand a scale to be able to focus on a human perception in space, started to develop in the 1920's (Barnett, 2016). Le Corbusier's Ville Contemporaine from 1922 was a planned new city for three million residents. The city would be composed of a big group of sixty-story skyscrapers, spaced far apart. The plan glorified the use of automobile, and separated pedestrian and motorized traffic (Barnett, 2016). Robert Hughes (1991) spoke of Le Corbusier's city planning in his documentary series 'The Shock of the New':

“...the car would abolish the human street, and possibly the human foot. Some people would have airplanes too. The one thing no one would have is a place to bump into each other, walk the dog, strut, one of the hundred random things that people do ... being random was loathed by Le Corbusier ... its inhabitants surrender their freedom of movement to the omnipresent architect.” (Hughes, 1991)

References to the Gesamtkunstwerk, a “total work of art,” are abound in discussions of modern art and culture. Many architects at the time, in addition to designing the building itself, also designed the details such as fabrics, furniture, lights, railings, and even typefaces and stationary. Architect became a total author of space, and users were merely allowed to use it (Barnett, 2016). Le Corbusier saw a city as a geometrical problem and famously claimed that “the lack of order found everywhere in cities is offensive” (quoted by Hughes, 1991). Le Corbusier does not seem to be acknowledging any other type of order than pure geometrical one (Jarvis, 1980).

Modernism failed to recognize individual differences in people. Its focus on efficiency led to the superiority of the ergonomic considerations. Human was considered a uniform creature, and the existence of a “typical” human was assumed (Barnett, 2016). Architects and planners at the time put little attention to who is using the space. Instead, apartments, buildings and ultimately cities were considered as machines for living (Gibbons, 2015). This mechanical, robotic approach overlooked the social richness of cities.

### 1.1.2 HUMANISTIC AND SOCIAL SPACE: LIFE ON THE STREETS

Studying and creating public space did not significantly expand past physical considerations until the middle of the twentieth century. A multitude of new fields in science started to develop at the time, and scholars started to focus on human behavior, the multi-sensory perceptions and invisible dimensions of urban space (Schurch, 1999). This resulted in a new set of recommendations about how public space should be. Instead of shape and form, activities and experiences assumed the central role. Urban places should be made comfortable for human life, legible and pleasurable, with soft edges, right seating and liminal spaces where social triangulation can happen. This new humanistic understanding is an important step towards the development of social considerations of urban space.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, design of public spaces was still mostly treated in physical isolation. It was sometimes filled with artistic visual qualities, and sometimes with the utilitarian, functionalist qualities. Somehow diminishing the field of architecture, numerous authors (Lynch, 1981; Kreditor, 1990; Rowley, 1994) used the term “big architecture” when describing the purely physical considerations in urban design. Authors argue, that this is a scaled up version of thinking about individual buildings. Scale changes, but methods and principles remain the same.

“To approach the city ... or neighborhood as if it were a larger architectural problem ... is to substitute art for life.” (Jacobs, 1964, p. 386)

City-building at the time relied on outdated rules of architectural design (Rowley, 1994) and a ‘total work of art’ approach was a mainstream trend in architecture. This left little space for user’s individual expressions and preferences. One of the initial points of departures was the distinction that urban design, unlike architecture, contains multiple properties, owners, interests and motivations (Sternberg, 2000). Urbanists started to recognize the need for a more democratic and participatory method of creating urban space. Instead of assuming the role of artists or authors, they started to see themselves more as editors, who considered many dimensions and various input about spatial preferences and made decisions about how everything can fit together in a coherent manner (Childs, 2010). Editor must know the user and have a better understanding about the sociological, economical, and political dimensions. They should be familiar with what works in a city and what is needed in a city in order to decide on the plans.

The recommendations put forward by Camillo Sitte have again found favor in the townscape movement of the 1950's (Gibbert, 1953). This movement shifted from a purely pictorial aesthetics to introducing the first humanistic concepts like pedestrianization. Humanistic nature of the street was studied, but still within the architectural origins (Collins, 1986). In the 1960's, authors like Kevin Lynch, Gordon Cullen and Jan Gehl started to develop a new theory of urban planning and design (Childs, 2010). In this new paradigm, instead of shape and form, human activities and content in cities became central. Mandanipour (1997) writes that urban design does not only create appearances, but places which can be used for different purposes. While the artistic principles still remain relevant, they have been re-contextualized as one dimension of a wider spectrum of attention in urban design.

There are two main reasons for the expansion of the traditional considerations about cities at that time. Firstly, this was a period of great scientific advancements. From rocket science to social science, new disciplines, which tried to understand the world around us, were developing rapidly. These include phenomenology, language philosophy, linguistic and ethnomethodology (Jarvis, 1980). Urban design could start to incorporate ethnographic, behavioristic and sociological dimensions. Secondly, the cracks started to show in the modernist urban planning. Geometric purity and architectural design as main objectives in creating urban spaces were criticized by those, who started to recognize and embrace the disorderliness and social complexity of cities. Cities became conceptualized as complex, jumbled, messy and incoherent assemblies of rough juxtapositions (Jarvis, 1980). Values of urban design shifted from creating the geometric purity to embracing the haphazardly mixed urban landscapes and increasing the coherence of these elements (Sternberg, 2000). Terms like enclosure and scale were replaced by more advanced observations about the physical form (Cullen, 1961) like legibility, vitality, permeability, imageability and genius loci.

Instead of city being seen as buildings and places between them, public life and human experiences started to emerge as the focus of research. Traditional urban masterplans had an objective quixotic point of view where no observer is present. Visual design introduced the observer in three-dimensional perspective on the street level. Now users of space also started to move through the city in research observations. Gordon Cullen (1961) started differentiating between aesthetic experience and everyday life in cities (Jarvis, 1980). He introduced the term 'serial vision', which describes

how space is perceived in a series of sequences and jolts as one moves through the urban landscape. If Sitte was considering space in three dimensions, Cullen took this a step further by adding the fourth, temporal dimension. Cullen's users of space also gained sensations and feelings. Although still referring to the visual composition, Cullen (1961) writes about how people love intricacy, anticipation, incidents and mystery in urban forms.

As the construct of a 'user of space' evolved, so did the construct of a city itself. Instead of it being seen as the same thing at all times, it now gained many faces, depending on the time of the day, weather and season (Jarvis, 1980). As a result, new urban design recommendations included quality of the street lights and providing rain shelters.

A large split in urbanism became prominent in New York City in the beginning of the 1960's. The city went a through period of massive urban renewal and was becoming more adapted for the cars. Huge new highways and bridges connected Manhattan to the other boroughs. These massive planning projects were led by Robert Moses, an urban planner, who famously proclaimed that:

"Cities are created by and for traffic. A city without traffic is a ghost town" (*New York: A Documentary Film, 1999*).

In 1961, Moses set in motion an immense federal initiative - an elevated eight-lane highway which would raze directly through the heart of lower Manhattan, destroy thousands of historic structures and displace almost ten thousand residents (*New York: A Documentary Film, 1999*). Greenwich Village was discarded as a slum and set for urban renewal which would include demolishing additional 14 street blocks.

But this kind of urban planning did not have a consensus. Local community activists led by Jane Jacobs, a sociologist who one year before Moses' audacious plans released her seminal book 'Death and Life of Great American Cities' (1961), were opposing the demolitions and discarding of Greenwich Village as a slum. Jacobs criticized modernism and claimed that its huge scale abstract ideas and masterplans were irrelevant for how the cities really work. She embraced the city as a messy organism - it had to be messy or it would not work. She understood that urban economies are different, and claimed that Greenwich Village harbored complex and high quality social and economic connections. This moved the discussions in urbanism from big disruptive plans to individuals, small shops, streets,

crosswalks, networks of people, rich and poor living closer together in an integrated community. Jacobs defended small scale buildings, and people walking in the city. She noticed that public places which have a constant succession of 'eyes on the street' are the safest. When people watch others, and are themselves being watched, the whole public life reinforces itself in what Jacobs (1961) calls a street ballet - an intricate spontaneous performance, where everyone is a spectator and an actor at the same time. She stresses the importance of public figures, someone like a shop owner who one recognizes and greets every day. This increases social familiarity and attachment. Jacobs provided a counter-vision for what the city is. It is all about the intricate connections between people and their communities and not about traffic flows and efficient geometrical masterplans. Urban renewal was shattering and breaking communities, and in fact barely even acknowledged that they existed.

The modernist approach was later theorized as environmental determinism (changing society through space), which is now widely discarded (Madanipour, 1997). Contemporary discourse in urban design is about community design, which is the opposite of total design. The idea is to change the space in a way that it serves as the framework for community public life and social change (Madanipour, 1997). Jane Jacobs and the Greenwich Village activists started this shift in paradigm by successfully opposing the Lower Manhattan Expressway - an event that turned the tide from spatial plan view back to the experiences at street level.

In 1971 Jan Gehl expanded the understanding of social dimension of cities in his seminal book 'Life Between Buildings'. As evident in the title of the book, the object of research is the public life instead of the physical environment itself. Gehl's approach to improving cities is based on the careful observations and documentation of human behavior, and on analyzing what factors influence it. Gehl argues that planners were ignorant about public life, which was at best overlooked and often neglected or completely phased out in favor of geometric purity. Modernist urbanism focused on traffic circulation and separation, high-rise buildings with good solar exposure, fresh air and vast areas between the buildings, which they thought would host many recreational activities and rich social life. Gehl claims, that they did not understand or consider actual human behavior and missed the intricate social richness of public space. Modernist masterplans with large, pure and

orderly gestures, repressed many random behaviors that people enjoyed. For Gehl, looking at these behaviors is more important and interesting.

Three reasons for why people are located in public space, are necessary activities, optional activities and resultant social activities (Gehl, 1971). Necessary activities like waiting for a bus are not dependent on the quality of space, because they have to happen anyway. When outdoor areas are of poor quality, only these activities will occur. In higher quality urban places people in addition to doing what they need to, also sit, play, eat and linger (Gehl, 1971). These behaviors are described as optional activities and only happen where the physical conditions support them. According to Gehl (1971), these conditions include good microclimatic conditions, great sitting, standing and walking places, low noise levels, active facades, 'talkscapes' and human scale. Gehl (1971) describes how the emergence of life between buildings happens like as a snowball effect. People come where people are. For good public life, critical mass has to come and stay in the place and then the process begins to self-reinforce. Wherever people stand, walk or sit, if there is something happening, or something to look at, some will stop or turn towards it. They become part of this attraction and reinforce it.

"Something happens, because something happens" (Gehl, 1971, p. 74).

The text refers to the similar concept of 'social triangulation' by William H. Whyte (1981), who was investigating public plazas in New York City and had a profound impact on the municipal legislation. Whyte noticed that common activities and experiences as well as unexpected or unusual events serve to initiate and generate conversations. Social triangulation can happen between street performers and audience. Spectators A and B exchange smiles or begin to talk while enjoying the skills and talents of the street entertainer, C. A triangle is formed, and a tiny but enjoyable process has begun to develop (Whyte, 1981).

Human activities in public space reinforce themselves, but how to get the snowball rolling in the first place? There are two ways of increasing the number of people in public places. Firstly, more people have to be invited or have a reason to come to the place. Secondly, they have to stay longer. Gehl's arguments are mathematical. If movement is reduced from fifty kilometers per hour to five kilometers per hour, ten times more people will be present on the streets (Gehl, 1971). From this observation, a contemporary urban planning recommendation to locate car parking a few minutes walking away from the residences has been developed. In this kind of setting people



**Figure 1 | Twelve key quality criteria (Source: Gehl, 2010)**

walk a part of their car journey, this way contribute to public life and develop and maintain social connections with their neighbors. Gehl recognizes the importance of ‘knowing’ people in public places (related to the Jane Jacobs’ (1961) notion of ‘public figures’).

The relationship between patterns of space use, specifically outdoor activities, and the spatial properties of the physical environment is the main

research focus of Jan Gehl. Architects, urban planners and designers can influence the possibilities for seeing, meeting and hearing other people by creating appropriate places which serve as the framework for these activities. Gehl recognizes that more than urban design is needed for the development of lively public places. Functions of public space have expanded. Instead of transit and consumption, it also started to be planned for leisure, recreation and socializing activities.

Jan Gehl emphasizes that humans are the same *Homo Sapiens* species everywhere in the world, only the economic, cultural and climatic circumstances differ (*Urbanized, 2011*). It is useful to discern some basic human characteristics such as the area human eyes can command, walking distances and conversational noise levels. Gehl's approach is somewhat statistical - counting and mapping how people behave - where they sit, walk and stand. Urban sociology focuses on the differences amongst *Homo Sapiens*' individuals and recognizes different ages, genders and various ethnic, economic and religious groups. When designing for communities, it is important to understand these individual circumstances and preferences. Universal products are in general not the best at one specific task. From this vantage point, public places created for 'general public' can begin to be questioned.

Gehl's seminal book *Life between buildings* received relatively little attention when it was first released in 1971 (Gehl Architects, 2015), but Gehl was persistent in using Copenhagen as a laboratory with his students. The city adopted Gehl's studies to influence policies and introduce public space and pedestrian improvements. Gradually until today, the humanistic and social view of the city became well integrated into the mainstream urban design.

### **1.1.3 STATE OF THE URBAN DESIGN PROFESSION TODAY**

The term Urban design first appeared in the 1950s in the USA. Josep Lluís Sert i López organized a series of 'urban design' lectures at Harvard University starting in 1956 (Childs, 2010). American Institute of Architecture established a Committee on Urban Design in 1957 and the first urban design study program was launched at Harvard in 1960 (Rowley, 1994). While the practice was rooted in the modernist functionalist movement and followed the Team 10 design philosophy (Childs, 2010), it continued to be redefined. In essence, urban design today is a discipline that deals with designing and

shaping cities. In contrast to architecture which deals with the buildings themselves, urban design typically deals with space between buildings. This is most often public space (e.g. street, square or park), but urban design can also address private space (Childs, 2010).

Urban design is related to architecture, and is frequently taught at architecture schools. It often deals with larger scale than architecture and therefore requires a different kind of problem-solving skills. Spatial interventions on one scale need to be reconciled with the context on other scales. Modifying a square requires the knowledge of the district, manipulating the district requires knowing the city (Schurch, 1999). According to Rowley (1994), urban design occupies the middle ground between planning and architecture. Schurch is even more precise by stating:

“[Urban Design] is merging particular aspects of architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning, potentially to form a true field” (Schurch, 1999, p. 26)

This is why urban design is not simply big architecture, but must interconnect with other disciplines. It can be compared to a field of medicine, which deals with the human body and health, but includes a broad spectrum of professions like nurses, specialist doctors, technicians and pharmacists. Urban design is about promoting a collaboration between disciplines that are shaping space and demands understanding of a wide range of subjects (Madanipour, 1997). Asa Briggs’ remark, as quoted by Viscount Esher summarizes this notion:

“No self-contained discipline can cope with the city or with cities. Nor, moreover, are all the disciplines taken together quite enough” (Esher, 1984, p. 515).

In more practical terms,

“Design is often prepared by a group of designers interacting with other professionals: the agencies who control resources and rules such as landowners, financiers, planning authorities and politicians” (Madanipour, 1997, p. 379).

According to Madanipour (1997), specialisms of urban design include urban and regional planning, architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, furniture and product design and artistic disciplines like painting and sculpting. Urban design considers pedestrian zones, nature, aesthetics, typology, density, morphology, accessibility, animation and mixed uses

(Shaftoe, 2008). As shown, traditional definitions of urban design tend to focus on technical creation and modification of the physical environment.

“[Urban Design deals with] the coherence of townscape, including heritage districts, the relationship between buildings both old and new, the forms of spaces and small-scale improvements to streets” (Relph, 1987, p. 118).

Schurch in 1999 expanded this definition. He stated that urban design is supposed to be anonymous, has to include public participation, democratize the process and so the urban designer should not be an ‘author’ like in architecture or landscape architecture. She is more a conduit or editor. While architecture is emphasized by pure form, urban design is characterized by messiness and complexity of urban environment (Schurch, 1999).

This is a particularly postmodern view on the discipline, which would offend modernist. Buchanan (1988) describes urban design as a particular discipline of place-making, including events and activities that enable it. He writes that urban design is about making connection between people and places. Berry (1983) sees it as integration of land, work, people and their history, mutual dependencies and sense of community. Schurch (1999) describes it as a combination of structures, natural setting and contemporary living.

“Urban design therefore can be seen as the socio-spatial management of the urban environment using both visual and verbal means of communication and engaging in a variety of scales of urban socio-spatial phenomena” (Mandanipour, 1997, p. 372).

State of the urban design discipline evolved from physical considerations through place-making to the current state as socio-spatial management of places. But the evolution is not over. Enabled by the changes in society and rapid technological advancements, new developments and trends are starting to appear in production of urban space.

#### **1.1.4 INFORMAL PRODUCTION OF URBAN SPACE**

The struggle for public space is as real today as it was in the times of Jane Jacobs. Economic crisis of 2008 resulted in numerous national austerity programs. Rampant neoliberal capitalism is causing the increase of the divide between rich and poor. Public space is being privatized and gentrification, touristification and real-estate speculation are limiting housing options of urban citizens. On the other hand, the proliferation of mass social media and accessibility of information gives people the opportunity to organize on a new scale and connect on the basis of niche interests. People are becoming

increasingly more likely to take the matters in their own hands (de la Fuente et al., 2016).

One of the new bottom-up styles of creating space is tactical urbanism, which can be simply explained as an urban doing instead of planing. It could be categorized as an aspect of new urban activism, where users of space take matters in their own hands, and appropriate space, most often without the official planning office consent. Lydon (2015) named this kind of activism 'hacktivism'. Practitioners often work against urban planning regulations, which frequently serve interests other than those of ordinary citizens. Tactical urbanism has developed particularly in North America, and includes citizen interventions like drawing bike lanes, intersection repairs, guerrilla gardening and chair bombing (Lydon et al., 2015).

Tactical urbanism bears some similarities to urban acupuncture. This term combines language of urban design and traditional Chinese medicine and aims to use small-scale interventions to transform the large-scale urban territories. These projects are intended to relieve stress on the built environment and are developed through the dialogue between the city government and the community (Lerner, 2014). Focus of urban acupuncture is on local resources, instead of on the expensive municipal infrastructure programs. Citizens are encouraged to participate, install and care for the interventions, and through this, community morale will get boosted, which will in turn help to catalyze revitalization (Lerner, 2014).

Another recent and related trend is DIY urbanism, which is characterized by locally driven renovation and appropriation of urban areas by non-professional actors (Deslanders, 2013). Implied in this term is its anti-professional nature. It is born through informal contacts on a local scale, and often connected to other space appropriation activities such as squatting and graffiti (Deslanders, 2013). It often has a symbolic meaning, and serves to empower the local actors who have no way to influence the huge-scale urban planning projects in the city.

The difference between DIY and tactical urbanism lies in their goals. While tactical urbanism tries to address larger urban problems and structural deficiencies through guerrilla projects, DIY urbanism can sometimes just be street art or 'opportunistic placemaking' (Lydon et al., 2015). The practice of 'yarnbombing' trees, for example, can bring creativity to any urban environment, but it is not usually intended to change city policies or cause

long term social change. This is where the danger of DIY urbanism lies - in its alternative visual nature, which makes it cool. DIY urbanism projects often evoke hipster-style aesthetics. DIY projects are sometimes dismissed as 'hipster gentrification' or described as 'colonization of urban space through cultural capital' (Berstein Sycamore, 2006). DIY urbanism is also generally temporary. The amateur and sometimes illegal nature, informality and marginality make it difficult for these places to resist large scale structures of power (Lydon et al., 2015).

Mechanisms for the resistance to these large scale structures have been greatly increased in recent years, particularly because of the advent of ICT technologies, which results in bottom-up organized events and protests on a scale never seen before (e.g. the occupy movement, critical mass events and flash mobs). This phenomena of appropriating and changing public space is called new urban activism (de la Fuente et al., 2016). It represents a renaissance of activist movements in cities and is enabled and distinguished from previous movements by relying on the ICT communication technologies and by using highly symbolic public places as landmark platforms for the amplification of their voices (de la Fuente et al., 2016). These practices are originating from non-institutionalized parts of social movements, and often include appropriation of space in different ways, from short events like neighborhood breakfasts lasting a few hours, to longer-lasting projects such as open air social centers, community kitchens and community gardens.

Activists are not necessarily strictly political. These digital networks are also utilized for mobilizations or as open source communities, producing knowledge through mass collaboration. Young, technically savvy and skilled individuals are using these tools to ameliorate their unemployment or precarious working positions (Walliser, 2013). This collective intelligence tends to have weak links with formal political institutions and organizations (de la Fuente et al., 2016). While ICT technologies are crucial for building these virtual identities and networks of people, they can also de-virtualize the actions by encouraging offline interaction. In the last ten years, consumer technology advanced rapidly from the first SMS mobilizations to the smartphones of today. Services like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and live video broadcasting dramatically changed the ways activists organize and share knowledge. This can now be a lot faster, more dynamic and responsive to ad-hoc developments. Sampedro (2004) named this process of activism 'media opportunity structure'. Sometimes these kind of activism can

gain massive traction on social media, gain visibility comparable to mainstream media and influence or even shift public opinion (de la Fuente et al., 2016).

New urban activism can manifest in space by using a proactive bottom-up strategy with the aim to transform the city by developing innovative projects. Collaboration with official government structures is often nothing more than a tactical behavior to achieve their purposes. These projects can shift the public opinion enough to secure the lease of public land, where they could develop community spaces. Some of these spaces became well known references. One prominent example is a community garden *Esta es una Plaza*, which started out as an informal occupation of an empty plot in the center of Madrid. After about a year, the municipality has decided to evict the place and send bulldozers which destroyed the place. Massive social media campaign triggered a public outcry and city was forced to ultimately legitimize the actions of the activists and formally leased the plot of land to them. This is an example of a concrete effect of virtual networks, skills and identities on the physical urban space.

Urban commons like *Esta es una Plaza* seem to offer an alternative to the diminishing public space and speculative land ownership. These places can serve as tools to build community oases in the degraded urban areas to prevent further decay of space and communities. In thriving city centers, these common places can have an opposite effect - if they become successful, they can create hype and exacerbate gentrification and consequently the displacement of people.

Allotment gardens, superficially similar to community gardens, have in some cases existed for more than a century (Barthel et al., 2015). Allotment gardens hold property rights, which are in comparison stable and long-term. Individuals own their own plots of land, and while there are common areas like pathways and lawn, allotments themselves are not publicly accessible (Bendt et al., 2012). Participants also have to apply, often queue for a long time and then pay to use their plot.

Collective publicly accessible places in cities are more than just community gardens. Gardening is one element of these places, which are often focused on social learning by lowering the formal obstacles for immediate participation of the public (Bendt et al., 2012). This means there are no contracts or memberships required to participate in activities, which besides

gardening include events like lectures, workshops, community kitchen, bike repairs and movie screenings. These places challenge what public space can be used for. Instead of mostly for consumption and movement, they can be used for production and learning.

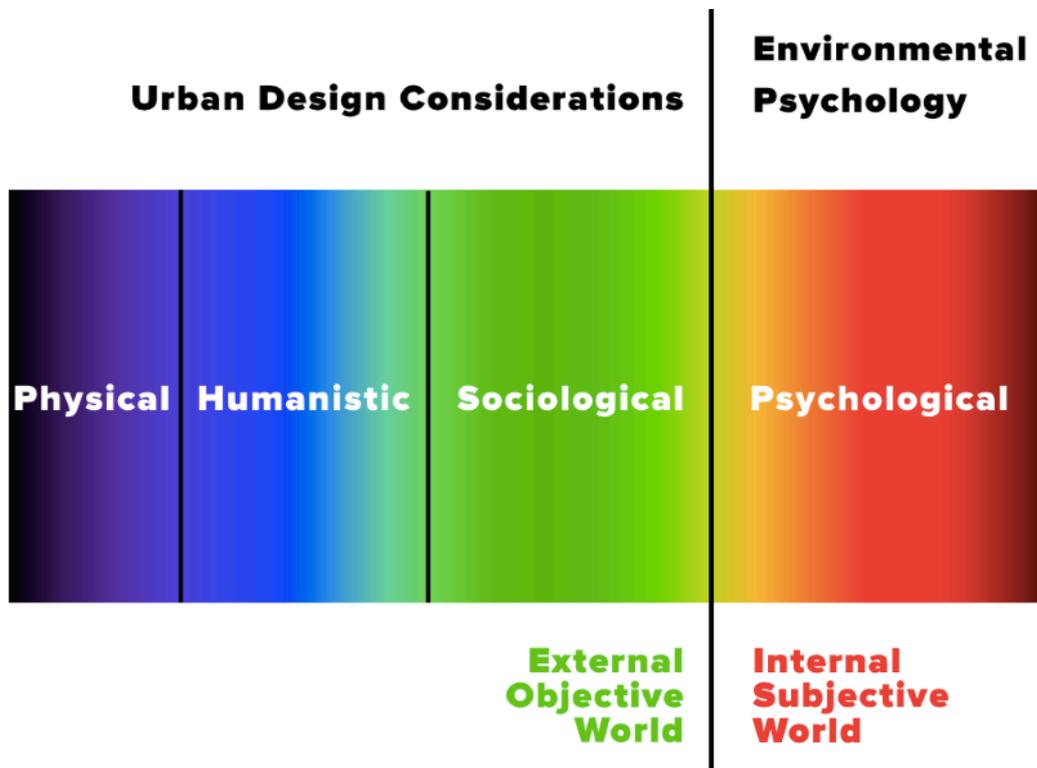
Community places represent a new kind of urban development. They result from new urban activism, and include elements of DIY and tactical urbanism, which is specific in different contexts. Practices look different depending on the location. For example, in Madrid these kind of places tend to emerge from the squatting movements, while in Berlin organizers will in general more likely aspire to obtain a temporary use permit before starting the project. These new approaches result in new kinds of urban places, which are often an answer to the economic crisis, a sort of an utopian oasis in a desert of capitalistic production of space. The emphasis on community places is on moving away from the gardening and towards community engagement and self-organization. In some cases, however, the motivation is rather the integration into the urban environment, to become a genuine part of the city instead of an isolated enclave (Müller, 2011). Community gardening of the 21st century often appears in abandoned or forgotten places, where people can find a niche to develop strategies relying on mutual collaboration.

### **1.1.5 SUBJECTIVE SPACE: FROM PRODUCTION TO PERCEPTIONS**

One of the original authors who made a shift from the objective reality to subjective perceptions in a city was Kevin Lynch (1960), who studied how people orient themselves and navigate in space by creating and relying on mental maps. He writes:

“Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the series of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences.” (Lynch, 1960, p. 1)

Kevin Lynch invented a social usage approach, which sees cities as social space instead of three dimensional art. He took the intellectual leap to detach from the apparent and visible information, notice the invisible and bring it into the foreground by careful articulation. While he still focused on physical elements like landmarks, paths, edges and nodes, he added new elements to the environmental considerations. As already discussed, the perspective on cities shifted from abstract plans to three dimensional space with Camillo Sitte (1889), and then gained a temporal dimension with Gordon Cullen (1953), who started to look at the urban environment as an observer



**Figure 2 | Spectrum of considerations in urban design contrasted with environmental psychology (Source: Author)**

moving through it. Kevin Lynch (1960) adds different times of day, weather and seasons to the external considerations, which are all major environmental factors of urban atmospheres. Most importantly, Kevin Lynch made a shift from objective to subjective mapping. He studied how people remember places, how they orient themselves and navigate in their heads. Studying these mental maps, he distilled the importance of legibility, image and identity of places - all internal subjective constructs.

The exploration of subjective dimensions of public space can be started by looking at urban atmospheres. This is a characteristic of a place, which at the same time include both physical and perceptual components (Pallasmaa, 2014). Atmospheres cannot exist independently from the person having an emotional reaction to them - subject and object have to be both present in place (Pallasmaa, 2014).

Urban atmospheres are perceived very quickly. Before one can make an intellectual evaluation of a place, their senses are already analyzed and an impression formulates in the mind. Zumthor (2010) calls this emotional sensibility of space. Atmospheres are inherently multi-sensory experiences (Zumthor, 2010). Sound can evoke just as strong a memory or emotional

response than vision. Music is particularly atmospheric, even if one doesn't understand the instruments and notations. Smell has the particular ability to bring back long forgotten memories and emotions. This is a good argument for architects and urban designers to pay closer attention to multi-sensory approach. Visual renders and plans should be supplemented more with stories, smells etc.

The subjective experiences which people share in a city would seem to appear as a result of the quality of the external environment, therefore as something objective. But every person being present in space, talking to others and emitting a certain 'energy' is also actively contributing to the atmosphere. Lifeworlds are generators of atmospheres. Banal things like open windows, people having more leisure time or different behavioral habits are all actively shaping atmospheres of places. Every communication happens in a certain mood. Therefore, atmospheres are not only produced by physical space, but also by social space (Pallasmaa, 2014). This idea takes Gehl's (1979) notion of physical space as framework for activities one step further and implies that physical elements together with human activities create specific urban atmospheres. Because people are attracted to positive atmospheres, more of them come to the place and by their presence and behaviors further contribute to the urban atmosphere. A positive feedback loop or a snowball effect of self-reinforcing public life is created. If the composition or number of people in a place change dramatically, the atmosphere itself can be changed to the degree of self-destruction.

But atmospheres can be invited by staging objects, materials, lights, smells and sounds in a strategic way. This is a key aim of stage design. By analyzing and manipulating the physical generators of atmospheres in cities, it is possible to create conditions for particular atmospheres to materialize. It is often assumed that in order to influence positive perceptions of space, something needs to be done or changed about it. The notion of urban atmospheres may challenge this assumption. Positive atmospheres can materialize spontaneously. Older or ruined buildings or spaces can be more atmospheric than new developments. The problem is to recognize and acknowledge that. Only then it is possible to preserve the positive atmospheres of places by forbearance in design.

Urban design tends to create new and erase the old. Yet, there is an acute need for familiarity in space, made more urgent by the pace and scale of urban change under neoliberal capitalist conditions. Changes are so

profound and so fast that people are often clinging on to whatever familiarity they can find (Hall, 2012). When a place is moved, changed or closed, the social ties to it are broken and space familiarity is reduced. Examples of this process include mass closing of traditional pubs in London and their replacement with kebab shops, internet cafes and supermarkets (Low, 1992). This process on many streets disturbs decades long habits of local residents, who lack spaces where they can mix and learn from each other. The banal spaces are important for the formation and maintenance of local social connections (Hall, 2012).

Changes in cities are so great and are happening so fast that people are clinging on to the familiarities they can find (Hall, 2012). Locality or territoriality is a defensive strategy to combat perceived threats and effects of change (Low, 1992). People can develop insistence of place - strong opinion on what is theirs. This influences the endurance of boundaries despite physical change (Hall, 2012). There are two different boundaries in cities - physical like rivers, and symbolic like place stigmatism (Human, 1992). Stigma of a place can be persistent even when the character of physical space changes (Hall, 2012). Examples are modernist housing estates, where local residents can feel territorial and insular.

Unlike the dismantling and clearing of local spaces and ways of life, a layering process is a way of renewal by gradual addition of layers. Products of layering can appear as messy and mixed aggregations of structures, spaces and people, and can be successful in social terms. People and groups get the opportunity to invest in space in all sort of ways, but such places are, however, frequently equated with decline (Hall, 2012). Place can be designed to be under-designed, to allow flexibility and to conserve elements of familiarity. New kinds of community places like publicly accessible community gardens are being created and changed according to the non-designed participatory approach of creating public space.

So far, the case has been made for noticing, appreciating and respecting what is already there in a city and for changing urban space by gradual change instead of large-scale erasing and rebuilding. To further understand the relationship between people and places, this paper draws on elements from environmental psychology, starting with the sense of place concept.

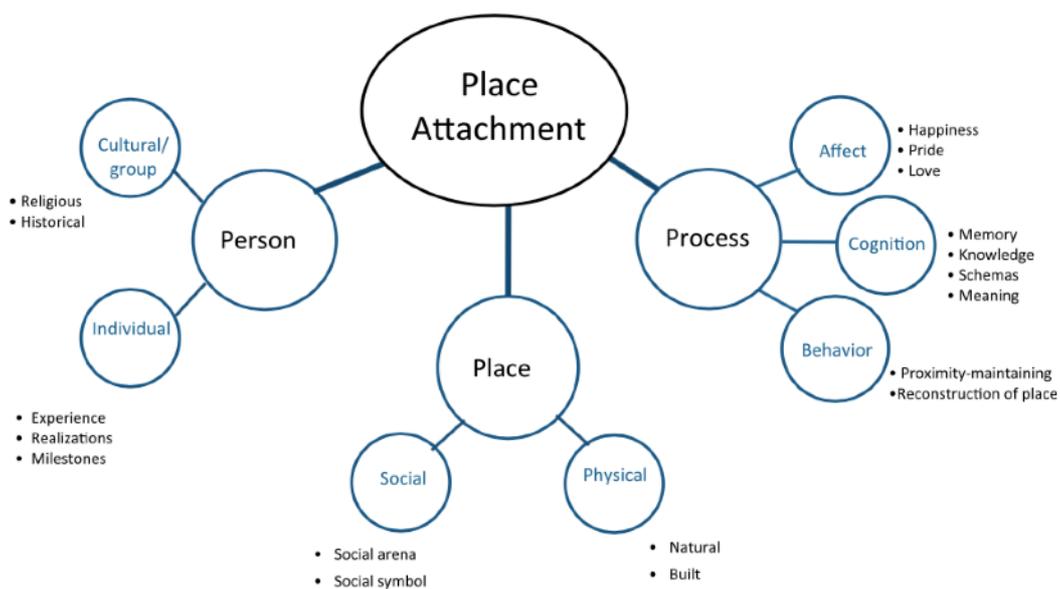
Tuan (1979) has provided the most often cited definition, stating that sense of place is a “field of care” or a “center of meaning” which emphasizes human

emotions and relationships with places. Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) state that:

“sense of place is not imbued in the physical setting itself, but resides in human interpretations of the setting“ (Jorgensen et al., 2001, p. 233).

Sense of place is all about the subjective perceptions - the way people routinely think about places. The notion has been conceptualized and explained by Hay (1998), who identified five categories of sense of place based on rootedness (cultural, ancestral, personal, partial and superficial). Shamai (1991) created a scale of strengths of sense of place, from not having any sense of place through belonging, attachment and identifying to involvement and sacrifice. Hummon (1992) suggested five types of sense of place. This include two attached (everyday rootedness and ideological rootedness) and three non-attached (alienated, place relative, and placeless). The tripartite model adopted by Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) is the most often cited model for conceptualizing sense of place. It is comprised of place attachment, place identity and place dependency. It is difficult to discern exact meanings of these components, because they are often used interchangeably and they overlap with other terms. Place attachment is the most consistent. It is described as:

“... a positive bond that develops between groups or individuals and their environment“ (Jorgensen et al., 2001, p. 234).



**Figure 3 | Person-Place-Process model of Place attachment (Source: Scannell and Gifford, 2010)**

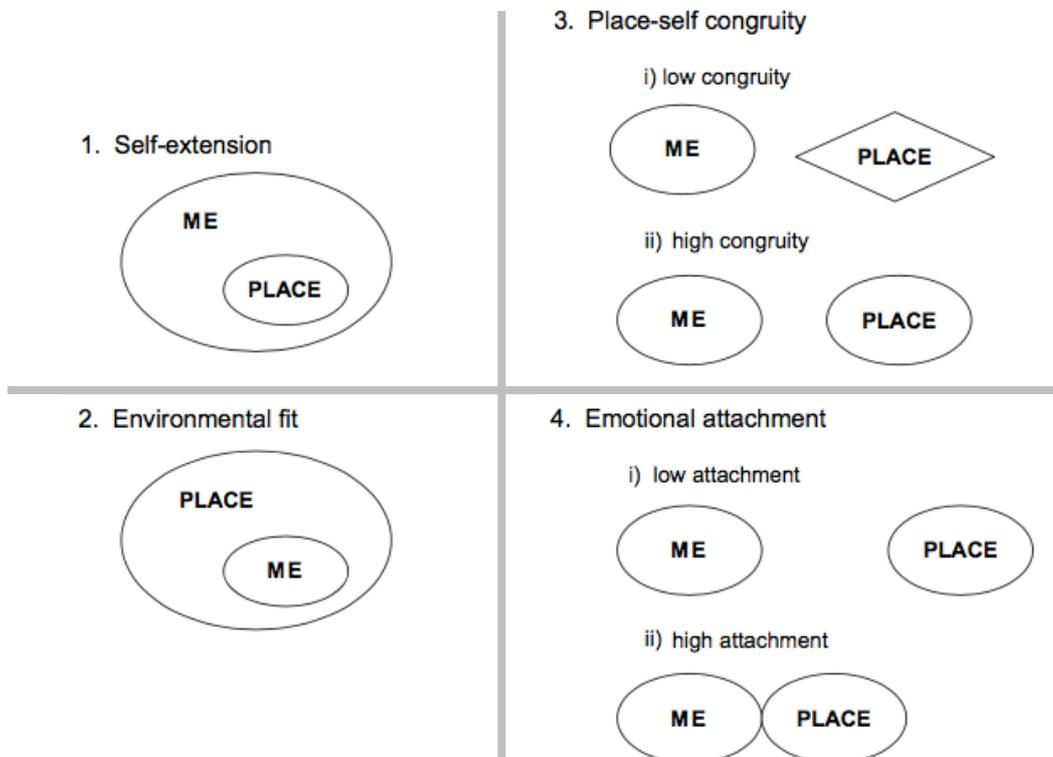
Place attachment is related and sometimes used interchangeably with the concepts of rootedness (Shamai, 1991), place bonding (Hammit, 2006) and insidedness (Ujang, 2012). Place attachment also overlaps with place dependency, which can be referred to as “functional attachment” (Convery et al., 2012).

Place attachment is a significant part of human well-being and adaptation to the environment. By saving places which are most important for attachment, it is possible to improve public space (Hummon, 1992). Therefore, place attachment is related to place familiarity. Arguments for conservation of environments that would otherwise be changed or destroyed can be developed from better understanding place attachment (Low et al., 1992). As people are using the space, they are developing place familiarity, memories, meanings and social connections. One of the biggest indicators of place attachment is the duration of presence (Ujang, 2012). Some studies suggest (Lewicka, 2010; Devine-Wright et al., 2010) that the quality of physical environment is relatively unimportant for place attachment.

There are many conceptualizations of place attachment. Hummon (1992) identified five types of place attachment: Ideological rootedness, everyday rootedness, place alienation and sentiment, uncommitted placelessness and place relativity. Low (1992) identified five reasons for place attachment:

“(1) genealogical linkage to the land through history or family lineage; (2) linkage through loss of land or destruction of community; (3) economic linkage to land through ownership, inheritance and politics; (4) cosmological linkage through religious, spiritual, or mythological relationship; (5) linkage through both religious and secular pilgrimage and celebratory, cultural events; and (6) narrative linkage through storytelling and place naming” (Low et al., 1992, p. 166).

According to Rowley (1990), there are three types of feeling belonging or insidedness towards places: social (familiarity with people), physical (familiarity with the environment) and autobiographical (through memories). Social place of belonging is described by Low (1992) as a group space in which one can communicate and think at a personal level without being detached from the group. It is a particular form of informal social membership - respecting social codes common to the group, as well as having a right to distance itself from others (Hall, 2012). A similar notion was named sense of community by Human (1992), who identified five types of senses of community within individuals, including three negative or non-attached (alienated, place relative and placeless) and two positive or attached



**Figure 4 | Four ways to identify with a place (Source: Droseltis et al., 2010)**

(everyday and ideological rootedness). More place attachment is not always a desirable goal. Too much place attachment can lead to closeness and xenophobia (Relph, 1976). Place attachment needs to be balanced with some benefits of the fluid-space identity as a counterweight.

Place identity is another component of the tripartite model of sense of place by Jorgensen and Stedman (2001). This is the focus of research of Droseltis et. al (2010), whose idea is that people identify with places in four different ways. Firstly, they might see the environment as their self-extension. This is particularly true for private property like dwellings. Secondly, identity by environmental fit means that people identify with their community, or feel they are part of their physical environment. This notion is closely related to rootedness. Thirdly, place-self congruity is the idea that place in some way matches the values of the individual. Fourth is the emotional link to places, which can materialize from place attachment. In this framework, place attachment is the reason for positive identification with places.

Example of place identity is stigma of a place. Even when physical and social space changes, people still perceive the old meaning. Place identity is

related to the terms place affiliation (Low et al., 1992), belongingness (Droseltis et al., 2010) and community identity (Hummon, 1992).

Two years after the sense of place article, Stedman (2003) revised the tripartite model and re-conceptualized sense of place as being composed of place attachment and place meaning. Place identity is in this paper described as roughly the same thing as place attachment. If place attachment asks 'How important is this place for you', place meaning asks 'What kind of a place is this'. Attachment can be measured on a scale, but meaning has to be explained (Stedman, 2003). Place attachment reflects how strongly people are attracted towards places, while place meaning describes the reasons for this attraction (Stedman, 2003).

Places can be imbued with meaning and serve as symbolic locales with distinct cultural identities (Hummon, 1992). Place meaning is further researched by Kudryavtsev (2012). He defines it as

“... a symbolic meaning that people ascribe to the setting” (Kudryavtsev, 2012, p. 232).

His suggestion is, that it is not enough to approach meaning from the environmental psychology perspective alone, but also from critical theory, anthropology and cultural theory. This notion is related to the Person-Place-Process model by Scannell and Gifford (2010), which also suggests interdisciplinary approach to studying feelings about places.

Sense of place literature is by no means complete, but it can provide researchers with tools to measure subjective perceptions. The research suffers from large interchangeability of terms. It feels like the researchers are interpreting terms in different ways, as it suits their research objectives. This ambiguity is a serious limitation in the sense of place research.

Researching sense of place is also disproportionately focused on the person and much less on the process of developing it and on the place itself. In order to create successful places for people, attachments, meanings and identities have to be understood and considered - not just as subjective constructs, but also in the sense of linking them with physical characteristics of places, which in turn catalyze the process of developing individual sense of place.

## 1.2 CONCLUSION

Multiple dimensions of space exist, ranging from physical and sociological to subjective and perceptual. Urban design was initially focused on the physical aspect of public space. Other considerations of space started to appear only at the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It took a leap of reason to detach from the visual and to understand more intangible dimensions of cities. Kevin Lynch (1960) was one of the first researchers to focus on the subjective perceptions of cities. Jane Jacobs (1961) articulated ordinary personal and social experiences in a city and brought attention to public life itself. She described how people behave and interact in public space and how cities actually work, as opposed to how planners wanted them to work. Jan Gehl (1971) continued the tradition of looking at public life. He offered practical recommendations on how to foster activities and make public places enjoyable for people. If a planner in modernism used to be an artist, the role now became more similar to an editor.

More recently, urban design became seen as a tool for neoliberal capitalism to shape space. With the advent of ICT technologies, formal urban design and planning disciplines are losing the monopoly in place-making. Instead, people are increasingly empowered to appropriate places based on their needs. This kind of bottom-up appropriations of space are focused on community empowering and providing resources which ordinary people actually need. This created new kind of public places - community places. This recent phenomenon in cities again expanded functions of public space to include community learning, production and support.

Because of the particular processes of creating and managing these places, they tend to have a distinctive aesthetic style. Together with activities and people in these places, this is a recipe for the materialization of particular urban atmospheres. This intangible characteristic can be studied using a sense of place concept, which is bridges the physical space and subjective perceptions or experiences of a place. Sense of place is composed of terms originating from environmental psychology like place attachment, identity, dependency and meaning.

## 1.3 RESEARCH GAP

Literature about sense of place and its components is most often looking at natural or rural settings (Jorgensen et al., 2001; Abdelal et al., 2001; Devine-Wright, 2010; Droseltis, 2010; Hammit et al., 2006; Stedman, 2003, Brown, 2005, Kaltenborn et al., 2002). While there is research related to perceptions in urban public space (Ujang, 2012; Hummon, 1986, Herting, 1985, Mehta, 2014; Riger, 1981), none is focusing on perceptions and feelings in a particular category of public space - publicly accessible community space. These new kinds of places have different urban atmospheres and social and behavioral norms as general public space.

In relation to the three-partite Person-Place-Process model of place attachment, Kudryavtsev (2012) argues that more is known about the people who are attached than places that are most attachable or processes that create attachment. Stedman (2003) and Lewicka (2011) both refer to the lack of knowledge about the interface between physical place and sense of place. Heft (2010) notes that while there is extensive research about how particular environments are experienced, information is lacking about perceptions of space in the course of action in situ. In other words, individual components of sense of place are well known on their own; what is missing is a closer look at how they affect each other - their links, interactions and relationships.

Disciplines for making places in cities are typically concerned with the physical framework, functions, activities and interactions in public space. Subjective perceptions and feelings about places lack practical design recommendations. In order to make better public places, knowledge is needed about how to expand the considerations of urban design to include not only physical and social dimensions, but also internal perceptions and less tangible qualities of space like urban atmosphere.

# CHAPTER 2

## METHODOLOGY

An interdisciplinary approach is needed to study how people perceive public places based on the physical characteristics and urban atmosphere. For the purpose of this paper, the three elements are investigated through three lenses. First lens looks at the processes of creating and managing the places. This determines the nature of the place in terms of its social character and urban atmosphere. This dimension is researched using semi-structured interviews and informal conversations. Second focus of this paper are the physical characteristics of places. These are being evaluated on site, using Jan Gehl's twelve key quality criteria for public places. The aim is to evaluate if these kind of places provide good spatial framework for human activities and comfort. Third focus are people's attitudes and feelings about public community places. These are measured by surveying visitors and users of space. Ultimately, this paper juxtaposes the three lines of research to find patterns and connections. Rather than the specific components, the main research focus are the connections between them. Methodology uses a mixed qualitative case study approach, where two similar case studies are compared to each other.

## 2.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

This paper attempts to answer several questions addressing the intersection between physical space, urban atmospheres and subjective perceptions and feelings about these places. The first question relates to Jan Gehl's twelve key quality criteria and attempts to establish whether a high degree of self organization and participation in creating and managing space tends to result in a high quality physical environment. The second question deals with less tangible qualities of community organized public places such as their atmospheres or characters and attempts to link them to the creation and managing processes. Once the link between the process and urban atmosphere is established, the components of the main research question are in place.

**How do physical quality and urban atmosphere affect perceptions and behaviors in community-organized public places?**

## 2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is described in the following figure which should be read from top to bottom. This paper first studies the literature, identifies the gap in knowledge about urban space and articulates the research question.

Research is done on two similar case studies in different contexts, which were researched through three lenses - person, place and process. After analyzing the results, new contribution to the theory and practical recommendations are developed.

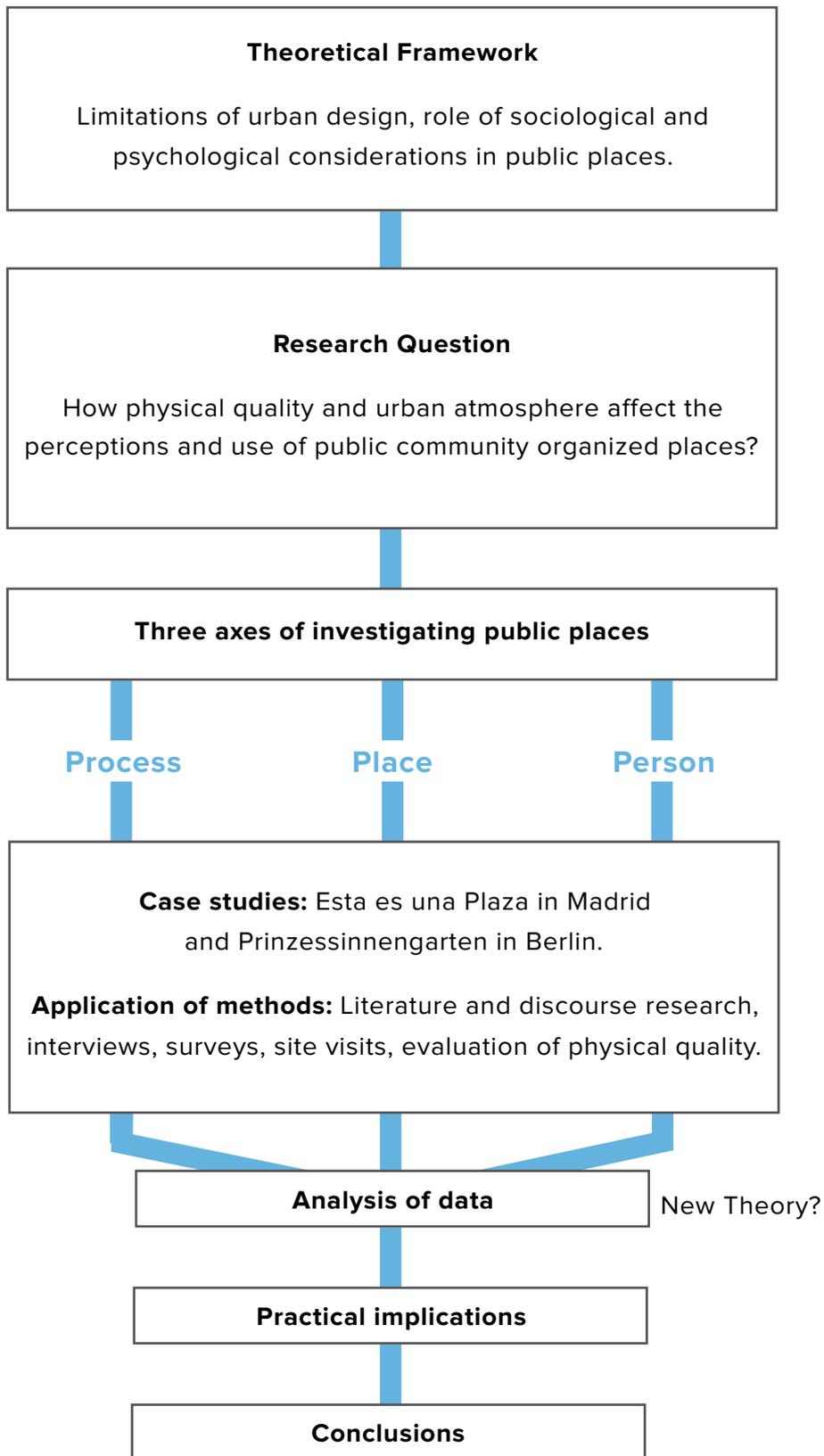


Figure 5 | Research design diagram (Source: Author)

Individual components of sense of place are well researched each on their own. What is new in this research design is the juxtaposition of these factors and a comparison-oriented research design, which doesn't focus on individual components as much as on their connections and relations. Particular attention in regards to the process of making and managing places is put on places that have been established and maintained through a high degree of self-organization and participation - so called publicly accessible community places. They are interesting, because they were not built for the general public, which enables a particular urban atmosphere, often with an informal character. The DIY approach in these places results in a greater flexibility and opportunities to appropriate. What cities need are places, which are not completely designed and regulated, places that don't define exactly how they should be used and which are open for interaction, learning or for doing something yourself. The aim of the research is to study how people perceive and feel on these kind of new urban places and to provide knowledge for community actors and recommendations for urban design.

## **2.3 COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES APPROACH**

The two case studies selected for research are *Esta es una Plaza* in Madrid and *Prinzessinnengarten* in Berlin. They have been selected because of their local similarities within different city and national contexts. Both *Esta es una Plaza* and *Prinzessinnengarten* are temporary use places. They are publicly-accessible community-organized places and feature examples of DIY urbanism. Furniture and structures on site were built by users of places themselves. The layout allows for a variety of uses, from open air screenings to urban gardening. Both places are explicitly focused on community learning and production. Both plots are owned by the municipalities, and both received an official temporary-use extendable contract. They are also located in similar districts - *Embajadores* in Madrid and *Kreuzberg* in Berlin are both ethnically diverse communities, which are recently experiencing increased gentrification. By studying the two comparable publicly-accessible community-organized places, results of research can be more credible by confirming generalities and particularities of such places.

## 2.4 ANALYSIS GRID

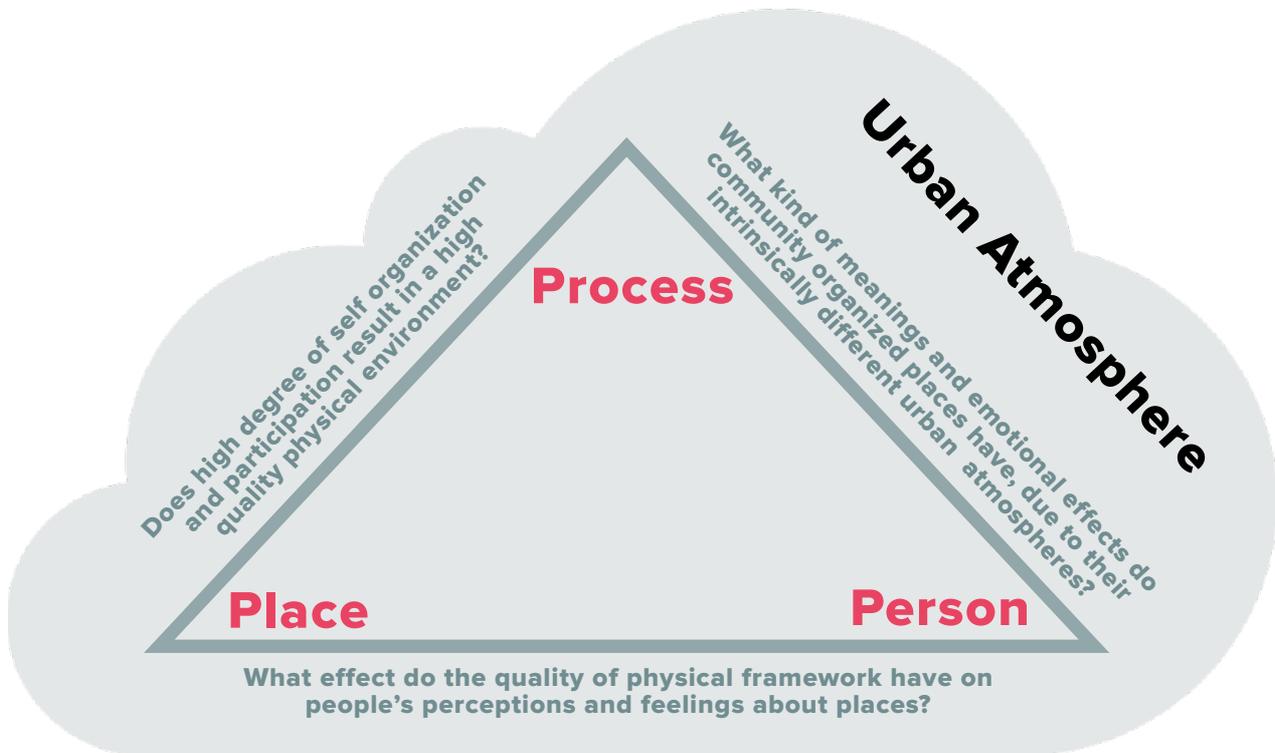


Figure 6 | The research matrix (Source: Author)

The approach to research is a three factor analysis grid, composed of the factors Process, Place and Person. The research juxtaposes the processes of space, which include its history and ideology, with its physical quality and with individual perceptions of it.

The process of creating and running the place is invisible on its own. The work of the researcher is to identify the key actors and their relationships in order to explain the place. Process materializes in the physical place, which in turn attracts particular people and behaviors. People are in addition to the place also attracted directly to the process. Total sum of the three dimensions is urban atmosphere, character of the place or genius loci. These qualities include various activities, the kind of people who are there, memories of places, weather, time of the day and meaning of the place. Compared to the top-down designed city squares and parks, these qualities are significantly different in selected case studies. It is crucial to understand these less palpable aspects of space in order to build high quality places for

people and communities. Particular urban atmospheres identified in the case studies raise the following question: what kind of meanings and emotional effects do community organized places have due to their intrinsically different urban atmospheres?

For the person dimension of the research matrix, it is necessary to shift focus from external objective reality to internal subjective perceptions. For this purpose, the paper draws on aspects of environmental psychology by asking questions that hint at understanding internal constructs like attachments, identities, motivations, meanings, sense of familiarity and dependency. These are researched by surveying and interviewing users of space.

Contrasting place and process is structured around Jan Gehl's twelve quality criteria, a framework for measuring the quality of public places, which focus on human scale, senses and activities. These criteria could be considered to be common sense recommendations. Basic example would be to not place a bench facing the wall. If these principles are automatically implemented by non-professional DIY participants as they make small gradual decisions about a place, using logic instead of design knowledge, this would indicate that the criteria are indeed common sense, and when they are not respected in contemporary urban design practices, they had to be either actively unlearned by urban designers, or somehow defeated by other considerations. It is important to establish exactly how much the case studies have been 'non-designed'. The question attempted to be answered here is whether a high degree of self organization and participation by people who simply build and move things around, automatically results in good physical framework for human activities.

Comparing place and person dimensions illuminates how important is this physical framework for how people feel in space. For example, how important are actually sufficiently low noise levels, or benches conducive to conversations for positive subjective perceptions of space. Contrasting process and person dimensions will help to clarify how much people know and care about the history and ideology of places. Aggregating the three dimensions will help to answer a question how people feel about public places based on the physical quality and the characters of the places and how important is a high quality physical public space in comparison to other factors such as an informal character, flexibility, freedom, political ideology or special atmosphere of the place.

## 2.5 METHODS

### 2.5.1 RESEARCHING THE PROCESS

Investigating the process is initially done by online and literature research. It aims to understand the creation story of the places, the key actors involved, ownership structure and contextualizing the location within space, community and politics. It also includes identifying any architectural or urban design companies or initiatives involved in the design.

At the next step, semi-structured interviews with key actors are arranged. The research aims to find out what kind of issues these places are dealing with, how the idea for the place came up and what is their vision for the future. Additionally, interviews are arranged with the design groups, where the research aims to understand what kind of organizing principles were used when designing the place and how aware are the creators of public place quality criteria and sense of place. This will help to evaluate how intentional by design is the end result. Data will be valuable when establishing the connection between urban design practices and social success of public space.

### 2.5.2 RESEARCHING THE PLACE

Basis for the evaluation of the quality of public places is twelve key quality criteria of public space by Jan Gehl. Quality of the physical space is evaluated by being present in the case study areas for long periods of time and carefully observing the plans and actual situations. After grading and explaining each of the sub-constructs a summary is calculated for each criteria. Detailed understanding of Jan Gehl's criteria is needed in order to produce valid results. Therefore, the recommendations are extensively analyzed in the literature review chapter.

The author is aware that this method has been created by a private architecture office and so it might be somewhat subjective. This method originates from practice-oriented approach, but it is possible to apply it to help answering the theoretical research question of this paper. Gehl's 12 quality criteria are made for evaluating general public space in cities.

Community space has different 'laws of physics', so the criteria would have to be adapted to that.

### 2.5.3 RESEARCHING THE PERCEPTIONS

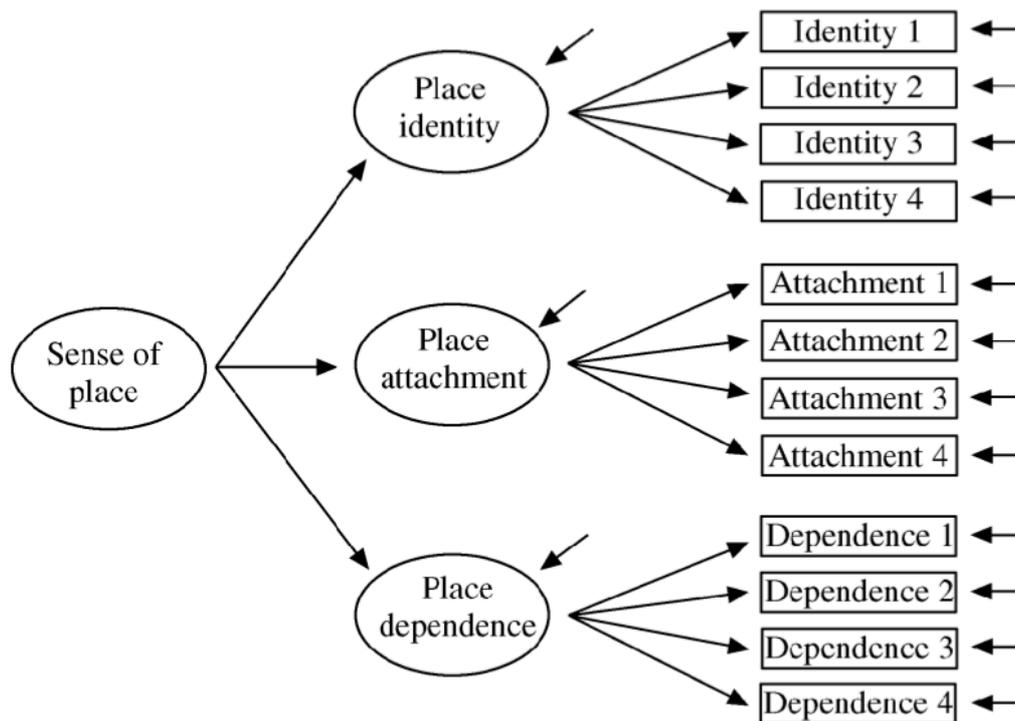


Figure 7 | Researching sense of place (Source: Jorgenson et al., 2001)

Methodology for studying subjective perceptions of public spaces is based on the concept of sense of place by Jorgensen et al. (2001). They developed a tripartite sense of place model, composed of place identity, attachment and dependence. Main tool of investigating is a likert-scale survey, where participants rate how much they agree with a statement on a scale from one to ten, where one means 'completely disagree' and ten means 'completely agree'. The questions are simplified and have been formulated in a way that don't explicitly communicate the categories. For example, measuring identity is not formulated as 'how much do you identify with this place', but rather as 'This place reflects what kind of person I am', and 'I feel like I can be myself here'. Two questions about each sub-construct (attachment, identity,

dependency) were asked. The questions and averaged answers are exposed in the results.

Factor	Item label	Item description
Place identity	IDENTITY1	Everything about my lake property is a reflection of me.
	IDENTITY2	My lake property says very little about who I am.
	IDENTITY3	I feel that I can really be myself at my lake property.
	IDENTITY4	My lake property reflects the type of person I am.
Place attachment	ATTACH1	I feel relaxed when I'm at my lake property.
	ATTACH 2	I feel happiest when I'm at my lake property.
	ATTACH3	My lake property is my favorite place to be.
	ATTACH4	I really miss my lake property when I'm away from it for too long.
Place dependence	DEPEND1	My lake property is the best place for doing the things that I enjoy most.
	DEPEND2	For doing the things that I enjoy most, no other place can compare to my lake property.
	DEPEND3	My lake property is not a good place to do the things I most like to do.
	DEPEND4	As far as I am concerned, there are better places to be than at my lake property.

**Figure 8 | Survey questions for measuring Sense of Place (Source: Jorgensen et al., 2001)**

In addition to the survey, informal conversations are used to gain additional insight into perceptions of space by people working there or visiting. These methods have been used and developed by Sampson et al. (2010). These conversations often happened after participants finished the survey. This way, more detailed nuances about subjective perceptions were collected. In order to sample the average composition of visitors, the surveys have been conducted on multiple occasions at different times of the day, but always during a summer season (June and July) at places in Madrid and Berlin.

# CHAPTER 3

## CASE STUDIES

Case studies selected for this research are Esta es una Plaza in Madrid and Prinzessinnengarten in Berlin. In this chapter, different scales of investigation are compared, starting with the national level, descending to city and neighborhood scales and ultimately focusing on the places themselves.

### 3.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

It is important to clarify the scales of administration of both case studies. When analyzing the immediate surroundings of the places, the neighborhood of Embajadores was selected in the case of Madrid. Madrid has another informal layer of neighborhood names, which are not administrative units, but rather live in mental maps of residents and are often named after central squares or streets. Most people in Madrid will say that Esta es una Plaza is in Lavapies, but there is no statistical data on Lavapies. Luckily, Embajadores administration area almost perfectly correlates with Lavapies. In Berlin, the chosen immediate surrounding area is a statistical area (plannungsraum) Mortizplatz, which is part of the neighborhood Südliche Friedrichstadt. Unlike Embajadores, this is a statistical and not administrative area. Another major difference between the two administrative scales is the municipal scale - City of Madrid is one municipality - the biggest by population in Europe. Berlin is divided into twelve boroughs.

Country	Spain	Country	Germany
Region	Community of Madrid	Region	Berlin
Municipality	Madrid	Borough	Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain
District	Centro	District	Kreuzberg
Neighborhood	Embajadores	Neighborhood	Südliche Friedrichstadt
Informal neighborhood	Lavapies	Planning Unit	Moritzplatz

Figure 9 | Administrative Scales of *Esta es una Plaza* and *Prinzessinnengarten* (Source: Author)

### 3.1.1 NATIONAL AND CITY SCALES

Madrid and Berlin are both major European national capitals of comparable sizes, but population trends are significantly different. Berlin's population is growing fast in the last years. In 2015, the Berlin senate revealed, that the city is growing twice as fast as expected (The Local, 2015a). Instead of predicted year 2030, it will increase in population by a quarter of a million already by 2019 (The Local, 2015a). Virtually all population increase comes from immigration. The city is experiencing consistent positive net migration since 2005, which accelerated after 2011 with more than 40.000 newcomers every year (Berlin.de, 2015). To keep up with the influx, Berlin should build 25.000 homes every year, yet they only built 8.000 in 2015 (Chazan, 2016).

After decades of stagnation, the growth is seen as positive in general, but the fast population growth is placing strains on the city, which is struggling to accommodate people. Gentrification is a major issue in Berlin. In 2015 alone, the housing prices increased by thirty percent (The Local, 2015a). There are big protests against gentrification (e.g. Wrangelstrasse 66) and some districts are adopting policies like rent controls, banning luxury renovations and limiting Airbnb (Chazan, 2016). Because 80% of people rent their homes in Berlin, the housing market is more flexible and the change can occur faster (Chazan, 2016), but despite the negative trends, Berlin is still cheaper than most other large German cities.

Madrid's municipal population grew by almost half a million people between 2000 and 2010, when it reached the peak at 3.273 million (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2016). The growth was also fueled almost entirely by immigration, which virtually stopped after the financial crisis of 2008. The population of the municipality started to decline in the next five years, when Madrid lost 132.000 residents (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2016). Population growth is only starting to slowly pick up again in the past two years (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2016).

Madrid seems to be generating more state-led gentrification than Berlin, where gentrification is mostly market-led. Much of it started to occur already in the 1980's on Spain's way to democracy (The Local, 2015b). First neighborhoods started to gentrify on the northern side of the city center (e.g. Chueca and Malasaña) and then the gentrification waves spread southward through the rest of the city center (The Local, 2015b). In recent years, when Madrid is starting to grow again, gentrification is starting to reach the traditionally poor neighborhoods (e.g. Lavapiés) on the south side of the city center. This is evident by the growing average real estate prices and apartment sizes (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2015).

Berlin as a German federal state is politically governed by the Social Democratic Party of Germany in coalition with the Christian Democratic Union, which has support mostly in the suburbs. In the 'hip' neighborhoods like Kreuzberg, Friedrichshagen, Prenzlauer Berg and Neukölln, the Green Party took the majority of votes (Wahlrecht, 2016). This is important, because districts in Berlin are relatively autonomous, and have their own budgets and parliaments. According to Matthias Wilkens (Prinzessinnengarten: 2017), Kreuzberg-Friedrichshagen district is traditionally governed by the green party, which is more open towards the bottom-up community projects such as Prinzessinnengarten.

In comparison, Madrid has a relatively centralized government. The whole city is one municipality, which is in fact the largest municipality by population in EU (Eurostat, 2015). Madrid has been governed by the conservative christian democratic People's Party for 24 years (Chazan, 2016), but in 2015, the left-wing participatory-democracy party Ahora Madrid took the elections by surprise, and the leader of the party became mayor of Madrid (Riveiro et al., 2015). This political change brought many shifts in city government policies, including a progressive plan to close down the center of Madrid for cars (La Sexta, 2017). According to an interview with Sara Casado Jiménez

(Esta es una Plaza: 2017), the current municipal government is a lot more open to bottom-up participatory projects such as Esta es una Plaza.

Primarily due to reunification-related expenditures, Berlin in the last decades accumulated over €60 billion of debt - more than any other city in Germany (Deutsche Welle, 2016). On the other hand, Germany's economy is booming. In 2016, it reported the highest trade surplus of any country in the world, worth €310 billions (Ettel, 2016). The same year federal state of Berlin asked the federal government for help to get the debt situation under control (Deutsche Welle, 2016). For now, Berlin is forced to focus on attracting investments and new developments, which conflicts with the anti-gentrification efforts on the district level. A prominent recent example of corporate interests winning over public good in Berlin is the large-scale neoliberal commercial development in the East Side Gallery area in Friedrichshain.

Madrid is also an indebted city, but its public debt of €5.6 billion (La Sexta, 2017) amounts to only about 10% of Berlin's debt. The difference is that Madrid can't count on the national state to help with the debt situation. While the Spanish economy size in 2017 finally returned to its pre-crisis size, Spanish government now carries enormous burden of debt of about one years worth of total output of the economy (Goodman, 2017).

### 3.1.2 EMBAJADORES VS MORITZPLATZ

Because of the need to research the immediate vicinity of the case studies, the smallest possible spatial units based on data availability were selected for analysis. Embajadores is a neighborhood in the Centro district. Moritzplatz is a planning unit within the Südliche Friedrichstadt.

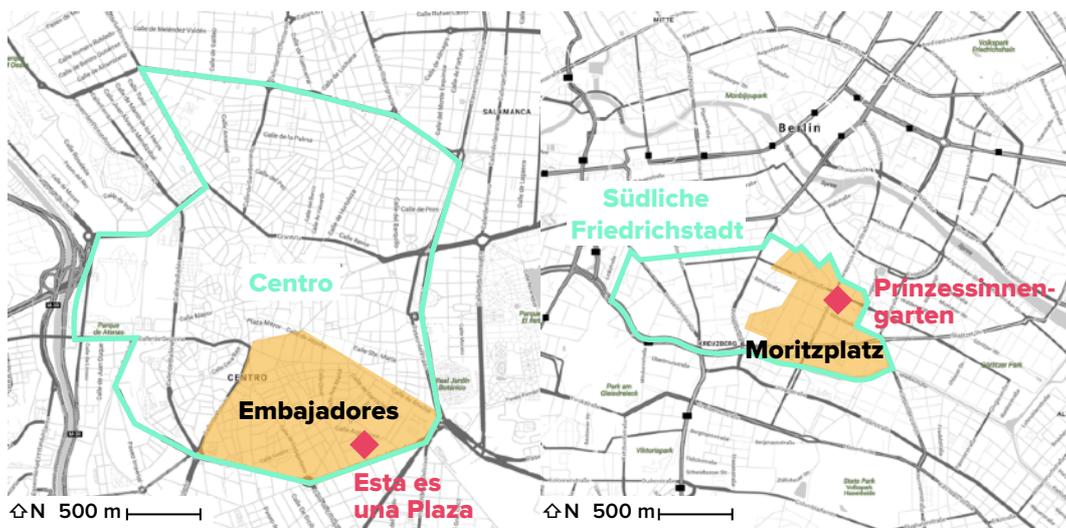


Figure 10 | Situations of case studies to scale (Source: Author)

Embajadores is the most populous and the densest neighborhood in the Centro district of Madrid. Moritzplatz is relatively less densely populated.

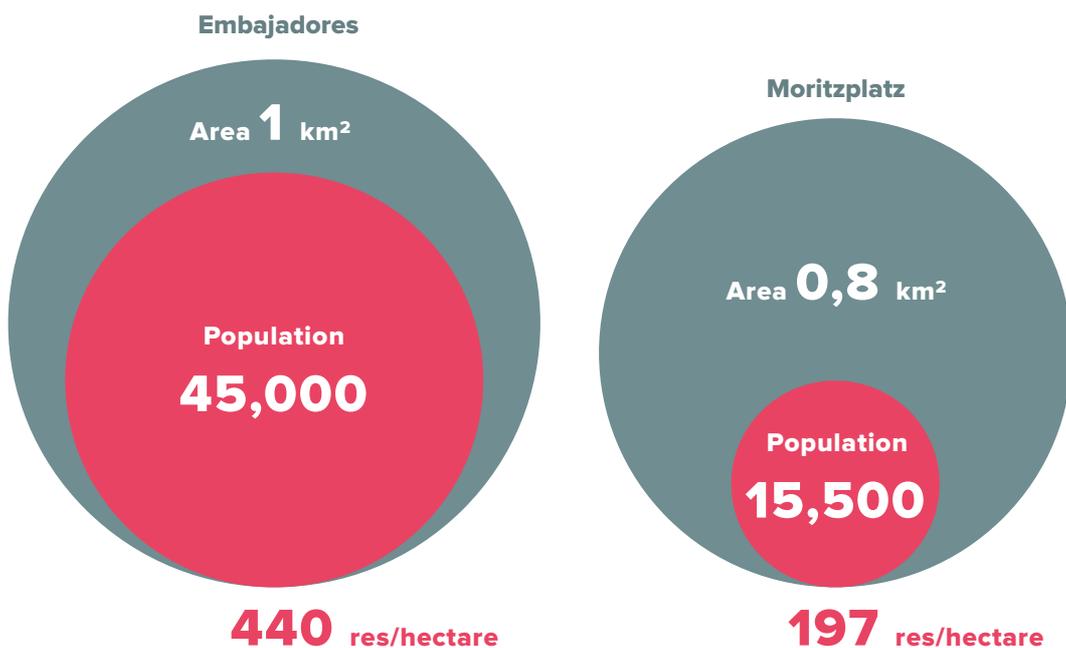


Figure 11 | Visualization of residential densities (Sources: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2016a; Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, 2015b)

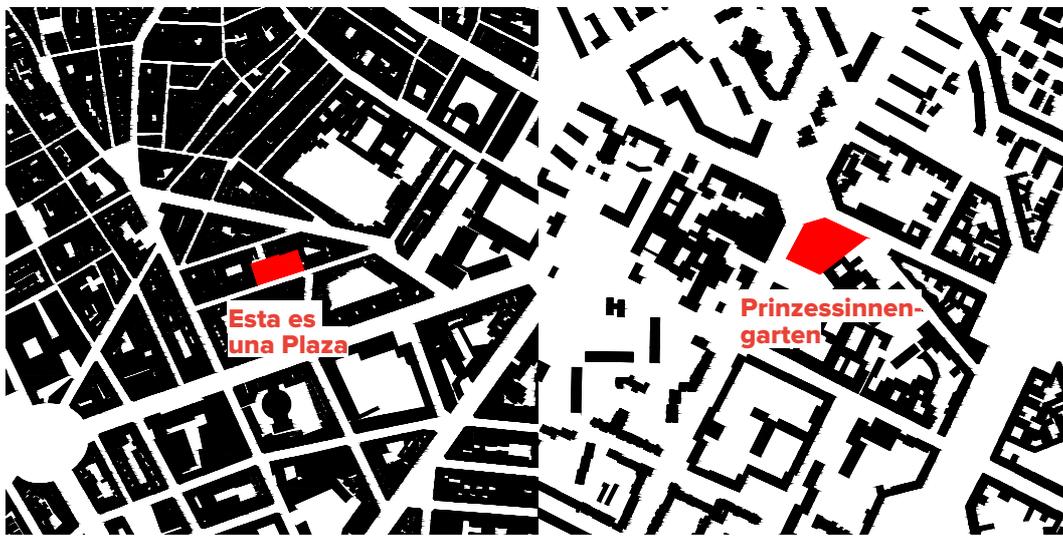


Figure 12 | Morphological density comparison (Source: Author)

Embajadores is the most diverse neighborhood in the Centro district in Madrid, but it still has a significantly lower share of foreign-born residents than Moritzplatz.

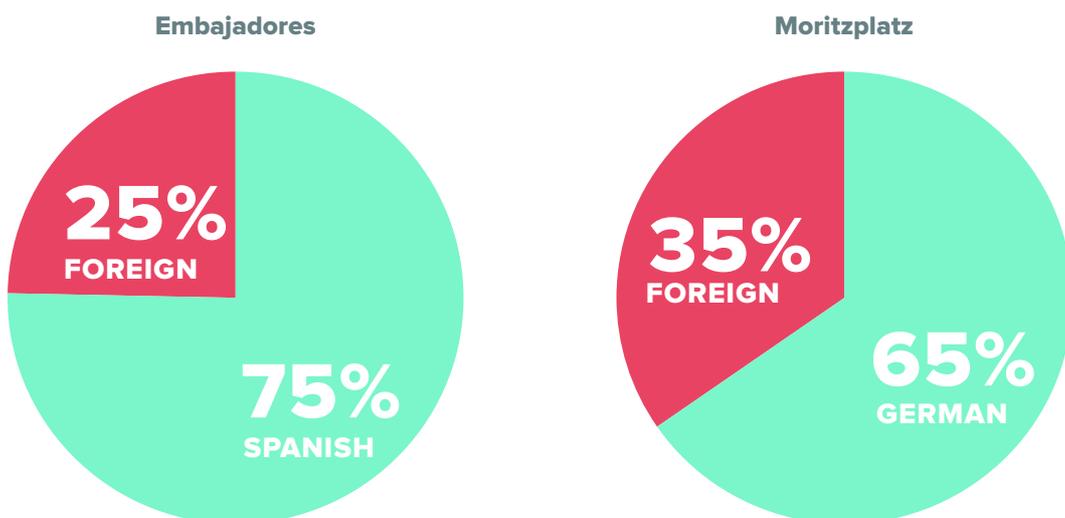


Figure 13 | Share of foreign born residents. (Sources: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2016b; Berlin Open Data, 2016)

The origin of foreign-born population is more diversified in Madrid, with the largest group coming from Bangladesh (Barañano, 2017). Other prominent nationalities include Moroccan and Senegalese from Africa and Ecuadorian, Colombian and Venezuelan from South America (Barañano, 2017).

Two thirds of all foreign nationals in Moritzplatz originate from Turkey. This fact, combined with the higher overall share of foreigners means that one in five total residents of the immediate surroundings of Prinzessinnengarten is Turkish. In Embajadores, the most populous foreign nationality group of Bangladeshi nationals represents one in twenty people.

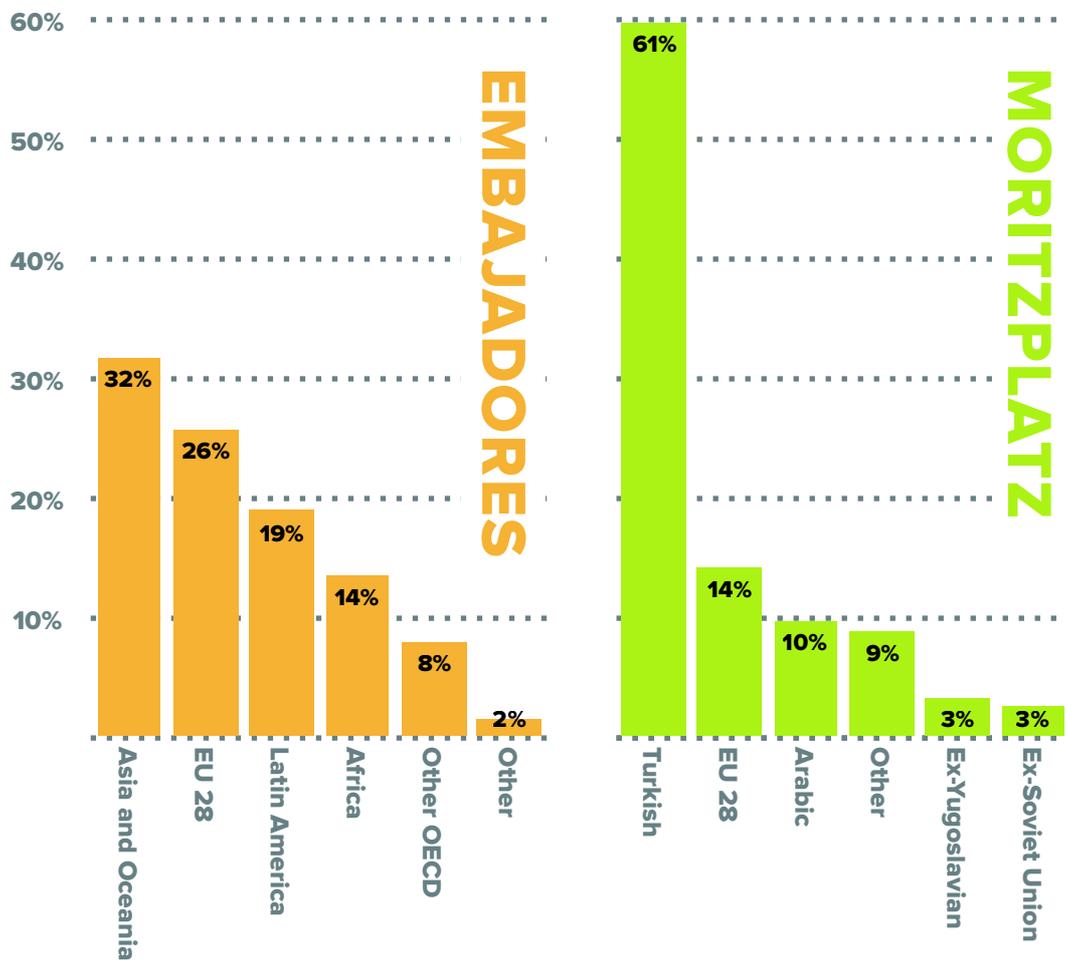


Figure 14 | Origin of immigrant populations (Sources: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2016a; Berlin Open Data, 2016)

Age structure also differs between the two neighborhoods. While Embajadores has a higher share of children, teenagers and people under 30, Moritzplatz has a higher share of people in their thirties and forties and has a generally older population.

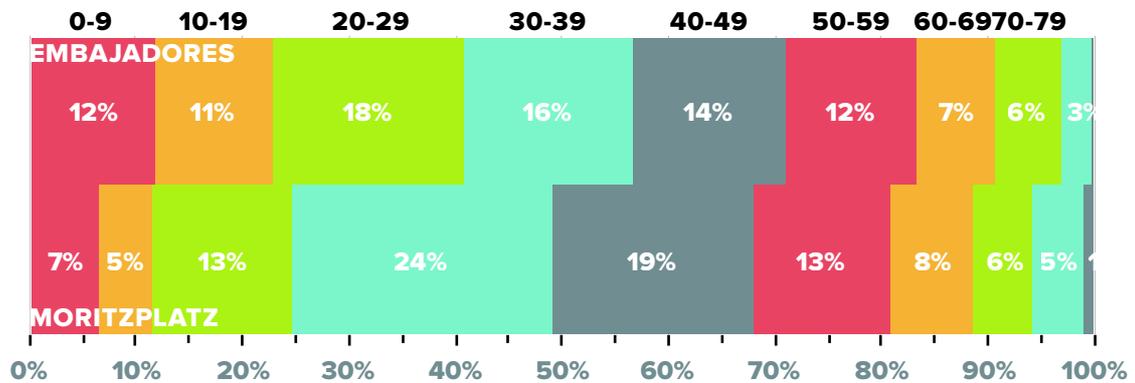


Figure 15 | Residential age structure (Sources: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2016c; Statistik Berlin Brandenburg, 2015)

Although the unemployment situation in Spain (19,7%) is a lot higher than in Germany (4.3%) (The World Bank, 2016), the situation looks quite different when looking at the unemployment situation at the scale of Embajadores and Moritzplatz. While Embajadores is the poorest district in the city center of Madrid, unemployment levels don't reach those in Mortizplatz, which is considered a disadvantaged "area of special attention" in Berlin (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt Berlin, 2015).

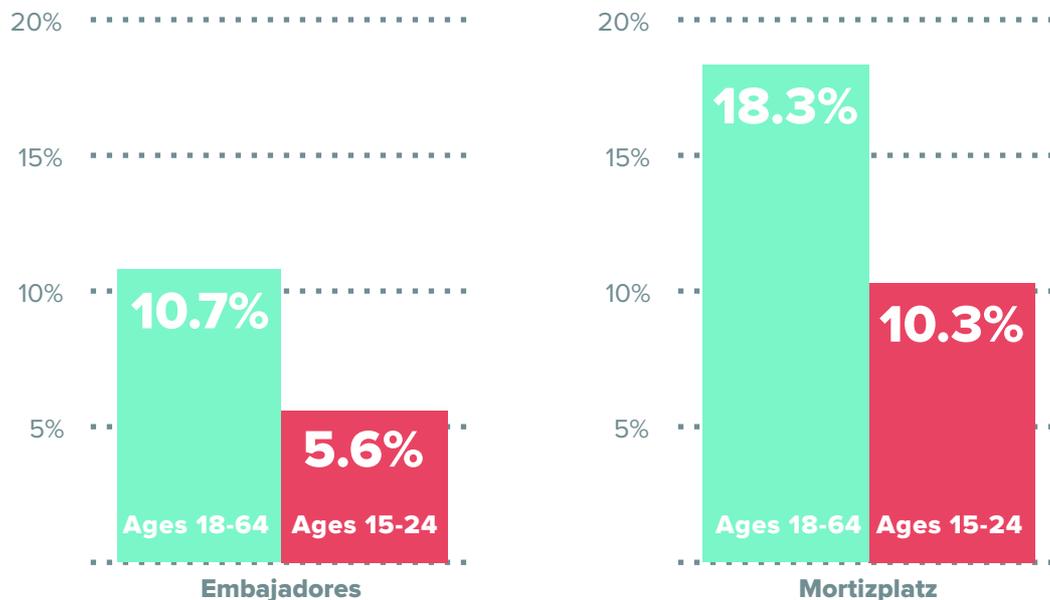


Figure 16 | Unemployment (Sources: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2017; Senatsverwaltung für Gesundheit, Pflege und Gleichstellung Berlin, 2013)

Embajadores is also considered an area of special attention, as recognized by the City Council and the Community of Madrid in its 'Plan for the Improvement of security and coexistence', which marks, among other objectives, the promotion of citizen participation and revitalization of the neighborhood through initiatives for the improvement of social integration (Esta es una Plaza Assembly, 2014).

Embajadores shows a great diversity with respect to the level of education of its inhabitants. According to the Ayuntamiento de Madrid (2016d), 33 percent of residents did not finish the primary education, while 23% has some university or postgraduate degree.

Real estate prices are rising in Embajadores. Prices of apartments per square meter rose on average 11 percent in 2015 (Barañano, 2017). One of the reasons why gentrification has not arrived to Embajadores before, might be the average size of the apartments. Traditionally poor working class neighborhood has a large number of very small apartments, which are less attractive for upscaling. Comparable data for Moritzplatz is not available, but in the post code area 10969 Prinzenstraße, where Prinzessinnengarten is located, rent for two bedroom apartments increased by an average 54 percent since 2009 (Berliner Morgenpost, 2017).

### **3.1.3 CONCLUSION**

In short, Embajadores and Moritzplatz are extremely diverse neighborhoods where there is an obvious need for fostering coexistence among different ethnic and economic groups. While they are both considered areas of special attention by their cities, a new class of residents is entering the housing market and changing the residential composition. Because of fast changes on the neighborhood levels, the difference between the surrounding conditions at the time when the two community places started out and today is already palpable.

## 3.2 THE HISTORY

Esta es una Plaza started as an idea in 2008, during a workshop in a nearby cultural center La Casa Encendida. The workshop was organized by the group Urbanación. The participants identified unused lots in the neighborhood. One of them, located at Doctor Fourquet Street 24, was empty for thirty years (Esta es una Plaza Assembly, 2014). The concrete actions carried out during this workshop consisted of proposing the transformation of this lot into a green space of alternative leisure and collective enjoyment. During the duration of the workshop, there was an intervention on the site, cleaning the garbage and brainstorming about future uses (Roberta Di Nanni, Esta es una Plaza: 2017).

Thanks to the success of the initiative, the initial group, made up of the group of people enrolled in the workshop together with the motivated neighbors began the procedures to obtain the permission to use the lot from the City of Madrid, owner of the space. The first step in this direction was the establishment of a cultural association with the name Esta es una Plaza. They wanted to change the one-off workshop into a bigger project, with the focus on self-management and citizen participation (Esta es una Plaza Assembly, 2014).

During an interview conducted on 9 June 2017, assembly member Sara Casado Jiménez stated that in 2009, one year after the works started, the city of Madrid has decided to destroy the self-built plot, sent bulldozers, and leveled the site. This caused a public outcry, which inspired a large-scale new-activism-style media campaign. According to Sara, the place was frequently featured on the news, and became a known name throughout Madrid and Spain.

Those interested in keeping the plaza as a collective space were working hard to reclaim the space. This included working in the neighborhood, talking to the media and at the same time using all possible avenues for negotiation with the City Council (Esta es una Plaza Assembly, 2014). Finally in December 2009, the formal concession to use the site was obtained (La Red de Huertos Urbanos de Madrid, 2012). This was a temporary use contract for 5 years, with the possibility of extension.

Prinzessinnengarten started out somewhat less dramatically. According to co-founder Robert Shaw, interviewed on 19 July 2017, the first time he went

inside the empty lot was when they jumped the big fence with a journalist on the same day in 2009 as they were about to officially receive the keys. In this case, the majority of the administrative battle for establishing the place was going on before the plot was physically appropriated in any way.

Robert explained that when they jumped the fence, they saw huge amount of trash and initially felt discouraged. The journalist wrote a small article about the place, and added the date for the cleaning action. Instead of expected five or ten people, more than 150 people showed up to help. As soon as they started, people began to select trash. They found useful or interesting items and put them somewhere in the place. That's how the spacial configuration of space first started to spontaneously materialize.

The idea for Prinzessinnengarten was inspired by the urban gardening practices in Cuba (Burckhardt, Prinzessinnengarten: 2017) and built by large numbers of self-organized volunteers from the neighborhood and beyond.



**Figure 17 | Gradual construction of the stage with the sitting 'talkscape' at Esta es una Plaza (Source: Esta es una Plaza Assembly, 2014)**

Esta es una Plaza has since 2009 transformed into a landscaped, quiet and pleasant space through successive interventions and activities. There is a distinctive atmosphere of an alternative leisure, meeting and coexistence.

This happened during a slow process of gradual developing and changing the space by various actors. There was no central design authority, and certainly no professional expert intervention. Everybody just built something, the assembly agreed on where to put it, and so the place evolved.

The same is true for Prinzessinnengarten which has been developed in the same way of gradual accretion. These evolutionary processes are messy by nature. Matthias Wilkens during an interview on 17<sup>th</sup> July described how sometimes someone would build a structure, not knowing where to put it, and so it would stay stored somewhere in the place for weeks until another person finds a different use for it.

One exception to this way of creating space was a large wooden structure in a corner of Prinzessinnengarten, called 'die Laube'. It was designed by an architect group, and it polarized the garden. Robert Shaw, co-founder of the garden explained in an interview on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017, that the student group approached the garden, and got the approval for proceeding with the project from people present on the garden that day. Then everyone forgot about this until the students, after two years of planning, returned with a fully elaborated plan for the structure. The plan called for a huge wooden



**Figure 18 | Construction of a roof structure at Esta es una Plaza (Source: Esta es una Plaza Assembly, 2014)**

structure, which would stand directly on the entrance like a monumental landmark. Even though most people participating in the garden found it inappropriate, they could not completely refuse the students after giving them a green light before. The role of the people in the organization was then reversed. Instead of trying to find ways to create or build something, they needed to reduce the structure as not to be so imposing and changing the character of the place too much. At the end, a compromise has been reached and a much smaller structure was erected in the corner. According to the co-founder Robert Shaw, this structure to the outside symbolizes the stability of the place, implying that Prinzessinnengarten is here to stay. But on the inside, it represents a foreign object which disrespected the cooperative rules of conduct, which enabled this place to be as it is in the first place.



**Figure 19 | Wooden structure 'die Laube' at Prinzessinnengarten (Source: Urban Inspiration, 2017)**

### 3.3 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Both places are examples of temporary use space, a special kind of lease contract, legally intended for underutilized places such as abandoned construction sites or brownfields in the city. These contracts are given for a fixed period of time, but they can be extended at the discretion of the city or district. This means, that the city has the opportunity to reclaim the space at the end of each contract period. Precarious status is therefore inherent to these places.

Major difference between the case studies is that *Esta es una Plaza* is using the plot free of charge, while at *Prinzessinnengarten*, about one third of the expenses are being used to cover the rent of the plot (Burckhardt, *Prinzessinnengarten*: 2017). This results in different attitudes towards money. At *Esta es una Plaza*, any kind of for-profit activities are strictly forbidden. During an interview, an assembly member sent out a group of people taking photos of dogs for a dog show, as this was considered to have a monetary for-profit purpose. The limited expenses of the garden (mostly water and some tools) are being covered by open kitchen events a few times a year, where people can donate for food (di Nanni, *Esta es una Plaza*: 2017).

*Prinzessinnengarten* has a social entrepreneurship approach. Instead of fighting against the capitalist system, they try to work within it. They are a not-for-profit organization, which employs eleven people (Burckhardt, *Prinzessinnengarten*: 2017). This way the garden offers jobs to disadvantaged people from the neighborhood. About a third of income comes from each of the following: from the bar and restaurant on the site, from organizing and running workshops on locations such as schools and museums and from selling the produce from the garden (Shaw, *Prinzessinnengarten*: 2017). There is a lot of pressure from large private companies to use the place for their branding and marketing purposes like recording commercials or organizing events, but so far this kind of offers have been rejected (Shaw, *Prinzessinnengarten*: 2017).

At *Esta es una Plaza* the decisions are taken in the assembly, which includes between thirty and forty members (di Nanni, *Esta es una Plaza*: 2017). Nobody is in charge and all the members are equal. Naturally, some have a bit more say, depending if they are there for a long time or are particularly persuasive, but there is no formal vertical hierarchical structure. The



**Figure 20 | Assembly meeting at Esta es una Plaza (Source: Esta es una Plaza Assembly, 2014)**

assembly meets weekly and discusses topics. The decisions are taken by consensus. This means that every single present member has to agree with the proposed change or project, or it does not happen. This process can make some changes difficult to implement and some projects move ahead very slowly (Obelleiro, Esta es una Plaza: 2017). Yet, the sample of people from the assembly seem to agree, that the system works well.

Prinzessinnengarten has two kinds of hierarchies. There is a formal hierarchy, where the two co-founders of the non-profit organization have the power of decision. Another layer is the informal structure within the members of the organization. Decisions are taken on two weekly meetings - Thursday meeting is specifically about gardening and Friday meeting is about general matters. There is an interesting relationship between the two kinds of hierarchy. The interviewed members of the Prinzessinnengarten organization agreed that the co-founders are attentive and respectful to the general opinion of the garden. Co-founder Robert Shaw stated, that he would never do something against the opinion of the members of the garden. Still, conflicts of interests do arise. For example, Shaw (2017) talked about his overview of the finance of the garden and described the financial situation to

be precarious. He mentioned his sense of responsibility for people depending on the garden for their survival. Once, he brought to the meeting the idea of accepting advertising money out of desperation over the cashflow issues. Because other members of the organization don't necessarily know the financial situation and don't feel this pressure, they can afford to be more principal about the topic. The members rejected the idea. Robert Shaw (2017) stated, that he would never accept any decision against the will of the people in the garden.

Both places actively communicate with the wider public trough social media and on central blackboards on sites. Interestingly, they are both against using extensive signs - they want to encourage interaction and participation, and don't want visitors walking around "like in a botanical garden" (Shaw, Prinzessinnengarten: 2017).



**Figure 21 | Bar and restaurant area at Prinzessinnengarten (Source: Cool Cities, 2015)**

### 3.4 PRESENT STATE

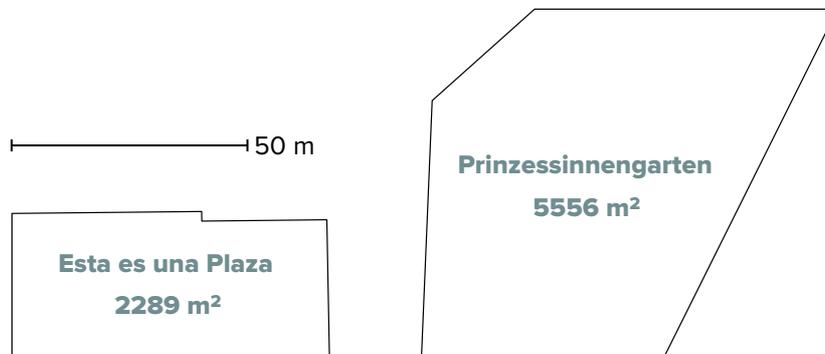


Figure 22 | Comparison of sizes and shapes (Source: Author)

The two urban commons are of different sizes - Prinzessinnengarten is almost two and a half times the size of Esta es una Plaza. The sizes and shapes put limits on the layout of the places. There are more different programs present at Prinzessinnengarten, partially because there is more space.



Figure 23 | Esta es una Plaza Spatial Configuration (Source: Esta es una Plaza Assembly, 2014)





Figure 25 | Central board at Esta es una Plaza (Source: Author)

will be extended by the end of this year. Co-founder of Prinzessinnengarten, Robert Shaw stated in an interview (2017), that “they would not dare” to evict them, because they had grown to be too important for the district and the city.



Figure 26 | Plant beds at Prinzessinnengarten (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2011)

# CHAPTER 4

## FINDINGS AND RESULTS

### 4.1 PROCESS AND THE RESULTING URBAN ATMOSPHERE

Over a period of seven years many events and activities happened at both places - concerts, open-air cinema, tournaments, workshops, open debates, public breakfasts, music jam sessions and so on. Places developed their specific urban atmospheres and informal rules. An interesting 'non-design' process has been identified in both cases. Neither had any kind of professional design oriented thinking behind it, but rather developed through a slow evolutionary process of accretion and layering. Exception is the wooden structure die Laube at Prinzessinnengarten, which is considered an



Figure 27 | Table with movable benches, protected against sun and rain at Esta es una Plaza  
(Source: Author)

alien object by the garden community. There was no overarching authority making decisions about the layout at the beginning or at any point later in development. It was more about hundreds of people making thousands of micro decisions, which almost spontaneously gave shape to the places as they are today. Result of this kind of process is a different kind of esthetic of the place, which could be described as rugged and disorganized. An architect could see this as a mess, needed to be organized and rationalized through design. But this paper at the beginning spoke about the importance of random places, where people can do random things. The case studies definitely provide that. People building the place for themselves by themselves will have different feelings about it. They will likely build it to human scale instead of car scale. They will incorporate flexibility, so people can appropriate space in the way they want. They will install shades where they will be bothered by the sun or put sitting places in the shade with a good view. Because it is possible to significantly change a part of the place even after it has already been created, this calls for a continuous evolution and adaptation, which opens space for experimentation and gradual refinements. This brings up an interesting question: What is the purpose of urban design, if people seem to be capable of creating their own public space?



**Figure 28 | Tables in the shaded area of Prinzessinnengarten (Source: Author)**

Organizational structure and the idea of the place attracts specific people, which join the projects and then shape the place according to their tastes and needs. Because of this snowball effect, there is a risk of homogenization

of the places. This is indeed visible to some degree in relation to the local foreign-born residents who generally don't come to the places in both cases. It is not reasonable to expect all the groups to be equally invested in place-making. Good urban design does not seem to necessarily need an expert designer. People are able to use their common sense to build comfortable furniture, create a functional layout of the place and protect places from rain or wind. Therefore, urban designer's role can function more like a mediator.

Community learning is one of the main objectives at both case studies. For this, there must be elements located in place, which are intended for specific knowledge-creating purposes such as a bee-hives, wood-working or bicycle workshops. This structures and activities also contribute to the urban atmospheres, attract people and provide productive opportunities. They expand the function of public space beyond what is typically expected. Through this additional layers of activities, these places foster a higher sense of belonging.

The context of the places also has a big impact on what kind of character the places have. Esta es una Plaza is used as the refuge for those who feel oppressed on traditional public places. Drinking outside in Madrid is illegal



Figure 29 | Youngsters occupying a discrete corner at Esta es una Plaza (Source: Author)

and police presence is high in the city centre. This is why many young people come to drink and smoke to Esta es una Plaza. This influences the urban atmosphere. There is also drug dealing present there, as one of the correspondents wrote their phone number on the survey, with the note “call me please, I have great weed”. This is a problem for at least one member of the assembly. They mentioned that firstly, the children are playing and running around just next to them, and secondly, it sheds bad light on the organization. They expressed the concern that if a municipality sees that this is what is going on there, there is a risk that they will not like it. Berlin has generally a much more permissive environment, so the refuge role of community gardens is not needed. A more articulated process there is touristification.

This is another process, which shapes the urban atmosphere. As the places grow in popularity, the word starts to spread, they appear in travel guides and more people come to visit. Big majority of tourists don't participate. Instead they use the place for consumption or sightseeing. The organization is even considering to move the participatory activities from Prinzessinnengarten to a different location (Shaw, 2017), leaving only the leisure activities in the existing, highly frequented location. Shaw (2017), one of the co-founders said in an interview that sometimes there are two people working in the garden, and four other people stand around and take pictures of them. As it can happen for whole districts or cities (e.g. Prague or Friedrichshain in Berlin) the same negative effects of increased tourism are detectable even on a small-scale place such as Prinzessinnengarten.

## 4.2 STUDYING THE PHYSICAL PLACE

Two case studies can confirm or reject assumptions about the quality of place resulting from the bottom-up community-organized processes of origin and organization. Insight about the physical configurations of *Esta es una Plaza* and *Prinzessinnengarten* emerged from the detailed analysis of the sites using Gehl's twelve key quality criteria.

Both places turned out exceptionally well in a few categories. Protection against traffic and accidents is perfect because there is no vehicular traffic at all in both places. There is no need to take extra care of children running around and virtually no parent would hold their child's hand. Both places are dimensioned to the human scale. This means that there are no vast areas where a person can feel uninvited, no big billboards, no expansive distances or uniform facades. It is apparent that the places were built by humans for humans. People intrinsically know human scale. If a lay person is thinking about creating a place for their own use they are not going to plan broad straight avenues with no details, because no single person needs them. Traffic might need the wide roads, but this is not part of the considerations on the case studies. The resulting dimensions and resolution of the details in places make for a very engaging environment.

It is possible to enjoy the best aspects of climate on the locations of both case studies. There are plenty of opportunities to find shade or to stay in the sun. There are cooler areas, generally more densely planted, and warmer areas like the open air gardening zones. *Esta es una Plaza* is situated in a somewhat more enclosed volume of space, which enables less windy microclimatic conditions. Even though *Esta es una Plaza* is less windy, *Prinzessinnengarten* has more places to hide from the wind. There is also less rain in Madrid, and so *Esta es una Plaza* is offering less protection against it than *Prinzessinnengarten*, where there are about twelve different roof structures.



Figure 30 | Quality criteria evaluation of Esta es una Plaza and Prinzessinnengarten (Source: Author)



Figure 31 | Sitting 'talkscape' at Esta es una Plaza (Source: Esta es una Plaza, 2014)

'Opportunities to sit' is another quality criteria where both places did extremely well. There are plenty of seating spaces available at both locations, and one can always find a place to sit. Seating is positioned in a way that people watching and interacting are encouraged. Abundant greenery provides protected backs. The ambients in both places are small enough so that people can command the entire space with their eyes. This

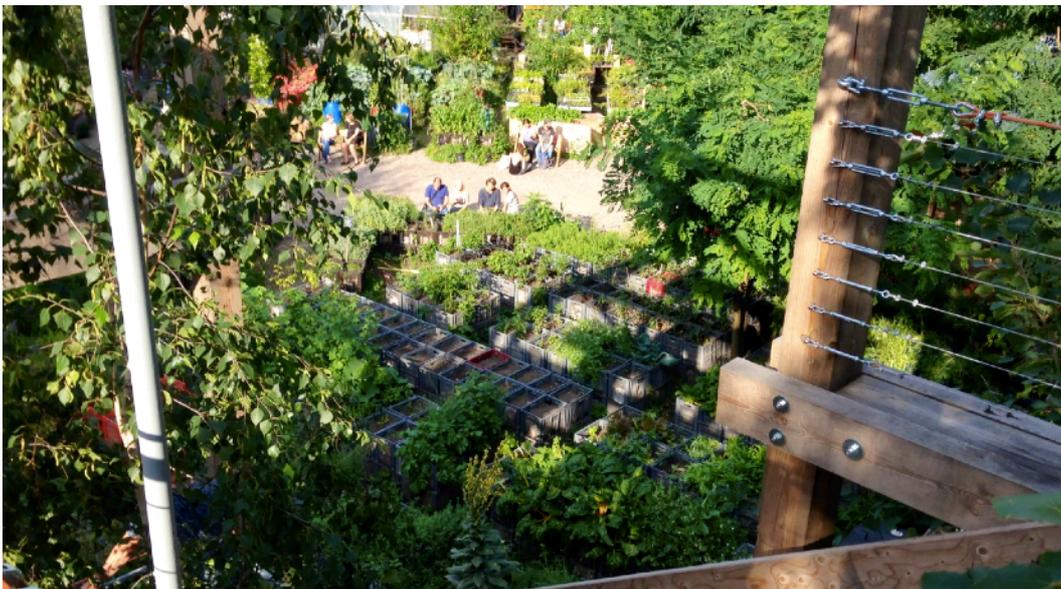


Figure 32 | Lecture at Esta es una Plaza (Source: Author)



**Figure 33 | It is possible to grasp Esta es una Plaza in one view (Source: Author)**

allows for passive surveillance, which is more possible in Prinzessinnengarten, because passers by can look inside the place from a few locations on the street, and because the wooden tower provides an overlooking point. This reinforces the presence of “eyes on the street”. People looking at other people, and knowing they are being watched as well, automatically provides a higher degree of safety.



**Figure 34 | Prinzessinnengarten has a more articulated division of places, but the wooden structure ‘die Laube’ allows for some overview (Source: Author)**



**Figure 36 | Small library at Esta es una Plaza (Source: Madrider, 2013)**

Because both places are walled in, they are quite isolated from the surroundings. It is not apparent to the passer by that she may enter the place. Esta es una plaza is more isolated from the street level, but there are large numbers of windows in neighboring buildings overlooking it.

Esta es una Plaza is small enough that it is possible to grasp it in one view upon entering. Prinzessinnengarten is larger and thus not instantly graspable. It is divided into smaller units, which become sub-places within the fragmented space. The edges of these sub-places become nuclei of social interaction. The furniture is often concentrated on these edges, where people choose to be. There is always something to look at on both places.

Space at Prinzessinnengarten is more divided by the structures and therefore has a higher quantity of edges. There are sub-places within the space, so multiple activities can happen simultaneously. Esta es una Plaza is composed of two main continuous spaces, but on both there are plenty of places, nooks and crannies where people can meet, hide and stay. This is slightly more articulated in the forrest at Prinzessinnengarten. There are also commercial activities at Prinzessinnengarten, including a shop, a cafe and other functions. However, there is no mandatory consumption to use either of the places.

There are good conditions to talk at both places, but traffic noise is more present in Prinzessinnengarten. There are also usually more people present



**Figure 37 | Dry soil and plant beds made of bricks in Esta es una Plaza (Source: Author)**

in place. Esta es una Plaza is very quiet most of the time and it has a great talking landscape (theater). Prinzessinnengarten has only one small sitting talkscape sculpture by the info container. The wooden tower could be in a way considered a talkscape as well.

There are no sports opportunities at any place, but there are playground areas. Gardening could be considered as a physical activity. More tables at Prinzessinnengarten are more conducive to card and board games, activities which were not observed at Esta es una Plaza. There are also more organized activities (tours, workshops, screenings, concerts ...) unfolding at Prinzessinnengarten, although Esta es una Plaza produces regular organized activities as well.

Prinzessinnengarten has more sense-stimulating structures, including a bar, restaurant, info container and the wooden tower. Esta es una Plaza has less prominent structures and more prominent solid wall surrounding the perimeter. Generally, there are no obstacles for walking in both places. Prinzessinnengarten is slightly more difficult, because it has more cables and wires crossing the pathways on the ground. Both places don't have any steps

or curbs, so they are accessible in this regard, but the ground itself is the simplest possible dirt ground at Esta es una Plaza and gravel at Prinzessinnengarten.

One question in the survey addresses the perceptions about physical comfort in the places. The average comfort rating on a scale from painful (1) to extremely comfortable (10) was almost 9. This shows that most participants feel that physical comfort is particularly high. After verbal interactions with users of places at the time of conducting the survey, the general opinion was that the places are more comfortable than typical public space. This can be embarrassing for urban designers, as these places materialized without any expert assertion, yet they are more successful in this regard.



**Figure 38 | People feel very comfortable at both places (Source: Author)**

## 4.3 PERSON

### 4.3.1 WHO ARE THE PEOPLE THERE?

In order to contextualize the subjective experience of place, it is important to first know more about the visitors who come to the case studies. Supported by good physical framework, there is a lively public life unfolding within these walls. People on both places were counted on five different occasions. It is estimated that there are on average 71 people in Esta es una Plaza and 154 in Prinzessinnengarten. This means there are about 32 square meters of space available per person at Esta es una Plaza and 35 at Prinzessinnengarten hinting at a comparable density. But people are not evenly spread out. Instead, they assemble close together on at least three places within the places, which leave plenty of room for productive activities.

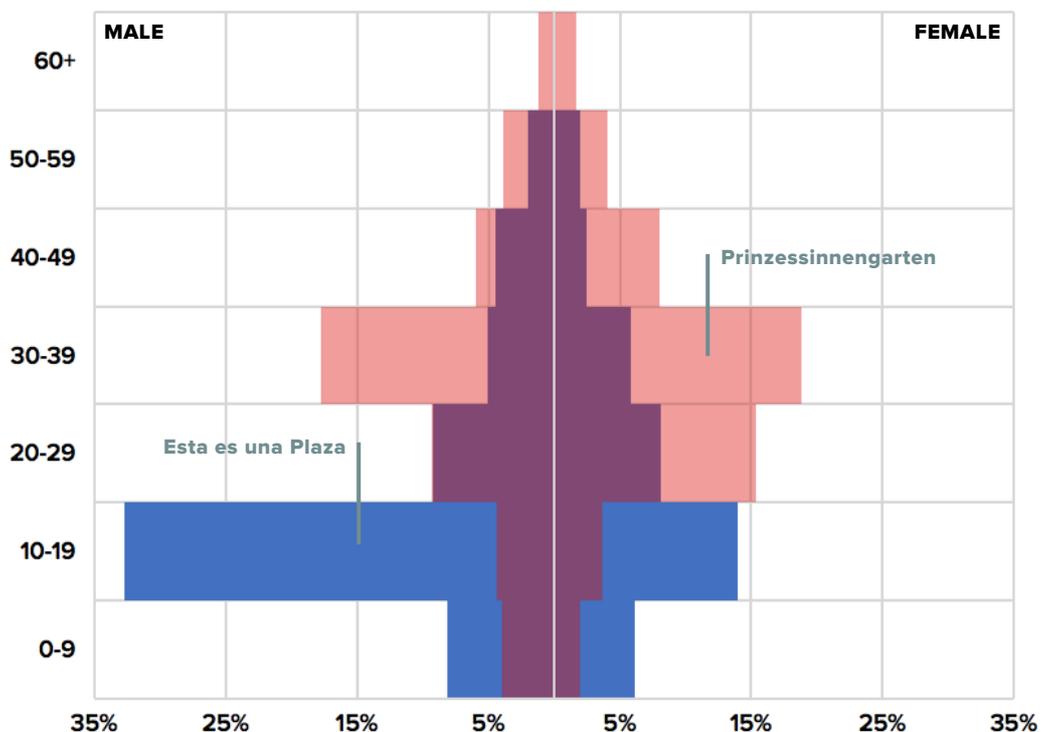


Figure 39 | 'Population pyramid' comparing the gender and age shares based on the count (Source: Author)

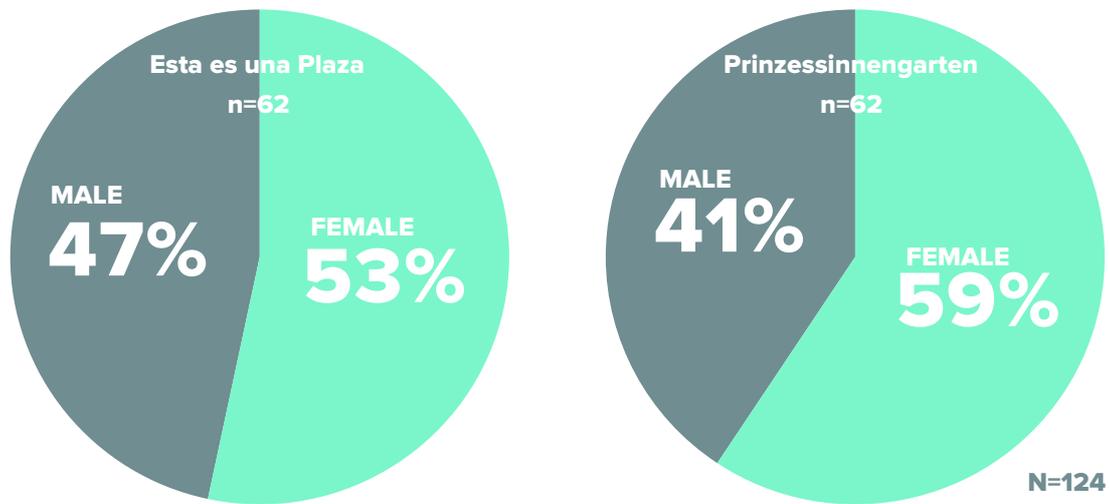


Figure 40 | Gender ratio of survey respondents (Source: Author)

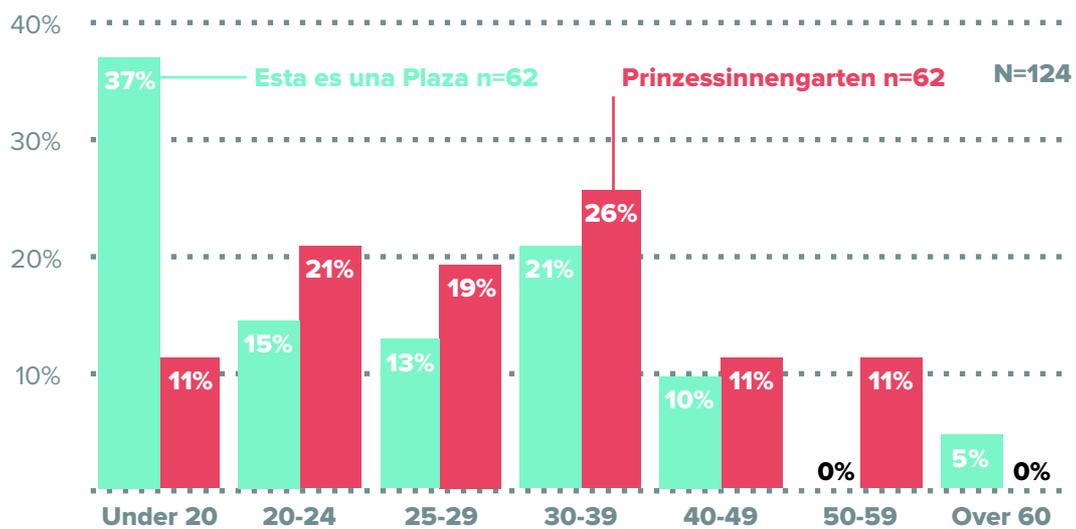


Figure 41 | Age of surveyed people present in both gardens (Source: Author)

The count included the author’s subjective estimation of gender and age. Based on that data, overlapping ‘population pyramids’ were created to compare the two results. The visitors profiles at both places are significantly different. The most obvious difference is the overwhelming presence of male teenagers at Esta es una plaza. They represent about one third of all visitors. In general, there is also a higher share of children and female teenagers at the community garden in Madrid. The most obvious explanation for this seems to be the fact that the urban environment in Madrid is a lot more policed and in general more prohibitive than the one in Berlin, so that kind of places serve as the refuge for young people to do the things they enjoy like

drinking and smoking. This is also apparent in the survey results. Another generalization is that users of space in Prinzessinnengarten are older. Most people there are in their thirties, and there is a presence of people over sixty years old, which are virtually absent at Esta es una Plaza. There is also a more gender balanced visitor base to Prinzessinnengarten with a slight female majority. Age profile of the persons surveyed largely matches the general composition of the visitors. Gender ratio of the survey respondents is somewhat female-biased.

From those elements, several problems can be highlighted. First, the fact that it's a place used mostly by young people can give the impression of a homogenous situation at the expense of other age categories, thus reducing the place accessibility. The same thing can be said about the imbalance between the number of men and women using the place. Those two facts may also have an impact on how much Esta es una Plaza is embedded within the surrounding neighborhood and how it is thus perceived by the people living around it, as the "population" of Esta es una Plaza doesn't fit with the neighborhood's population. This can create a lack of place identity and place attachment for people living around it. The existence of the place can make them annoyed or they become scared of it. The fact that it is used by people coming from different areas of the city may also have an effect on the place

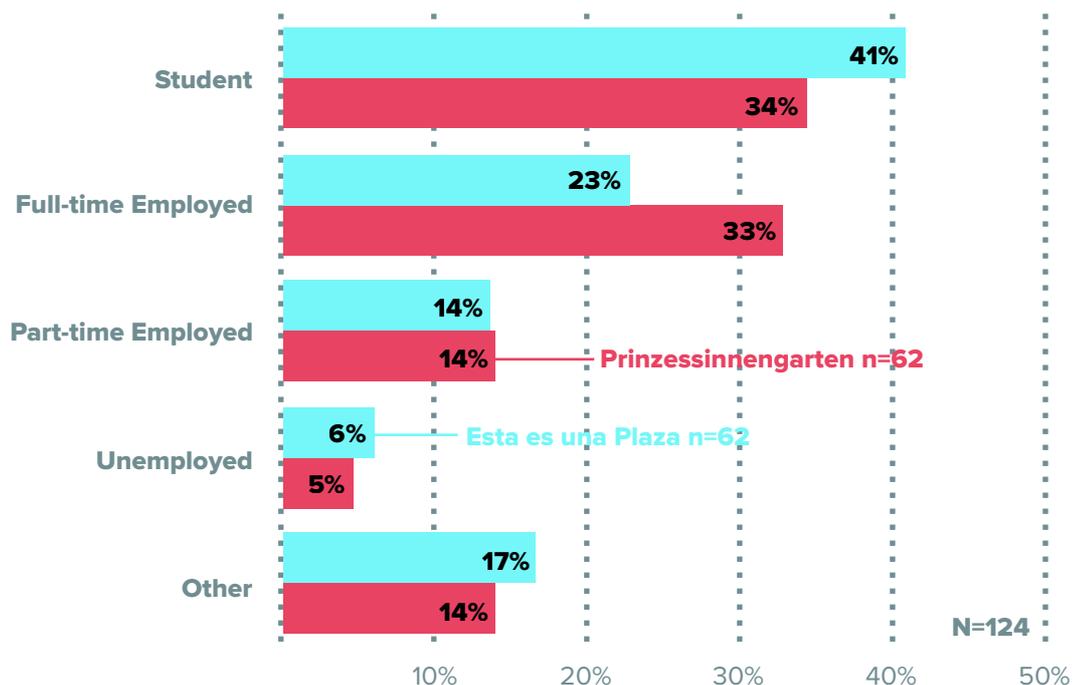


Figure 42 | Employment status of people in the community gardens (Source: Author)

embeddedness and how the neighbors feel about it. A disconnection between the place itself and the neighborhood it is embedded in can be an important problem for both the place and the neighborhood’s life.

There are significant differences, when comparing the composition of the population in the immediate neighborhood with those present within both community places. Big minority groups (Bangladeshi in the case of Madrid and Turkish in the case of Berlin) are largely excluded from the places. Lack of presence of people from migration background was the reason why it was not possible to match the sample of the correspondents of the survey with the relatively high proportions of non-native nationals living nearby. During an interview conducted on 9 June 2017, assembly member Sara Casado Jiménez stated that because of the difficult communication, the assembly at *Esta es una Plaza* made an exception from the general rules and dedicated a plot of land specifically to Bangladeshi women. This lasted for about a year before they stopped coming. According to co-founder Robert Shaw, interviewed on 19 July 2017, the Turkish community was involved in cleaning out the trash before *Prinzessinnengarten* opened, and then helped with building the plant beds and shared their gardening expertise, but ultimately they stopped coming. There are a few reasons possible for this dichotomy. Gardening manager at *Prinzessinnengarten*, Matthias Wilkens on 17 July 2017 communicated in a personal interview a few hypotheses for this. First, there is visible alcohol and weed consumption, which might not resonate well with the muslim culture. It is also possible that Turkish nationals have a strong

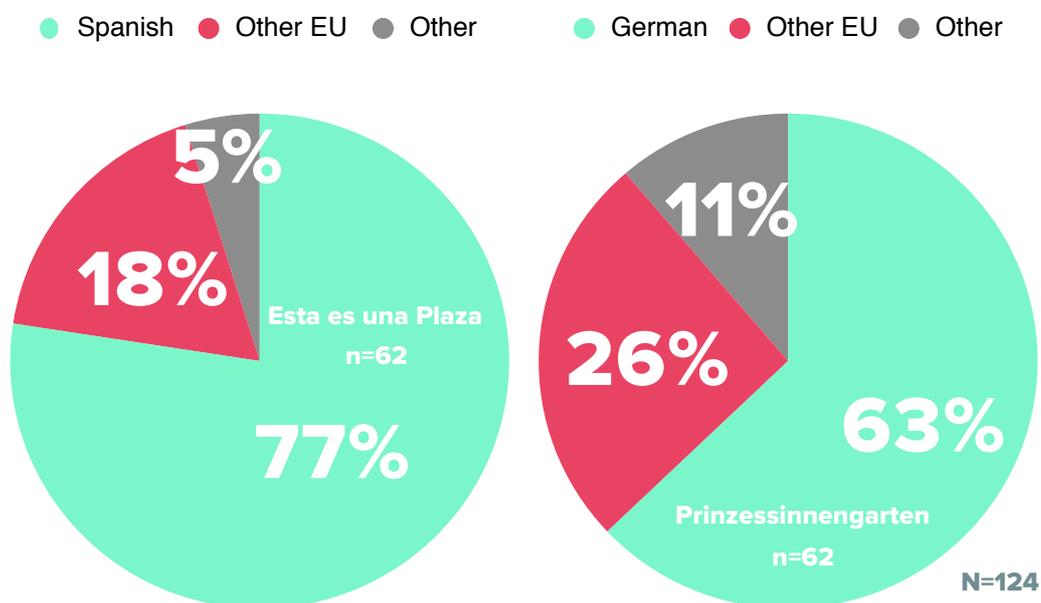


Figure 43 | Nationalities of survey respondents (Source: Author)

internal community, and don't interact so much with the local populations. Besides that, part of the reason could be cultural, like preferences for different ways of socializing (barbecue in the park, shisha bars etc.). Because Prinzessinnengarten is focused on the sustainability education, Mr. Wilkens supposed that some immigrant communities might have to deal with personal struggles and so might have limited capacity for caring about sustainability.

About a quarter of the people on Prinzessinnengarten are expats from other EU countries, while the immigrants from other countries represent just eleven percent of people there. This indicates that Prinzessinnengarten has a stronger international dimension, which corresponds to the descriptions of touristification effect during the interviews.

Comparing the employment structure of both places, shows that while there are slightly more students in Esta es una Plaza, there is a much higher share of full-time employed people at Prinzessinnengarten. The reason for this can be likely related to the age structure, rather than the inherent differences between the neighborhoods.

Last criteria to investigate about who are the people using the space is their residential location. If there are not many immigrant residents from the immediate surroundings, where are the people coming from then? The two case studies are quite distinct in this regard. Esta es una Plaza is visited by a more local population than Prinzessinnengarten, where only 42% of visitors live within walking distance. The fact that a majority of visitors live further away, speaks about the wider popularity of the place, which is listed in tourist

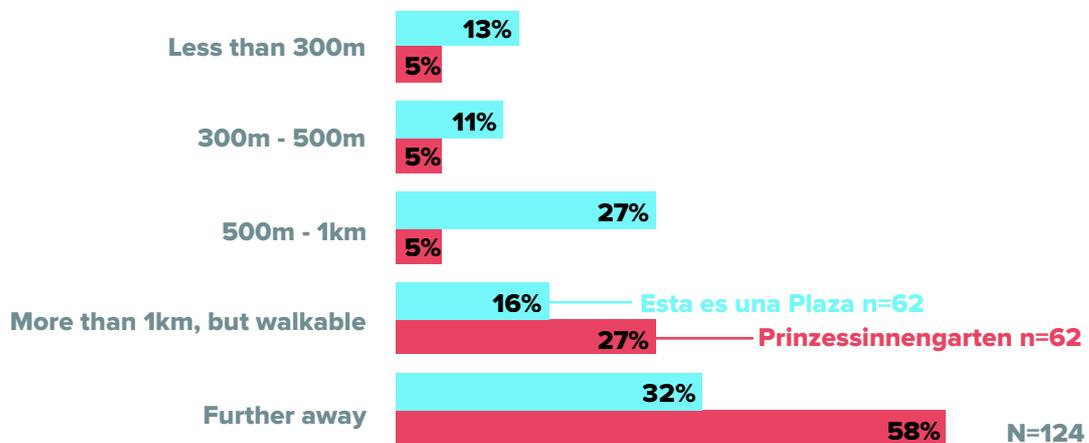


Figure 44 | How far away from here do you live? (Source: Author)

guides, and widely visited by tourists. This is becoming such an issue for people managing the place, that they are considering moving the gardening and workshop activities to a different location, keeping the existing space as a kind of entertainment venue with the bar, concerts and movie screenings. Visitors to Esta es una Plaza are more local. More than two thirds of them live within walking distance. Here, the data has to be contextualized with the higher population density in Embajadores. Based on the population density within the neighborhood it is possible to estimate that in a circle with a radius of one kilometer around Esta es una Plaza lives about 138.000 people, while the same area around Prinzessinnengarten is inhabited by about 58.000 people. Part of the reason for visitors coming to Prinzessinnengarten from further away is the ‘fame’ of the place, and part of the reason why more people come to Esta es una Plaza from close by is that there are simple a lot more people nearby.

Another reason for how frequented Prinzessinnengarten is might lie in its central location just next to the metro station Moritzplatz. But as the survey results indicated, people come there from many parts of the city, and therefore the place is important not only for the local neighborhood, but for the entire city.

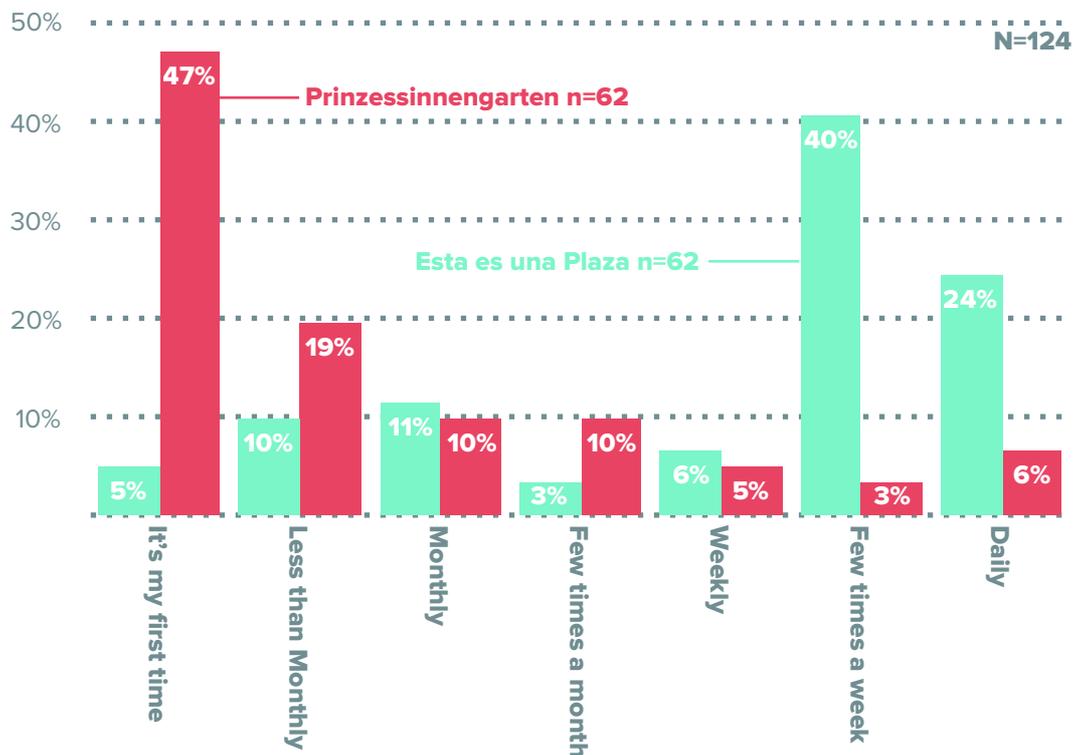


Figure 45 | Average frequency of visits (Source: Author)

### 4.3.2 ABOUT THE VISITING HABITS

The habits of coming to the place and using it are affected by how close by people live. The first visitor's habit to investigate is the length of stay. The survey analysis shows a big difference in the profile of people visiting both places. Almost half of the people at Prinzessinnengarten are first time visitors while more than two thirds of the visitors come to Esta es una Plaza daily or a few times a week. This means a lot higher return rates for people at Esta es una Plaza in comparison with Prinzessinnengarten.

Length of stay also differs significantly amongst the two places. In general, users stay longer at Esta es una Plaza, where almost half of the users stay more than two hours. Based on this data it is possible to distinguish the profile of people in both community places as predominantly 'visitors' in Berlin and 'locals' in Madrid. Generally people often come to see Prinzessinnengarten in a touristic sense. To Esta es una Plaza they come more to hang out and socialize.

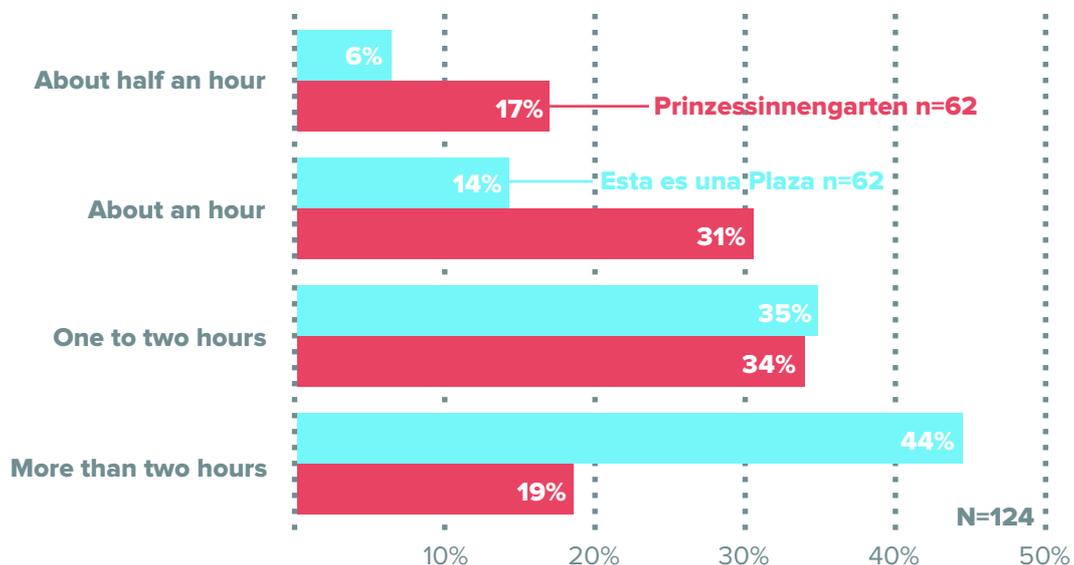


Figure 46 | Average length of stay (Source: Author)

How people come to this place generally corresponds to a general modal split in the two cities. Most people arrived to both places by walking. In comparison, many more people arrive to Prinzessinnengarten by bike, which corresponds to a significantly more articulated cycling culture in Berlin. More

people in Madrid arrive by public transport. Interestingly, not a single person surveyed in both case studies arrived to the place by car.

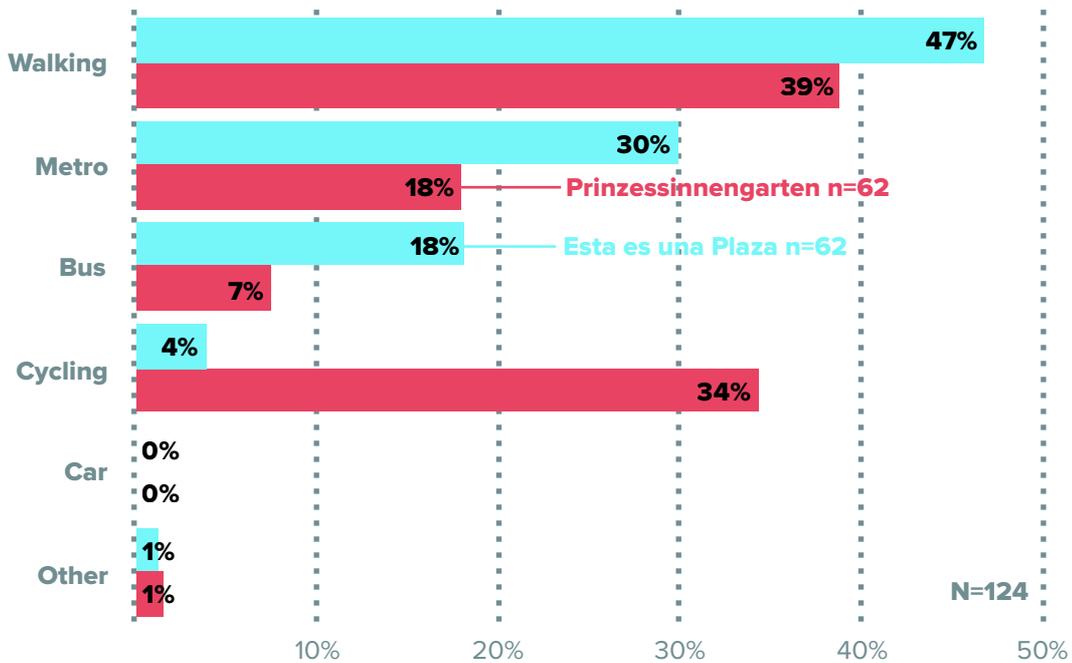


Figure 47 | Transport option used for arriving at the place (Source: Author)

#### 4.3.3 FEELINGS ABOUT PLACES

To transition from user profiling to subjective perceptions, this paper investigates the reasons and motivations for why users come there. In both places about a quarter of visitors come to the places to rest and relax. The motivations for coming correspond to the offerings of the places. On Prinzessinnengarten many people come to eat, which is not pronounced at all at Esta es una Plaza. On the contrary, many people visit Esta es una Plaza because children enjoy it - an almost non-existent reason at Prinzessinnengarten. Despite these places being perceived and identified as community gardening projects, only one or two percent of people come to actually garden. The fact that many people answered that they were just passing by Prinzessinnengarten and so they stepped in is curious. This reason for being present almost doesn't exist for Esta es una Plaza, despite it being located in a much denser urban environment. This might be connected to the proximity of Prinzessinnengarten to the metro station and a big transport node. Esta es una Plaza is located on a quiet, local and mostly

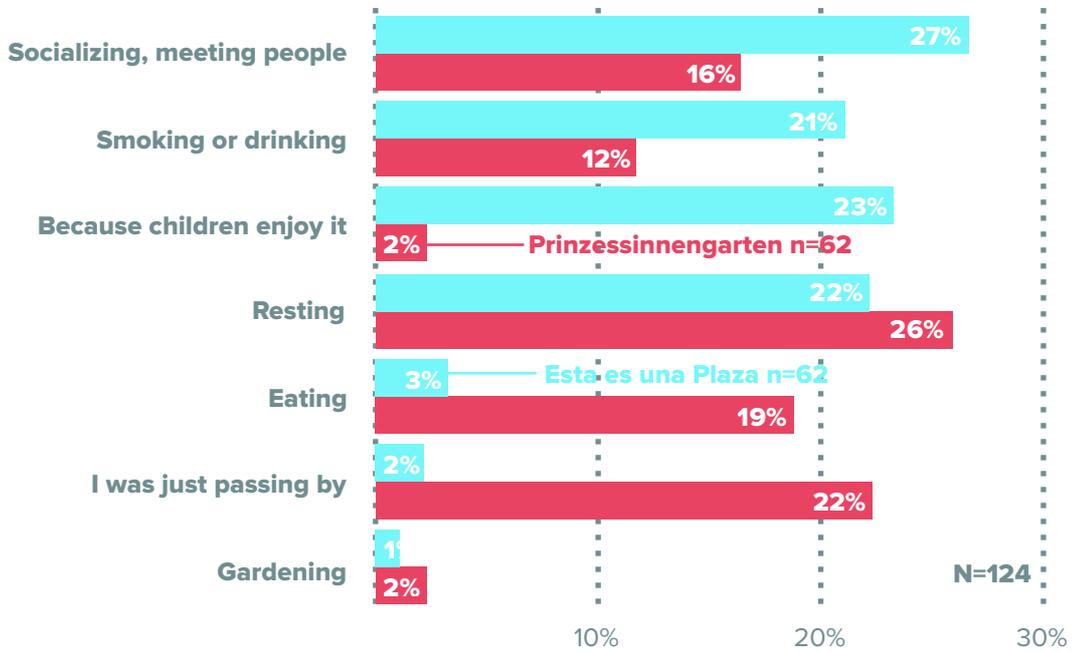


Figure 48 | Reasons for coming to the place (Source: Author)

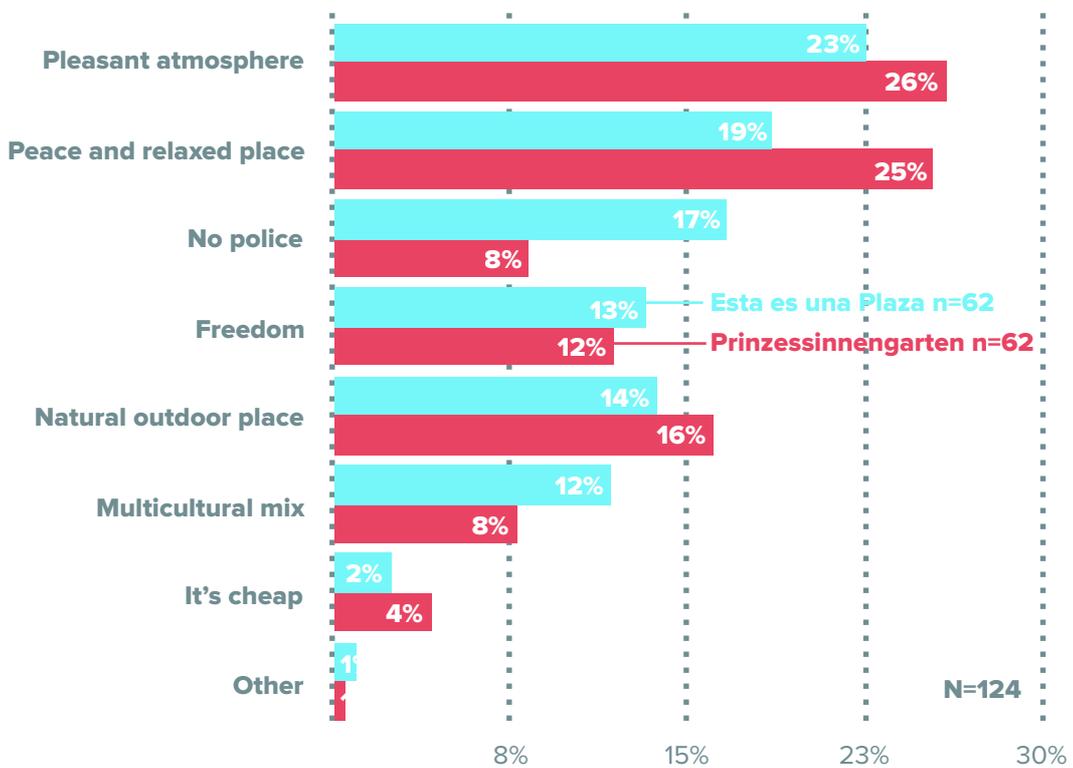


Figure 49 | What is it that you like about this place? (Source: Author)

residential street and more hidden behind the tall brick wall.

When asked why they came to Esta es una Plaza, almost a third of the people said that it was mainly for socializing and meeting other people, but this is something that can be done in most public places. So the question is why Esta es una Plaza offers better conditions for socializing than other public places. The argument of the human scale and spatial flexibility was already suggested. Almost a quarter of people there said that they went there to drink and smoke, something that is not allowed (or at least can be repressed) in typical public places. This likely relates to the respondents' young average age. These young people might not feel free to do what they want in other public places. If they go to those places, they may have to hide or to be discreet. That's why they choose to come to Esta es una Plaza where the behavior rules are less strict.

Researching what people actually like about these places gives a somewhat more balanced picture than the reasons for coming. However, the 'No police' factor was more prominent in Esta es una Plaza. This relates to the general environment in Madrid being a lot less permissive with a strong police presence in public space. People seem to like the atmosphere of the place on Prinzessinnengarten somewhat better than on Esta es una Plaza. Survey also shows that people perceive Prinzessinnengarten as more peaceful and relaxed place. This can be questioned in objective terms.

The most insightful results about perceptions of space have been generated using a likert-style survey questions about place identity, attachment and dependence. The respondents rated how much they agree with the statements, ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree).

When trying to explain the differences in subjective perceptions about places, it is important to acknowledge the apparent demographic differences on the places. Population on Esta es una Plaza is in general a lot younger. Younger people might tend to identify with places more, as they are trying to shape their own identities as part of the growing up process. Esta es una Plaza is seen as a refuge from the state control and police surveillance, and as such represent a significant sub-cultural space in the city. Prinzessinnengarten is considered more a general place of leisure, where one can go grab a beer and enjoy the surroundings.

Esta es una Plaza is one of the central political activist places in Madrid, and a role model for many other similar places which came later. One of the

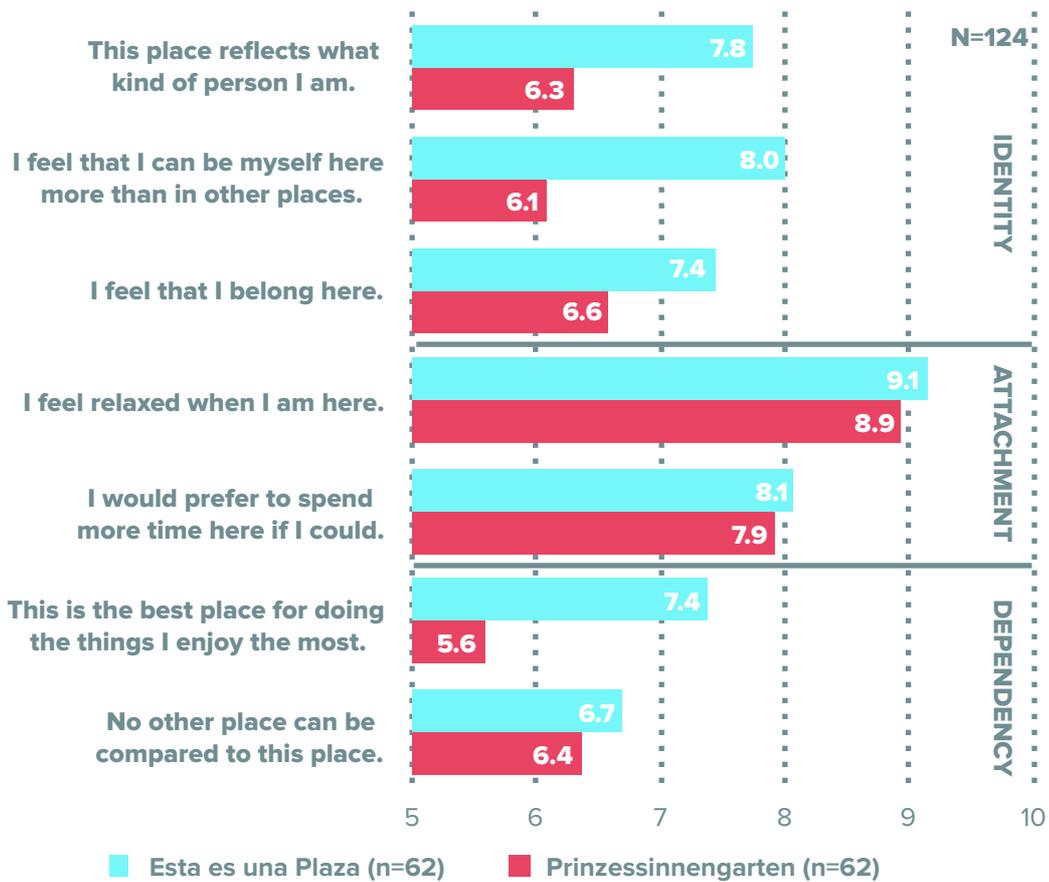


Figure 50 | Measuring place identity, attachment and dependency (Source: Author)

characteristics that set it apart from most other places is the no-money policy. Strong political ideology represents a stark contrast with the rest of the public society and positions the place as an oasis or an enclave within the capitalist city. During an interview conducted on 9 June 2017, Sara Casado Jiménez stated that her father was horrified with the place when she brought him there. He discarded it as ‘a place full of hippies’. This brings up another interesting point about place identity - the more one specific segment or sub-group identifies with the place, the more homogeneous the place might become and as a consequence, the more possible it is that all other groups will feel alienated. On Prinzessinnengarten this kind of strong opposite reactions to the place were not detected at any point during the research. It could be claimed that Prinzessinnengarten is less contrasting with its environment and is perceived more as a ‘normal’ place to go to in Berlin.

Another part of the reason for more developed place identity at Esta es una Plaza could be that the place exists for a longer time. Esta es una Plaza also

has a more local community and is much less frequented by tourists and other visitors. Seems like there is a more coherent and closed group of people there, who create their own alternative ideological reality within the place in a way that does not seem to materialize as strongly in Prinzessinnengarten.

There is clear difference between case studies in terms of place identity, but place attachment is much less differentiated. This comes somewhat as a surprise, as habits of users at Esta es una Plaza are in theory more attachment-generating. Visitors at Esta es una Plaza on average know five times more people there as on Prinzessinnengarten and they have been coming to the place on average for two months longer. People come back more often to Esta es una Plaza and they stay longer. The values for place attachment are indeed very high at both case studies. This suggests that the reasons for attachment would not lie in the differences but in similarities between places.

Both places are perceived as green, relaxing places in loud and busy cities. The gardening activities make people return to the place, to tend for the

plants and every time they return, they notice how the plants have grown. Both places can be changed and appropriated. According to Ellinghaus (Prinzessinnengarten: 2017) it is very rewarding to build furniture and then later see how people use it.

People are in general significantly more dependent on Esta es una Plaza than Prinzessinnengarten. Place dependency is in this case connected to the external factors. For example, there are virtually no green spaces or playgrounds in Lavapies, and so parents depend more on Esta es una Plaza, where they can bring their small children to play. The apartments are small and there are limited public places in the neighborhood, so Esta es una Plaza is used as a living room.



Figure 51 | How many people do you usually know here? (Source: Author)

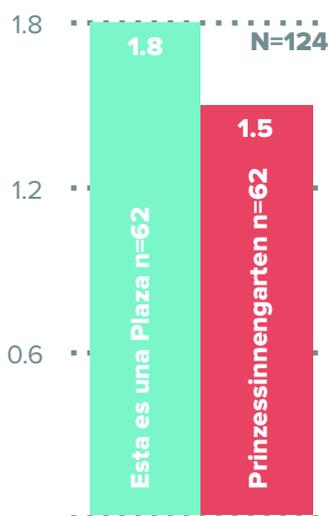


Figure 52 | How many years have you been coming here? (Source: Author)

But the primary reason for a well articulated place dependency at Esta es una Plaza is the fact that it is a place of escape for many young people. There is only one comparable place in the center of Madrid - Campo de la Cebada in La Latina district. Escaping in this case does not mean only escaping from the police surveillance, but also from the guardians. Three individuals on Esta es una Plaza mentioned in a conversation that they come here because their parents would not.

There is also something to be said about place dependence in terms of its educational and productive offerings. People are able to learn new skills and use their hands for making something useful. There are not many opportunities like this in the city.

Finally it needs to be acknowledged that at least eleven people are actually literally dependent of Prinzessinnengarten for their livelihood. Because of the social entrepreneurship approach of Prinzessinnengarten, they are able to more directly help citizens in need by offering them paid jobs. It would be apt to distinguish between different kinds of place dependences.

## 4.4 CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE METHODOLOGY

Comparing the two similar case studies within different contexts was useful for verifying hypotheses about community-organized public places. Researching two places enabled further refinements of the findings and in some cases exposed influence of the external factors. Further research could compare different kinds of public places within the same context, e.g. a traditional square, street, contemporary square and community organized public place. This way, particular characteristics of informal bottom-up DIY urbanism could be contrasted with official top-down urban design and planning.

Jan Gehl's quality criteria of public space are designed for these kinds of top-down planned public streets, squares and parks. *Esta es una Plaza* and *Prinzessinnengarten* are different kind of places. While they are public places by definition (open to public and owned by public authorities) they are different in terms of their creation processes, decision-making, aesthetic value, activities, roles and functions. These publicly accessible community places foster different values and priorities than general public space.

This paper applied Gehl's criteria for general public space directly to a specific category of publicly accessible community places. During the process of doing that, several ideas for adaptation of criteria have been developed. One apparent difference between the two kinds of public places are the opening hours. While public space is generally opened day and night, community places often close at night or even during winter (as in case of *Prinzessinnengarten*). Quality criteria assumes that the space is opened 24/7. Because they are not, factors like 'good lighting' and 'overlapping activities day and night' can become obsolete. Instead, the extent of opening hours could be evaluated as part of the accessibility to places.

Gehl embraces activities. Everything from people talking to each other, to street performances and concerts are considered positive. 'Activities' could be differentiated between self-generating activities of the people and activities planned or organized by the city. Too many planned activities can lead to increasing festivalization of the city. This can become a marketing strategy of the city with the purpose of boosting the image, repositioning themselves in the global economy and attracting 'creative class', while

potentially doing little to address the real needs of local populations (FestiWorld, 2016). Higher emphasis could be placed on participatory activities like workshops, gardening and lectures. A quality factor, suggested for community space is 'Opportunities to participate'. This factor would look at the thresholds for participating at events or for organizing them, whether one needs to obtain a formal contract, has to be a member, receive the assembly approval or just walk in.

The nature of activities and events could be further divided into thematic categories such as performances, lectures and workshops. At both case studies, community learning is the primary objective, therefore places could be evaluated with a quality criteria 'Opportunities to learn', which would look at activities of knowledge production and exchange in addition to the entertainment and leisure activities.

Research showed that flexibility of space is important in community places. Space in both case studies is particularly flexible. From simple opportunities for individuals to freely arrange furniture as they wish, to erection of large-scale modular structures that people built in workshops. Another quality criteria which could be added to the methodology is 'Opportunities to appropriate'. This notion is permeating into mainstream urban design, apparent for example in the movable furniture trend. Larger bottom-up appropriations are rare in public space, but intrinsic in community places.

There are some factors, which are incompatible with community places. One of them is 'Good mix of public and cafe sitting'. Any kind of monetary exchange or for-profit activities are forbidden at *Esta es una Plaza*. A reasonable factor for public space becomes problematic in community space. While a cafe might be one of the primary reasons why people stay in public place, in selected case studies this function is fulfilled by participatory social activities and behaviors.

Although aesthetic quality did not emerge as an important characteristic for the users of community places, most people rated the aesthetic of the places as positive. Sensory experiences are subjective. To foster higher place identification in community places, it could be more important that the place looks distinct rather than pretty or neat. Quality of materials and surfaces somewhat awkwardly translates to community places. It is reasonable not to expect dirt or gravel floor in public space, but this seems to work well in community space. It is not a good surface (like high quality ornamental

cobblestone) by any design means, but is smooth enough that wheeled and foot traffic can circulate freely. There is also something to be said about the need for unregulated and undesigned free spaces in a city, which could be part of the reason why place attachment is so high at community places.

Finally, a look at dimensions and edges. Quality criteria on one hand calls for 'unhindered views', and on the other for 'human scale' and 'reasonable viewing distances'. They can be difficult to combine. For example, if a place is too large, it shouldn't have unhindered views, because it would lose the human dimension. *Estas es una Plaza* is two and a half times smaller than *Prinzessinnengarten*. It is possible to grasp it in its entirety upon entering. Space in *Prinzessinnengarten* is more fragmented, with many sub-places, separated by vegetation and structures. Both places are surrounded by walls, which can not be considered to be 'attractive and functional edges' or 'facades with good details that invite staying'. The suggestion for researching community places is to rather look at the edges of sub-spaces instead of the perimeter edges. There are various interesting objects and structures which indeed provide soft edges and serve as separations of sub-spaces. Activities are often concentrated in these areas.

Besides the recommendations for adaptation of Jan Gehl's quality criteria for public space to community spaces, research produced a peculiar result relating to place attachment. The statements 'I feel relaxed when I am here' and 'I would prefer to spend more time here if I could' in the survey do not seem to address place attachment directly enough. They could be replaced by more direct statements like 'This is my favorite place to be' or 'I really miss this place when I'm away for long'.

Much has been researched about internal perceptions on the community places, and knowledge was gained about how they look from the inside. In further research, methodology could be developed to study them more closely from the external perspective.

## 4.5 WHAT IS THERE TO BE LEARNED?

Public space under neoliberal capitalism is diminishing in terms of its quantity and functions. It is becoming increasingly designed for the purposes of mobility, consumption and leisure. Users usually don't have much control for appropriation of space. Neighborhoods and communities need spaces for learning, production and support. These activities are facilitated by a new type of public space - community space. People appropriate empty space and by themselves create the environment to provide for community needs. These kind of places are developed through processes of gradual accretion without any formal design recommendations, yet they can qualify as high quality public places. It has been proven, that people in these places display high levels of place attachment, dependency and identity. This might be partially because the places are used by a specific group of people who come there. But the perceptions of space should not be diminished solely to the demographical composition. These kind of places foster new social connections by providing opportunities to meet new people through supporting new behaviors and practices, not usually found in public space. Gardening activities, for example, help building routines for gardeners to frequently return to the place, tend for the plants and ultimately harvest the products. This is a sure way for developing place attachment.

By analyzing these places, recommendations and tools for improving general public space have been developed. Because of the similar case studies, this paper is able to confirm or reject some assumptions and develop recommendations with higher certainty.

Urban design has to be first of all understood as a place-making discipline with the role of urban designers as mediators of different actors and interests, and not as an artistic discipline related to architecture. Urban designers should assume the role of a 'central office' which coordinates opinions and makes sure of a balanced outcome. Because shaping public space is inherently a public activity, it should defend public interests against capital interests and embrace empowering the ordinary people which will be affected by the projects.

Physical changes in space should be made hesitantly and carefully. It is important to detect the urban atmosphere or spirit of the place in order to protect it. This includes the appearances, smells, sounds, activities and

behaviors in space. People are attached to atmospheric places even if contemporary design would reject them as rundown areas based on their looks. In the fast changing cities of today, space familiarity has a value, and its destruction can interrupt social patterns. Do not erase and rebuild. Instead, let the environment develop through the processes of layering and accretion. The result might look chaotic, but this is what cities are supposed to be anyway.

Leave space flexible. Don't design the complete final product, because cities always evolve. Instead, design the gradual place-making process including bottom-up participation by users of space. Leave some space undefined and be wary of over-designing everything and sterilizing the environment.

Let people appropriate space not only in tiny ways like moving furniture, but let them build stuff for activities that they think can benefit the community. Instead of consumption, traffic and leisure, allow public space to be appropriated for learning, cooking, childcare, gardening, bee-keeping, sun-tanning, car-washing, taking care of the animals or any of the other things that people like to do. The expanded functions of public space foster place attachment by addressing community needs. Place attachment can also be increased by allowing for activities which require frequent returning to the place.

People have to be allowed to build structures for their activities. As this research proved, urban furniture built by the people without any professional design oversight can indeed be very comfortable. Another proven fact is that ordinary people using common sense can produce better environments for humans than professional urban designers sometimes do. Either the urban design discipline has to take into account so many other factors that it sometimes forgets about people, or the common sense for place-making is literally educated out of urban designers. As this research shows, if you let people make what they want and put things where they want to, the result can be a messy but complex, intricate, animated, engaging and comfortable public space.

This is a somewhat simplistic generalization. At this point it is important to inject some clarifications. Firstly, the aim for varied community functions and for continuously opened space for appropriation is important. If DIY urbanism is applied in a limited sense, then some neighborhood organization can make trendy benches out of cargo palettes, draw some artistic graffiti,

yarnbomb trees, start serving drinks, call it a pop-up bar, and contribute little else than hipster gentrification. Appropriations have to be made socially or politically relevant and address the real needs and problems of the community.

Secondly, public space has to remain public - this means that activities and structures have to be open for everyone. People should not be able to privatize parts of space for themselves or organize closed activities. This also means lowering the threshold for participation to the minimum and to actively encourage people to participate. People who are not used to certain activities happening in public space will need this encouragement to try something new for the first time.

And thirdly, it is very important to define who the people are. Typical public space is built for the general public. The case studies were built by specific groups of people for specific users. Everyone is welcome at both case studies, but not everyone is actually there. People who were there, displayed highly developed self-identification with the places, which is a sign of a positive relationship with the environment. Recommendation to build for specific needs of groups of people could be developed, if it wouldn't be for the potentially negative homogenization effect. The more a space is built by a certain group, the more other groups might feel alienated or excluded from it. Basic symptoms of low sense of place-belonging were detected at both case studies - people would sometimes stand at the entrances and would not dare to enter the places. Further research is needed about the delicate balance between identities in general and particular public places.

# CONCLUSION

Perceptions of space have been studied in many settings, ranging from natural or fictional to urban and private. There is no research about perceptions of space in community places. High levels of sense of place have been detected in people present in publicly accessible community places. People there feel very attached to the places and they identify with them. Visual factors have been determined to be of relatively low importance for a positive sense of place, because these places do not feature good materials or high quality visual design. Comfort and activities of the physical space play a more important role. Based on the research, it is possible that a completely 'non-designed' place develops into a high quality public space. If people are allowed to adapt space to their wishes and needs, places will get generally automatically better with each adaptation.

Plenty of researchers addressed individual components of sense of place (process, place and person), but research is missing about their interactions and links, particularly in community places. This paper establishes these links in the following way. At community-organized public places, people first produce the processes of creation and managing. This processes result in the ever-evolving physical place. Specific place attracts specific people, who can also be attracted directly to the process itself. These new people have the opportunity to further change the place according to their preferences and needs, which opens a potential for a positive feedback loop mechanism, which can lead to the trap of homogenization of the space.

People invested in these places have particular perceptions about them. *Estadela Plaza* is seen as one of the central political activist places in Madrid with rich meanings and history. *Prinzessinnengarten* has an image of an alternative place addressing the issues of environmental and social sustainability in Berlin.

The processes, place and perceptions of space all together engender particular urban atmospheres. These represent the essential answer to a question what kind of place is this. Urban atmospheres include internal

perceptions, stories and meanings as well as external factors like physical places, people and activities. To holistically design urban space, manipulation of urban atmospheres is necessary. This can be done by affecting individual elements of atmospheres in tandem. This realization curtails the place-making disciplines like urban design and planning in to a very small box.

Mainstream creation of public space can also be contextualized as being composed of processes, people and places. But the process in this case is fixed by the state or municipality by means of policy and lawmaking. Because of this, few people are attracted directly to the process. People who can appropriate space are selected based on merit and formal qualifications. These people, following the process, produce public places. They do have creating stories to share and their self-identification with the place is presumably high, but what about everyone else?

Due processes and fixed guidelines for place-making can misfire and produce places not needed by the community. There are, however, signs of change in the formal production of space. Trends like participatory design and flexibility of space are beginning to challenge the top-down production of space. As new types of public places emerge, processes and rules of production should be adapted to be able to facilitate creation and existence of the new uses and functions. If space is to fosters community engagement and positive place-related emotions, it should be designed with the goal of adaptability for community needs. This puts place-making disciplines like urban design in a role of advisors and facilitators of processes with the intention of empowering people to create their common places in cities.

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## INTERVIEWS

Hanna Burckhardt, Coordinator of tours and events at Prinzessinnengarten: 19 jul 2017, Prinzessinnengarten

Sara Casado Jiménez, Assembly member at Esta es una Plaza: 9 Jun 2017, Esta es una Plaza

Roberta Di Nanni, Environmental consultant, involved with Esta es una Plaza from the beginning: 16 jun 2017, Esta es una Plaza

Onia Ellinghaus, Intern at Prinzessinnengarten: 15 jul 2017, Prinzessinnengarten

Dan Guerrero, High School Student: 24 jun 2017, Esta es una Plaza

Mariejo Obelleiro, Assembly member at Esta es una Plaza: 8 Jun 2017, Esta es una Plaza

Robert Shaw, co-founder of Prinzessinnengarten: 19 jul 2017, Prinzessinnengarten

Matthias Wilkens, Garden Manager at Prinzessinnengarten: 15 jul 2017, Prinzessinnengarten

## APPENDIX 1

# INTERVIEW MARIEJO OBELLEIRO

MEMBER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION AT ESTA ES UNA PLAZA | 45  
8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017 | 18H | ESTA ES UNA PLAZA | MADRID

*Hello. Thank you for making the time to talk to me. I would like to start by asking you about how this place came to be.*

Esta es una Plaza exists since 2008. There was a workshop at Casa de Encedida, with the group of urbanists. This was a workshop for urban action, to think about improving space and it's use by citizens. It started with the practical exercise of identifying abandoned places in Lavapiés. Before, this plot was empty for 13 years, and the city council misappropriated it only five years ago.

*Would you say that this place was designed by urbanists or by the community?*

This is already the second design. The first one was similar, but it was demolished by the city council. We built and maintained the park, but the city didn't give us permission, so one day they came with bulldozers and destroyed everything. Then we made a big media campaign, and eventually the council reestablished our right, and we got five years to use this place.

*How does the financing of the place works?*

We don't use money in this place, except for five times per year, when we organize food and take donations, so we can pay for the water, some tools, wood for the furniture and so on. But just now I had to say to this people who came here to do a dog casting for a publicity agency, that we don't want people to make economic profit here. Activities here are welcome, but they have to be communitarian and no profit. We are quite political about this place.

***Can somebody just come here, and build a chair?***

Yes, but they have to cooperate with people here. It's not come and do what you want, it has to be informed and in communication with others, and then you can do it.

***So there is a community decision-making process in place?***

Yes, and it's not very hard. It's very easy. But you have to approach the organization slowly and with the respect.

***How about the organization itself, how many people are in the assembly, who has the keys ...***

Everybody can have the key if they need it and if they ask for it. A lot of parents, people with bicycles are involved in managing the place. The bike shop is just over there and is officially open on Sundays and Mondays, but sometimes also at other times. About 20-30 people in the association are organized in the assembly, and we are all equal, there is not one person in charge. Everybody is the same and is open to everybody.

***Who is the owner of the land?***

The city council of Madrid.

***Would you say there are many similarities to Campo de la Cebada? That temporary place is also municipality owned and community organized.***

It's different, because Campo de la Cebada started after us. They started because the city of Madrid destroyed the swimming pool just before the financial crisis, and then they did not have money to do what they wanted to do. It was a big scandal from the beginning. So it is a little bit similar in terms of circumstances, but also different. Also, Campo de la Cebada is now over, because they will close it in October. We don't have an expiration date. There is no planned project here after us. First, we got the permission for five years and now we have to renew it for another two years.

***Do you think it will get renewed?***

Yes, because the politicians are now happy with what is happening here. It is an example for the whole city. But we still have some legal issues. There is a lot of initiatives similar to this in Madrid.

## APPENDIX 2

# INTERVIEW

## SARA CASADO JIMÉNEZ

MEMBER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION | SMALL SHOP OWNER | 42  
9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017 | ESTA ES UNA PLAZA | MADRID

*Hi! Thank you for taking the time to meet up with me. First, I would like to ask you a few questions about how this place started and how you got involved. How did the physical layout come to be?*

There was a planned layout when it first started, and a lot of that layout still remains. Everything was demolished afterwards, but the layout was based on what the people from the neighborhood wanted. So they wanted a theater, they wanted a vegetable garden, a place for kids to play. There were different aspects that were taken into account. The layout hasn't really changed much, I think from that time, but I wasn't here eight years ago. So I can only speak to you from 5 years to now, and how things developed in a kind of sometimes planned way, sometimes chaotic. The planned way has to do with the materials that are used, the reusing, recycling, this whole concept is always behind everything that happens in this garden. Everything has to be free, we don't collect money. A lot of associations come and they ask to fund very worthy causes, but the only cause that we have decided as an assembly to finance is the water to water the plants here. So we try to get all the materials from other places. Most of these materials that you can see here are from buildings that were torn down. We don't like to use unsustainable materials. That doesn't mean that they are not used, sometimes they are.

There is a contrast between the thoughts and the action. So there are people that come here daily and do work in an active way, but they are not in the assembly. Thanks to them this whole area was created. We try to get along, and I think it's fantastic to have very active people.

*Is there a tension between practical and theoretical people here?*

It's not a tension, but it's a contrast between one thing and the other. There are theorists, who came up with the idea for this whole area at the front, next to the entrance, which is a very wild area. There are some people that don't understand it, who like a very organized garden, and that area was created to not be organized, just to have the plants that naturally come out, like weeds, and nothing is actually planted there, which is interesting as a project as well. It's like trying to get everything to work out together, and I find it interesting.

***Why are you helping out here, how do you feel about this place and why do you think it's important?***

Well, it's one of the only two green spaces in Lavapiés, the other one being Casino de la Reina. I live in a very small apartment nearby, so I started using this square just as a user. To come here and meet with friends, and have a drink and smoke a joint, you know ... But then I found that the assembly was very interesting. Especially the way the decisions were made. And the people involved were also very interesting people, so the human factor was important. And also to give back. I mean when you're using the place and you grow fond of the place, you kind of want to give back. And then a lot of other neighborhood activities surrounding this, or kind of connected in some way with this were also interesting to me. So that's kind of how I got involved.

***Do you think this works well as a kind of social mixer for the neighborhood, that different people can come together?***

I think so.

***Are you aware of any of the groups that don't come here?***

Let's see. Well, first there is a certain age group that doesn't come. There are a lot of very small children, up to five years old, coming here with their parents. There is a treehouse, library and the sandbox, where they mostly hang out. So that's until they are about five or six, and then they are gone until they are teenagers, when they come back for different reasons (laugh). I think that children after some age get bored in such a small place, but before, it's an adventure. So I think there is an age group there that probably doesn't come, like 6 - 15. I think a lot of people from all over Madrid and from all different ranges know this place. Then I guess lots of Europeans come here, there are a few Africans, a few Chinese.

***The biggest foreign nationality group in Lavapies is from Bangladesh. Are they here?***

We had Bangladeshi groups here, but mostly the women tend to stay in the house. For a while, Bangladeshi women were coming, but the way the vegetable garden works is that everybody shares everything. So we share the work, and then we share the rewards. Because we had a problem with communication with these women, we have decided to leave them an allotment for planting the red spinach, so that they would feel welcome to come and use the place. In return, they collected their spinach and they would bring us samosas with the spinach - already elaborated food. That happened for a couple of years, and then they haven't come back.

***Why do you think they don't come back?***

I think because they are very enclosed in their houses. I don't think they feel excluded, but I can't tell you for sure because I really didn't have true communication.

***When I was doing the survey yesterday, it was interesting, because it showed kind of what you said - you had the group of parents with children, you have people under 20, 25 who come here to drink and smoke. Do you think there is a conflict there?***

It's become very popular among teenager, because they have that safe haven, and it's starting to become a problem, because there is little respect for the self-management. So everywhere is full of cigarette buds and other trash. This is a big problem. Every month we have to take one day when we close off the plaza to clean. So we let people in, but only if they are willing to clean the place. The amount of trash already the next day is unbelievable. So we are starting to consider limiting the smoking area, so that the rest of the place is free of smoke. And sometimes there are so many people there that the smoke goes everywhere, and that is a problem. I think it's great to have a space of freedom, and I have been a cannabis activist for a long time. Now I don't smoke anymore, but I do believe in the freedom of choice, and I think it's a problem. This may serve as a deterrent for older people for example, to come here. They are not very comfortable places for an older person to sit - that's also true. The furniture makes a place in a way, so if you don't have comfortable furniture, then you don't really feel like ... But I have seen older people come in with their wheelchairs or their caretakers.

***What about the image of the place? Do you think the municipality can have a problem with this becoming weed-smoking haven?***

The municipality probably knows. I assume that undercover cops came here before. I don't think they have a problem with that.

***I've heard the opinion that if this place becomes a refuge for using drugs, then it might happen that the place becomes less stable because of the political decisions and the image that it gets, it get's stigmatized. This sort of happened at the Campo de Cebada. It used to be a lot more intergenerational thing, and now the neighbors are kind of pushed out by younger groups, and they generally don't really like it anymore.***

Yeah, yeah. That could happen. We do have to do something about it. There is also disrespect for the actual space. All those graffiti up there are relatively recent, that was never there. When people ask to do artwork in this place, we allow it. Not based on personal taste, but based on the community factors, or eco-friendly materials, if it's something non-offensive of course. This guy over here, his artwork is usually kind of grotesque, like faces that are coming apart, skulls and things like that. We said, if you are going to draw in the children's area, I don't want to influence what you draw, but if it's something like that, maybe chose another place. So yeah, in general we allow all the art that people want to bring, but for people to break in at night and draw their names, that's something we're not happy with.

***That opens an interesting question about rules for contributing to this place. Can just somebody come and build a chair? How do you make decisions about what is in here?***

We have an assembly, and that is the organ of government here. As I said before, there are some people, who don't come to the assemblies, and they work a lot. So there is that contrast between theory and the practice. So right there for example used to be a small hill, and some people liked it as a such. Now it's all terraced, and it's all very organized and beautiful, but it's less natural. People do come and do, but the assembly prefers there to be a consensus. Because that's how the assembly works - not by votes, but we try for everything to be a consensus. For the same reason things are sometime very slow because to reach a consensus takes a very long time. There comes a time when you can't really make a decision, so things are kind of stopped for a while, and they can't advance.

***Let's say I have a lot of comfortable furniture to give away, and I come here and say, guys I would like to make some comfortable benches. What would happen?***

If you wanted to bring pillows and things like that, people would probably say don't bring your trash because it's going to rain, it's an outdoor place. That happened with the small vehicles for the children, a lot of people either they outgrow their toys or the toys don't work and they bring them here, so this ends up being a bit of a dumpster every now and then, and things have to be removed. So this piece that you can see there that looks like a rainbow - somebody offered this to the space, it's a sculpture of some sort. They were like, I want to bring this sculpture because I have it lying around and it will be great for children. And it really is, but at the same time, when the winter comes, it will probably be destroyed, with the rain it will come apart. There are people who bring their trash and we have to remove it. We have a carpenter, who is great and he's done a lot of things, and he collects wood. So he brings piles of wood and makes stuff. There are a lot of people who don't want wood thrown out, and it can have another use. So there are certain things that are kept, some are not. People go on this way, they just bring what they want.

***How do you think this place looks and feels differently, compared to official urbanism. So how does the fact that it is community organized, materialize in the physical appearance of this place?***

Well, it's more chaotic, and it doesn't have regulated furniture. It's not regulated swings or playgrounds for children, which I think makes it more fun actually. It looks a little dangerous in a way, like no rounded edges, and that makes it obviously not regulated place. Also the plants. We have a lot of fruit trees, and that's unusual in this city.

***Do you think you could upscale this kind of organization of public space on the established official squares, and make them more like this?***

Well, it's actually a very interesting question, because just yesterday I finished the project, which I did present to the city myself. It has to do with communal gardening in public spaces. So it's taking something like this out to the street. I've been doing this for a very long time in front of my house. There was a little dirt square on the street where used to be a tree, and I made a garden with a bench just on the street. It is very cute. It's been there for a long time already, and when I presented it to the city, to say, let's allow

the neighbors do this in the city, and plant stuff, it would make the city less homogeneous and contribute different kinds of furniture.

***And it would make people grow more ownership of public places.***

Exactly. It looks like you read my project. My project says exactly that. It says if you feel like an actor in the public space, you take better care of it. A lot of plants have been stolen along the years, but it's a nice place, and it's across the street from the school, so sometimes you would see a father with the child having a little snack. It's useful, because there are no benches on the rest of the street. It creates the community, because every time you're cleaning or planting something, people come to you and say, oh that's never gonna last, or oh how beautiful, or I don't like it or whatever. It creates conversations, which I think is something important in the city. So we made another bench as an example in Medialab Prado, this time with better materials, but still reusing the materials from the street. Idea of this project, which I hope advances, is to get the approval from the city to do this kind of interventions and to be an actor in the public space.

***How open is the city to these ideas?***

Well, they seem to be open. They did gardening projects like this already in Paris, where they have the 'Le permis de végétaliser', where the city gives you the right to plant and garden in a certain area. You have to follow certain rules, like not to use certain types of plants which can be dangerous, or if you put a little fence around it, it needs to be a certain height for blind people and so on. You have to be careful with the public space, but at the same time you should be able to intervene. There are places all over the world that are doing this. Some places are doing it with the vegetable gardens, like 'Incredible edibles'. That's really extended. And I think it's something that people are wanting to do. There is a desire.

***And this is also important for the feeling of ownership of the space, looking at the modern trends like privatization of public space. People are kind of losing power in public places.***

I love that question. That was right on the spot. It's what I have in my mind right now. It's a project I've been after for a long time. Belonging to a place like this (Esta es uno Plaza) kind of opens up your mind and inspires you to do other types of things. I think this is the influence that a space like this has. And it goes both ways, you can have an influence on a place like this, but

this can also influence you to do or act differently. I remember someone passed a survey recently, which asked the question: How has this place made you be a vegetarian, or change your eating habits. In my case it hasn't done that, but it has changed my perspective on other things.

***What does it mean to you that this place was built bottom up by the people themselves?***

It means the place is in constant evolution, and is open to everyone, and that is very important to me. I think it's very empowering.

***What do you think is the role of this place in Madrid?***

It's a space of freedom on one hand and of creativity on the other. You can be a part of the construction. So definitely empowerment. And what we spoke about before, that it is one of the very few green spaces in this neighborhood. So we have to be careful that this does not turn into an exclusive drinking ground. There is another space that they've recently opened. It's being community organized, with the people from the Casino de la Reina. This new space was let to the social workers there. They are doing this for teenagers, who are also going to be the ones to build it. So I am hoping that we can send some of the youngsters over there, because it isn't that far away from here. It's an empty lot near the Casino del Reina, they are building it right now. So I think that might be interesting for them to experience the building process. There is another similar place at Calle Almendro in La Latina. And that, they say, was built by the very small children. They had assemblies with parents on one hand and children on another. And the children kind of decided on the toys and pieces of wood and so on. I haven't been to the place but I've seen this on video.

***What about the educational dimension of this place? You are organizing a lot of events and activities here.***

There are a lot little children, who don't even speak yet, they are just beginning to walk, and they are taking care of the vegetable garden. They ate one of the biggest groups in the garden, and they come and have their little watering cans, and there are a few gardeners who encourage them to do this. I think this can have an important influence. The fact that they interact with other children, and that most of the parents are not behind their own child all the time is also special. There is a kind of common 'parentship' while they are here. That is also important, that all parents are keeping an

eye on all children. And that's also an education for the parents. I don't see that happening so much in other parks. Another important educational aspect I would say are the assemblies and the fact that there is a consensus instead of voting. I think that's also something that people learn and embrace. Then the actual vegetables and what's in season, types of soil ... There are information boards like that one over there, which shows the pictures of different insects living in the garden. A biologist drew it out.

***So you get closer to the nature.***

A little bit closer to the urban nature. You get closer to building and designing. You get closer to events. There are certain events that happen, and so I guess they can also educate. There is also a community kitchen a few times a year.

***There are a lot of organized events, like lectures in a theater. What kind of things do people teach at these events?***

Sometimes there are people who come and give a talk. Or there is a movie screening. Movie festival in Lavapies is happening in two weeks, and we will screen some movies here as well. Sometimes we do things outside of here, like for example we participated in a festival with a short film, so we learned about acting and singing and dancing.

***Can somebody just come and make a talk or lecture, or is it pre-planned?***

People write to the garden by email or Facebook and they ask to do whatever it is.

***So it would not be acceptable if you just start doing the performance or a lecture?***

Well, we appreciate for them to let us know so that we can invite people to see or hear this. All this events have to be respectful to the neighborhood, so no drums, for example. They have to be free and open to everyone who want's to participate. So if you come and give a closed lecture to a group of people that is not so appreciated. It still happens sometimes, but we try for everything to be open.

***You mentioned earlier, that more older people would come if the furniture would be more comfortable. Can you think of any other other opportunities for the physical improvement of this place?***

I guess to enhance the communication with people, so that they would take a better care of it.

***How do you try to communicate with people to do that now?***

Mostly with signs and ashtrays that say 'use me'. That's mostly it for now. We don't want to put the trash cans, because we don't want to empty them. We want people to take their trash out. We haven't been successful in this sense. I think that closing the place makes people see that there is cleaning that needs to be done. In addition to that, the theatre part should be repaired because it's getting really old. But I think it's mostly the trash that bothers me.

***What do you think about the idea of having a toilet and public drinkable water?***

Those two aspects have been very often debated. A toilet needs a sewage or you need to have a dry toilet. This is also a place that's been very interested in bio-construction. There are pieces of installations in this place built in this way, like the adobe oven over there. Dry toilets eventually have to be emptied. And who wants to do that? It's the same as who wants to take out the trash. So that has been discussed, and what has been decided for now is that like people need to take out their trash, they also need to take out their other waste (laugh). Water has also been very often spoken about. We didn't originally have water here, but eventually got the connection. The water costs a lot of money. Every year we pay 1800€. It's a lot of money. It's a lot of water also for watering the plants. For drinkable water, we would like to have the typical Spanish adobe water containers, which are keeping the water cool through evaporation, and it doesn't touch the person's lips when used, so it's very hygienic. So we have water, but I don't know if it's open to public access now or not, but it's something that's been very much discussed. Do we put up a water fountain or not? Are people going to use the water fountain to fill the balloons and have a fight? Part of the education here is about water, you know we live in a very dry quasi-desert place, so we have to take care of the water, even if it does rain. We also collect the rain water in a few areas.

***Thank you for these answers. I would like to turn to your personal experience in this place. How do you feel when you are here?***

It depends on the time. Sometimes I feel like I'm completely separated from the place. I feel I've become unfamiliar with it when I come and everything is full of smokers, and I feel like they are not taking care, and they don't know what this place is about. Sometimes I feel angry because people play loud music on every corner. I feel like this should be a nice calm haven, so sometimes I can feel very uncomfortable here. Most of the time that's not the case, so I just kind of avoid the place at certain times I think. And it's a shame because is the place I love.

***Do you think this place reflects what kind of person you are? How much do you identify with it?***

I identify a lot with this place. I guess also because I'm very connected to it because I answer the emails. This means I have a very global idea of what's going on in the place. And I've also been a part of this place in the last five years, so I also identify in that sense. I bring a lot of friends here and I'm very friendly with a lot of the people here, so I would say I identify a lot with this place.

***If you are away for a long time, do you start to sometime really miss this place?***

I go away often. Maybe I spend a month or two in the states. But since I'm answering the emails, I'm always kind of connected to it.

***How unique do you think this place is? Are there a lot of places like this or is this a special kind of place from what you experience?***

There are a lot of self managed places, which are philosophically similar in concept. Even if its in a building - places where activities go on, where everything is free, where people do everything voluntarily, I think that's not unique. Maybe being a garden is more unique, but there are also a lot of gardens in the city. There is also Campo de la Cebada - I think it's different, but the ideas behind it are kind of similar. So I don't think it's really super unique in general, but I think it's unique in this neighborhood for sure.

***But is this not a central activist political place, known by a lot of people with huge media campaigns, and a frontrunner for other activist places?***

This came before the 15<sup>th</sup> May, which is so important here. This was born before that. It is very well known and if you look around you'll find a lot of different articles and things, but recently when suggestions come for making

a report about the place, the assembly usually reject it. Because we don't want that much media coverage. We feel like it's too exposed.

***What about the huge media campaign after the place was bulldozed by the authorities?***

Yes, but that was very much at the beginning. Right now we feel pretty stable, the municipality is most definitely going to renew the permit to keep using this place. I personally think some media coverage is important, depending on what the media is, but since everything is a consensus, very often things are rejected.

***Can you think of a friend or a family member who wouldn't enjoy this place?***

My grandmother wouldn't enjoy it because she would be uncomfortable sitting. If she came on a wheelchair, I'm sure she would love it. Actually, my father, he used to be very left wing, almost a communist. He's an artist and for the past twenty or 30 years he has driven a taxi and listened to very right wing radio. And one time I met him here, he was just horrified with it. He thought this was a place full of hippies, and I saw how he has completely turned around from what he used to be in his younger years.

***I think it's very interesting that your father would not enjoy this place because of his political views. Do you have to have a certain political view in order to enjoy this place?***

I don't think so, and I think something that brings us together is the actual place itself. We talk about the place really in a non-political way. But of course it is political in a way that is self-managed. At the same time, we don't talk politics politics like you know, this guy and the other guy ... I think someone can be very right wing and still be political okay with a place being self-organized.

***Any kind of place is in some way political. If you build up a place in front of a supermarket and put up cameras, this is also political, just in the opposite direction.***

Well, like I said my father has turned into a completely reactionary person with the years. And yes, I guess someone like that could not feel comfortable here. Even just smelling the pot would be a problem. Some people like things to be very orderly, and that's not the case here.

*What I like about this place is that it's not made for general public. Official plazas are made for a generic person, and this person might not exist. Here, people can more build what they would actually like. I think this is a crucial difference - that it is built for a specific public. And that makes it a lot better for this kind of specialized public, but maybe makes it less inclusive for others.*

This has been a very left wing neighborhood so this is kind of a reflection of that in a way. For people to feel like a part of it - sometimes I think it's complicated. To come in as a new person and say I want to be a part of this, when the group or a supposed group is already built, can be tricky as well. When I came here, I found a group that was already made up, but I found that it was a permeable group, and it wasn't a problem to become a part of it.

***But you can imagine that something like Retiro park is a lot more welcoming for just anybody, when here maybe some people could feel alienated.***

Yes, they can feel strange, and a lot of people just stay on the doorway and don't come in because they feel like it might be a closed space. You have to be a little bit adventurous to come in. Or someone has to bring you.

***I think this is what I wanted to know for now. What you told me was very helpful. Thank you for making the time.***

## APPENDIX 3

# INTERVIEW

## ROBERTA DI NANNI

INVOLVED IN THE PLACE FROM THE START | ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT |  
RESEARCHER | ARCHITECT | 42  
16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017 | 12H | ESTA ES UNA PLAZA | MADRID

*Hello! Thank you for seeing me, and talking about this place. First, I would like to ask you, do you think if you would allow people to make their own space, so that everybody does something and there is no centralized top-down authority, would this automatically result in a high quality public space?*

The first thing to say is that not everybody can do what they want here. Yes, this place came to exist through a process that came from below, but this doesn't mean there is no organization and rules. This kind of bottom-up processes in particular need a lot of organization, especially at the beginning. To answer your question, of course this is not a place that is done from the top-down planning process, and this results in a different kind of aesthetics. This is why the place is not always nice and neat. Sometimes it's a bit unorganized and strange, but this is exactly the value of this place - to change the aesthetic taste of the people, and get them used to experiencing different things. I see this place as something educational in a way, where people can discover something.

*Interesting. This leads me to a question about the inclusiveness and accessibility. Esta es una Plaza is trying to include different people, but perhaps because of how it looks like, it might also alienate some, who wouldn't dare to enter, or just stand at the entrance. What do you think of this?*

This place in my opinion is not really about trying to satisfy everybody. It is more about trying to propose something new, that is not yet very dominant. This way we want to introduce a certain way of living. There are a lot of small

children here and maybe it looks like it's a bit dangerous because nothing is very fixed. There are also old people who come here. It's another kind of use of space, and I see people getting used to it very quickly. So I don't see this place as trying to satisfy something, as much as proposing something new. It's about discovering new ways of living and co-existing.

There is also a difference between public space and collective space. This park is very much a collective space and not a public space. Public places in Madrid generally don't close at night, for example. We don't want to be used as another public service to support the public institutions. For example, in Lavapiés, there are not enough of green spaces. The authorities should not be like, here is *Esta es una Plaza*, so we don't have to create more green space. It is important that the city still pushes for more green spaces. *Esta es una Plaza* is not a welfare public service, but more a political process of people coming together in this neighborhood to create something else. There is a very collective process behind it. This are just my personal opinions, not everybody thinks exactly the same about this place.

***How long have you been involved with this place and what were your roles?***

I have been involved from the beginning. I worked here not so much as a technical person, but as a neighbor. The starting point was a student workshop in Casa de Encendida (cultural institution nearby), where I joined as a student. There was about six people, who later on decided to stay and we somehow became our own thing, pushing forward the community garden idea. It was a long process of having breakfasts here, talking to the neighbors, contacting people and other collectives in the neighborhood. It was more than a year and a half of negotiating, debating and always coming back here.

It was important for us to have our own project, because Lavapiés is full of the collectives who live here, and we didn't want this place to be appropriated by one of these collectives. We wanted to protect this place from too much identity. The idea was for it to be more of a neighborhood place and not belonging to some collective, which are often kind of closed, and want their own thing. Also, this prevented this place from having a specific political message, like radical left agenda. Of course, this place is still political, but in a different way. The main difference between us and the collectives is that we are not a closed group that shares the same values.

There are many people who work here, that I would not do all the things in the same manner as them, but to manage the space together is enough.

***This architectural and urban design drawing of the place is in the project catalogue of *Esta es una plaza* (show print). How did this come about?***

A student group made this graphic after the place was already built, so it's not a plan, but rather explaining the existing place. The process of creating the place was not planned. There was no planning process when somebody would come and say where to put what. It was more of a layering process, where things were added sporadically over time, and that is how the place evolved. At the beginning, we were deliberating in the assemblies what we need and want, and so little by little new parts were added. For example, the theater was one of the first structures to be built. There were a lot of bricks and stones already everywhere around this plot. We used them to build the theater stage, but there was never an overarching plan to have a theater.

***But somebody had to come up with the idea of having a theater.***

Well, there was a collective from Madrid, who was able to donate a whole lot of industrial pallets to us. So in this case, the material supply indicated what could be built. So we put the bricks and pallets together in the stage and seating configuration. At the beginning, when there were only five or ten people in the assembly, the decision making process was somehow easier, but there was a lot more physical work per person to do all this. So it was a lot about what was here and what we can do with it.

***This implies a lot of reusing and recycling materials.***

*Esta es una Plaza* was based on three core ideas. First, we wanted to reuse and recycle as much of the materials as possible. Secondly, we wanted things to be able to move around, so the place is more flexible. And thirdly, it should mainly be a green space. With these three main ideas we somehow had a set agenda. This was the utopian idea to guide us in some direction, but of course, sometimes we also had to buy stuff.

***How did these three principles come about?***

From the beginning, we had a system of consensus in the assemblies. So we talked about what are values are, what we wish to be here, and all of us were able to agree on these three points.

***How would you describe the motivations or considerations about creating the physical structure of this place? Were there mostly functional, aesthetic, safety or other considerations from the more technical point of view?***

One cannot really disconnect the collective and autogestion processes from how the space looks like. So there are these core values, which are reflected in the space, but I guess every individual has a different expectations about what they want from the space. Sometimes somebody likes to do something from the esthetic point of view. Something that would be nice and everybody would like it, but perhaps it is more important to stay with our principles. People who were creating this place were very connected to it. They were, and still are, neighbors and it is really this collective effort that did not exist before, why this place came together.

***What do you think would happen if the municipality of Madrid gave some public plaza to the people to do whatever they want with it?***

This is a difficult question. It brings us back to the distinction that Esta es una Plaza is not a public, but a community place. Open public plaza being converted into a communal place would interrupt the patterns and identities of a lot of different people. I suspect conflicts might arose if they closed an existing plaza with many identities which are already colliding there. Here, we had kind of a blank page, free space to create what we wanted. There was absolutely nothing here before, and I think this is a huge difference. There was not so much tension, and people didn't have to give something up to gain this place.

***Where I was going with this question is in line of the modern tends of financialization of the city, privatization of public space and securitization for example. Do you think there is a way to upscale these kind of places to spill over to the rest of the city in order to counteract these trends?***

Yes, it is important to counteract these forces. I think you have to first start doing material things in spaces as a collective. If you just go to the institutions with some wishes and ideas, they will probably not happen just like that. Better strategy is to first build and create the project and then, when you have something to show, to go to the authorities to get recognition.

***But then you can get bulldozed in the meanwhile.***

No (laugh). I am not very dogmatic that it has to be a big occupation or something, but just something that everybody can do. Just start somewhere, and later on, as the project develops, try to have some friendly conversations about it. There are also discussions to be had in different institutions about this. I think that it is good to start at small scale and do something from the civil society upwards, and later on try to incorporate into mainstream structures.

***To end with the physical dimensions of the place, is it okay to summarize that no single person can be identified regarding who planned the layout of the place and instead it was a gradual evolution, where the consensus brought things further in a slow process.***

Yes. The collective process is quite strong, and this is why the place is how it is now. It was developed in a very collective manner, and this is the main reason why it became so strong. But of course, things are also changing and things are a bit different now.

***Esta es una Plaza would be then different to Campo de la Cebada, which was planned, at least at the beginning, by the Zuloark architectural collective. There was absolutely nothing like this here?***

No. Here it is really a neighborhood, community, consensus thing. I see that Campo de la Cebada is very interesting and has a lot of potential, but it's different to here. The processes happen very differently and have different results. For me, processes might be more important to look at than the outcomes at these kind of bottom-up places.

***I was talking to Sara about the processes and social dimensions. With you as an urbanist and architect I have decided to try to explore more the physical structure of the place.***

Of course, and I didn't want to take you away from your path. I am happy to tell you where the trees and other things came from.

***Where did the trees come from?***

There are a lot of fun stories behind almost everything here. We have these fruit trees, which are unusual in the city. A collective from the US called 'Fallen Fruit' gave the trees to the Matadero project in Madrid. But the city denied planting fruit trees on public space, so they did not know what to do with them and gave them to us. Here is another point why processes were

important. When we received the trees, we organized a big party to plant them. A lot of people from the neighborhood came, and this was a triggering moment for gathering many more people to come and stay in the place. A lot of them also participated in the future. It was opening up the place and bringing down the barriers.

***For the final few questions, I want to turn to your internal perceptions and feelings about this place. Do you feel like you belong to many places in Madrid as much as here?***

This place is a bit like my child. I was a part of creating it. Now I'm not so much present on weekly assemblies, but I come here and I have a lot of friends and I really like to be here. This place can be very absorbing, and one can get very intensely involved in the process of creation, giving a lot of energy and time. But you can also let it go, if it becomes too much. It is not like you are feeling like you have take care about it all the time. I think people who were in this process were also able to let it go again, so there is no single individual trying to appropriate the place. People get closer to it, then a bit more distant and then they perhaps come back again. We have a lot of changes, and I have seen so many people change from the beginning. This is also because we were not already made collective when we came here, but we came here from different origins simply to participate in this place.

***How much of your feeling of belonging do you think comes from the fact that you contributed to the creation of place so much, and how much of it comes from the kind of place it is today?***

When you participate in a process, of course it's a different kind of involvement. I don't know if I came to Madrid for the first time now, if I would choose this place. But when you participate, even if it is a small thing, you grow attachment. The idea was never to be a service for people to come here and consume and enjoy the space. It's nice if people do, but the idea was a collective place where you also contribute. It's a different kind of production of space. So we are trying to educate people who just come here to drink and smoke to at least clean up after themselves. We have days of cleaning the space, so maybe they can help. The question for us is how to include them in the process of taking care of the place.

***Contributing to the place grows belonging and attachment. Do you have any suggestions how one would grow the sense of place belonging and attachment on typical public places?***

I don't know, but some sort of micro actions could make sense. For example, they temporarily reappropriated the space on Plaza Torres Soledad Acosta in Madrid. They made breakfasts in the mornings where people could come and eat and use the space differently. Before it was quite an ugly and not nice place. You have to have creative and innovative ideas for how people could use the space differently and do temporary interventions and original projects.

***I could talk to you a lot longer, but I think we will end here for today. Thank you for all the information and for your time.***

## APPENDIX 4

# INTERVIEW

## DAN GUERRERA

LOCAL RESIDENT | HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT | 17  
24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017 | 16H | ESTA ES UNA PLAZA | MADRID

*Hi. I want to ask you about why you came here today.*

We just had the math exam in school, and came here with friends to relax afterwards.

*How often do you come here?*

I'm here a few times a week. Sometimes we also go to Campo de la Cebada or hang out on other squares. But here is cool because we can do what we want and be chilled.

*What do you feel you can do here that you can't elsewhere?*

We can drink and smoke joints and talk and listen to music, and it's like my parents don't come here and we don't have to worry to get fined and it's also cool to have a place, where we can make party.

*Is there something that you feel you can't do here?*

Yeah, we were playing football here long time ago, and somebody came and told us that we are destroying the gardens and we couldn't do it anymore. Also, this place closes down at nine. It would be great if it would be open all night.

*Okay, I will leave you to enjoy this place. Thanks for talking to me.*

## APPENDIX 5

# INTERVIEW

## MATTHIAS WILKENS

GARDENING MANAGER | RUNS OWN PLANT NURSERY ON  
PRINZESSINNENGARTEN | 37

15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017 | 15H | PRINZESSINNENGARTEN | BERLIN

*Hello. Thank you for offering to talk to me about this garden. I would like to start with clarifying some basic facts. Who does this plot belongs to?*

It belongs to the Berlin borough Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, which is an advantage for us, because this borough is traditionally governed by the green party, who are more open to place like this. The borough also has the hip image of young people attracting tourists with their hip projects, which somehow benefits the garden, but is also problematic at the same time, because of the gentrification process.

*Do you think this garden itself is causing gentrification?*

It's part of it, but as we are aware of it, we try to be as little part as possible. The same phenomenon is going on in all cities. If you have a relatively poor district, which is cheap, then artists and hip young people move in, make it trendy and are themselves ultimately pushed out, when rich people move in. We are trying to counter this. We want to distinguish between people who just get here and get drunk, and those who want to be part of the project. Twice a week we organize the open community gardening days, where everybody can come without telling in advance or becoming a member, and work what they choose on the garden. These people get half price for food, drinks, vegetables and young plants, and that makes these affordable for everyone, even for people who have very limited income. I mean you can't beat the three euros for organic cooked healthy meal. You can't get something cheaper, even doner kebab is sort of the same price. This is one attempt for making the garden affordable to everyone. We also try to have as little as possible fees for workshops and events, so we are trying to keep that free or donation based. I personally like to keep the garden a little bit

messy, so that it doesn't attract too much people who are into tidy spaces. But of course, in a way, we are part of the gentrification process.

***Are you aware of any of the groups that don't come here?***

Yes, actually it is not the average cut of the local population. Usually, people here are younger than average. There are of course elderly people visiting and working, helping us, but way less than average population age. Also I think basically people have a bit higher level of education. And even though there are lots and lots of foreigners here, the number of people with the migrant background are underrepresented, especially people from islamic countries.

***There is a big Turkish minority here in this area.***

Yes, I heard that Kreuzberg is the biggest Turkish city outside Turkey. There are some of these people here. We had groups of Turkish people in workshops, like a group who came from the governmental welfare project and did an internship here, but very few of them came back. I'm not completely sure if I'm right, but one reason I guess could be that they are such a strong community, that many of them do not seek for new contacts outside of their groups. They often prefer to hang out at the park with the barbecue, or meet at the shisha bar, so mostly young people from western countries come here. Alcohol consumption here also might be a reason why Turkish people don't come. The alcohol consumption in the grades is quite high, and if people have a problem with it for religious reasons, they might avoid the place. It's not like in a corner bar, where you regularly get super drunk. We rarely have people who are super drunk, and if they are annoying to other guests we have to politely ask them to leave. For some people with muslim background, this might be a reason for not coming here. At the same time, many people from the Turkish community have to struggle enough and they might be occupied with their personal issues, and not too much into this "save the world" sustainability topic.

***You mentioned people drinking too much, and sometimes you send them out. What would be other examples of inappropriate behavior in this place?***

There are some tensions about abuse of hard drugs, but nobody in this garden would ask someone to leave for smoking a joint. Consumption of heroin is a problem. The hotspot for heroin trafficking was Kottbusser Tor, and because the police changed their presence there, a lot of the trading

moved to Moritzplatz. Drug trafficking in the garden is something that we absolutely don't accept. This would be also problematic with hash or marihuana, but the consumption of hash and marihuana is not a problem. Shooting with syringes is definitely a problem, because we can't have them laying around, there are children and general infection risk. Sometimes, especially in the morning, it happens that somebody occupies the toilet for a very long time, and afterwards is dirty with blood and there is the syringe. You can imagine a line of school children waiting for that toilet and what they see.

***How big is this problem? How often does things like this happen?***

It was every week up to every day in the past. All of us do have the understanding for these people's problems. We are sort of nice trowing them out, while in other places they get thrown out in another manner. This is why some drug users didn't immediately get, that this is unacceptable, because we were too friendly. But it's troubled people, not criminals, so there is no reason to be angry, but it's just unacceptable. There is also methadone abuse or using other hard drugs. One time I found someone smoking crack just behind my barrack.

***Does police come in here?***

Sometimes police do come here, but we didn't have too many conflicts with them. I feel super uncomfortable around police, but they are very rarely here. When they come, they are kind of okay, and stay a very short time, and I think the thing is that in Berlin basically you can smoke everywhere. The police usually would not react, if you just sit in a park and smoke a joint, so there is no reason to come here for weed consumption. Like I said, harder drugs are another story.

***How do you think the atmosphere of this place compares to the general atmosphere of Berlin? Is this place unique?***

Something in between. I think it's not super unique, but it's also not common. There are about a hundred other gardening projects in Berlin, but we might be more visible than the rest, and a lot of other projects copy ideas from us. Also because people here receive salary, they can do a lot more than volunteers. The garden on the Tempelhofer Feld for example, is another very nice place. It has a very different concept compared to this one. It is quite big, maybe even bigger than this, but it's differently organized, so the people

or groups have private plant beds, which they built themselves and they take care of them themselves. Ideally they would also harvest themselves. Here, all the plant beds belong to the garden, which makes a big influence on the efficiency with things like crop rotation, selecting what we want to grow and show. We grow about 500 different varieties per year. If you allow everyone to plant what they want it will be basically tomatoes and lettuce.

***Do you miss something here?***

No, not really. It changed a lot in the last years, it became definitely more touristy and crowded, it is not a paradise. There are also internal struggles between different groups and people. There are different perspectives about what are the main goals and importance in the garden even within the management.

***You used the word management. Could you describe the organizational structure of the garden?***

There is a hierarchy, but not really strict. There are the two founders, who are the stakeholders and sort of managers, and on paper they are the ones who decide about everything. But we do have these weekly meetings that you saw today, and Robert, I think you noticed, was one of the managers. Another one of the co-founders, Marco does not come to the meetings. So Robert, who is there is the last institution to ultimately decide. As you saw, it is sort of a grown thing. Someone who is here from the beginning has a little bit more weight than an intern from two week ago. Basically the more responsibilities people take over and the longer they are here, the more others listen to what they have to say. But it's of course also due to the personalities. I think if you have a good boss in a project like that, the hierarchies are way flatter than if you have no one. If you have a shitty boss, the hierarchies are the strictest. So Robert tries to moderate between all the people in the garden. In organizations which don't have a boss, and are theoretically deciding everything without hierarchy, you will find people who are a bit louder, smarter, more eloquent, forward or reckless, and so I think to have a leader who moderates and listens is a good way to go. And that Robert does, I would say.

***Can you tell me a bit about what kind of considerations you had when you started to build this place? Functional, aesthetic or safety, comfort ...***

There was no masterplan in the beginning saying we are going to do it like that, instead these are all grown structures. I was not a part of the planning stage. I started to be a part of this garden when it was already established. They were looking for a gardener and I was looking for space to have my plant nursery, and so we fitted perfectly. I also work at the garden, and organize the gardening work there. There are weekly meetings specifically for the gardening stuff. If you want you can also join in there. That became sort of, I'm not super happy about it, but it is quite a monologue of mine. I go around, write a list, and then we talk about the list, I don't delegate. I don't see it my job to tell people what to do, there is just a pool of work that has to be done, and everyone can pick as they wish.

There are still some considerations about this place, of course. We started as a mobile project, so we got a lease for one year at the time, which is quite difficult, if you make investments in the plot. So we started as a mobile garden, so that we could move. That is one reason why we grow everything in boxes and crates. The other reason being the pollution and bad quality of the soil. Workshops, kitchen, toilets and such are in the overseas containers, which can be easily removed and put into another space. A lot of things evolved from this aspect of the garden. Some considerations were just about the needs of the plants and gardening. Of course we can't grow vegetables in the shade, and for the gastronomical area the shade is kind of nice. So there is already an automatic layout suggestion, coming from the conditions of this plot. We had some safety considerations, so we try not to have too much stuff where people can kill themselves. From the aesthetic point of view, I think it just turned out by the unwilling, unplanned process.

***How do you see the goals of this garden?***

If you ask different people, you would get different answers, but in the beginning the idea was social pedagogic aspect. To create a space, where people can do projects, which are related to the topic of sustainable city development. So it's not just about gardening, it's also about the bike workshop, wood workshop, the small kitchen, the beekeeping and so on. A lot of projects here serve the workshops, with the intention that people learn something. This includes growing mushrooms or beekeeping, which is very important to create awareness about problems of industrial agriculture. On the countryside, the bees are way worse off than in the city, which is the opposite of what people expect. In the city, there is almost no agriculture, and therefore there are no monocultures, so diversity is way higher than on

the countryside, which is good for the bees. There is also no agrochemicals in the cities, which is another huge issue for bees on the countryside. But the beekeeping here is not about producing as much honey as possible, it is about creating the awareness of the dying of the bees. These workshops start with kindergarten kids, but the most advanced workshop is six full days spread over the year, where people do all the intensive jobs on the hives. We had at least a thousand participants of this workshop over the years now.

***To start closing up our conversation, I want to know how you feel like when you're here. Try to describe your emotions and feelings towards this place.***

This is a bit difficult because I'm here so much. Usually, I'm here six days per week. One of the first years I realized that I was here 60 days in a row, and then deliberately decided that I have to take my days off. The garden is a black hole, it can really drag you in. I didn't want the garden to become annoying for me, and so I had to decide to not let myself be dragged into too much. How I came to the garden was through a friend of mine, who did the first website for the garden, and told me that some weirdos are planning to grow vegetables in Moritzplatz. And I was like, what!? Because at that time in 2009, this urban gardening idea wasn't too spread out, the gardens were not as central as this one, but always in places where they could grow stuff in the ground. Then I came over, and Robert and me got along quite well. From that day on I was here very often. There are people, who decided not to lose their private lives. Many people who are here for quite a long time, now take more days off than in the beginning. There was also way more of social dynamics between the people who organize and run the garden, so pretty much every second day we were hanging out here very late, drinking beer, playing kicker. The garden enables me to live my lifestyle, which is sort of difficult in normal jobs. They would be quite hard for me. It is super diverse what I do here, ranging from guided tours, discussions with student group, then the garden stuff and my nursery, sometimes bees or bikes or kitchen stuff. It never gets boring, that is something that is quite important to me. Before this, I had some decent jobs, for example in the botanical garden in Berlin, which is one of the best worldwide. But also there I quite often felt like I don't want to go to work, and here this usually doesn't happen.

***Why?***

One reason might be, that I don't have to show up. On Thursdays I have to, because we are organizing the garden, but for my nursery I'm paying rent

and if I don't open exactly on time one day, I don't make money, which is my problem, but not a problem of anyone else. Its not that my phone is going to ring if I'm not here at nine. And also in the nursery, I can do stuff as I want. So it's not like I have a big economic output. If I would organize it differently than I do, for example if I had a flower shop, I would be rich by now. I would have just bought stuff from wholesale markets and resell them here. It could be crazy money, but it would perfectly not fit into the project, because usually the industrial production of decorative plants is even worse than food production. I can grow the plants here in a way that I think is correct. Many of the visitors do not have an understanding about the real biological environment. They come to me, and tell me that there is fungus on that plant. Well yes, true that, and ... ? It's not going to die from it, it will regrow healthy next year, and fungus doesn't hurt anyone. Perhaps it does not look as pornographic as the plants from the flower shops, but so what. I try to have the production as sustainable as possible. No adding mineral fertilizers, no greenhouses, I was even researching the pots for a long time, to figure out how to make them most sustainable. Buyers are warmly encouraged to bring them back, instead of throwing them away, so I can use them again. From the environmental perspective these plastic pots from recycled plastic are way better than clay pots, which take a lot more energy to produce and transport. I can't use biodegradable pots because my plants stand here for too long, and the pots would just degrade too soon.

Another reason why I like my job is that I get along pretty well with most of the people in the garden. I really like them, and I think they are really cool people. They have similar worldview as I do.

***Are people what makes you most happy here?***

The social aspect, yes. But I also think this work itself is meaningful, and so I feel that I don't just go here to make money for someone else. Compared to the people at the bar, or at the restaurant, my job here is like sitting on the beach. All those people that you get to know, most of them are super interesting and nice. There is a whole set of interns and people from various organizations like institutionalized volunteers. I'm usually not bored here. Of course there are days, when everything goes wrong, and this is annoying, but even then we usually solve the problem, and then it's good again.

## APPENDIX 6

# INTERVIEW

## ONIA ELLINGHAUS

INTERN AT PRINZESSINNENGARTEN | BENEFICIARY OF THE STIPEND BY THE  
NATURE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION OF BERLIN | 19  
15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017 | 13H | PRINZESSINNENGARTEN | BERLIN

*Hi. Thanks for talking to me. Perhaps we can start with the question about how the decisions about this place are being taken.*

We are a lot of willing workers here, like people doing internship. I didn't know anything about the gardening stuff before. I was interested, but I didn't know any facts, like what nutrients the plants need, for example. But Matthias knows everything about this stuff. So every Thursday, he is going through the garden and he looks what has to be done, and he makes a list. Then all the willing workers look at that list and chose stuff to do. The main organization comes from Robert, who is in the office a lot. He gets all the emails and then give them to us, but he is the main man. But it's very open, so the meetings are open for everyone. If I have an idea, I can say it.

*What do you think is the effect of this place on the neighborhood around it?*

I think a lot of gentrification is happening here because of this garden. Long time ago, there was nothing going on at Moritzplatz, because the wall was very close by. Nobody was walking here, just a few cars. And then the huge Modulor store opened across the road, and that brought the first people here. They are selling art supplies, and this attracts a certain crowd. They wanted to build another retail building on this plot, but the Modulor store was afraid that not enough visitors are coming here, so they wanted the garden to be here. Now this garden is in a lot of travel guides and promoted by the city itself. It was the right time for urban gardening, because a lot of people are thinking in a new way about organic food, so there was a big general interest. Lots of people are coming here now.

*How do you feel when you're here?*

I really like this place because Moritzplatz is so busy and loud, but then you come in here with all the trees, its a very calm and peaceful place. And I really like working here, because the people here are into the organic food and they are all thinking a bit differently. I think it's a point where a lot of alternative people meet each other.

***Do you know how much the garden includes the neighbors in the process?***

Local people were very engaged in this place at the beginning. Now its a bit less, and there are a lot of people from the outside involved in the operations. But a lot of people from the area still bring their organic waste for our compost, and people who work here spend their breaks here, so I think we have a lot of visitors from the neighborhood.

***You mentioned that you are helping with a workshop here?***

This is an educational garden, and there are all these guided tours and workshops, which is part of the education. We're going to schools, like the Lenau elementary school for example. Once a week we run workshops for kinds there. But a lot of children also come here and we do workshops with them here.

***Can you think of a friend or a family member, who wouldn't enjoy this place?***

No.

***How do you think the fact that you work here, affects the way you think about this place?***

Recently I harvested something that I planted here for the first time, and it felt great. It was radish, which I planted on my second day. The plants are growing because of me. So that is certainly an effect. If you really understand the project, then you are more into it. If you just come to drink coffee, you are not so into this. It is a beautiful place to just have a break, but now I know the background and how it works. Not everything is very organized, but it works out at the end.

***What happens where there is an issue about something hard to decide?***

I think always when a lot of people are involved in the decision and everything is very democratic, not everyone is always getting what they want. So at the meeting today, the issue was that some people are thinking

that this is not an open place for every project, but for projects which are fitting in the garden. Projects including gardening and sustainability. There was a woman doing massages who want to do them here, and it doesn't really fit so much into the topic of the garden. This is just a different thinking, but it's okay, and we are finding the compromises. I don't remember any fights or something like that.

***How about the social entrepreneurship aspect? Is this place creating some jobs?***

Yes, ten people are employed here. There are more in the gastro area, but they are here only during the summer, while about ten people are getting their entire income from the garden. Some are working here part-time, and also have another job.

***To finish up our conversation, how do you think the fact that you can change and influence this place reflects how you feel about it?***

Because you can have your own ideas, you are more into this place. But it's hard to make decisions, and I think it will take longer to build a place, if everyone has their own ideas. If there is someone who has a plan, and knows what they are doing, it can be more efficient. It is more beautiful and it fits more to the people who are using it, when they can create the place themselves.

***It was great talking to you. Thank you for your time.***

## APPENDIX 7

# INTERVIEW

## HANNA BURCKHARDT

COORDINATOR OF TOURS AND EVENTS AT PRINZESSINNENGARTEN | 28  
19<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017 | 14H | PRINZESSINNENGARTEN | BERLIN

*Perhaps this time I will start with a simple question. How physically comfortable do you feel here?*

Very comfortable, but there are of course some problems. It's not always very dry here, the weather is rather wet. Chairs get wet and you have to look for a dry place to sit. This is a problem because it is an outdoor space. There are some roofs and structures for protection, but it just gets less comfortable.

*Can you think of a friend or a family member who wouldn't like this place?*

No, no one in particular.

*How would you say this place compares to other places in Berlin?*

I haven't encountered a place like this in Berlin so far. I think it is very special in a lot of aspects. One is, that there is a lot of self-organization, and people take responsibility because they really like it. So there is the voluntary aspect. On the one hand it's nicely organized, and on the other hand, it's kind of chaotic in a very interesting mixture. There is a weird balance between structure and chaos. I have to admit, that I don't know a lot of other such places in Berlin. I got in touch with a tiny garden, which was also definitely chaotic, because a lot of different people wanted a lot of different things, but they were not yet as established as this place is. I entered this garden after it already got pretty established in the organizational structure, people found their roles already.

*Did you help creating something physical in this garden?*

Yes, I helped building the dome which is sitting there, on top of our little seed bank. It doesn't really have a particular use yet, and that happens a lot here

in the garden. The things get built and then they are just there. I built benches made out of pallets, that we use, for example, when we screen movies. In terms of something permanent, apart from taking care of the raised beds and fixing stuff, I think that would be it so far. At some point I made some up-cycled jewelry and other products, which were then sold at the info container.

***You seem to be quite skillful.***

I like to do this stuff. This is the reason, why I got to know this place. I was very into up-cycling stuff, like cartons and milk boxes, things that we usually throw away. And I heard that there are regular workshops about that here, and this is how I got to know the garden.

***You mentioned that people build stuff, which don't find their use. What are the rules for building something? Can you just come and build the table or do you have to go through the meeting or more official channels?***

Regular way is that if you have an idea, most people just come to the Friday meeting as guests, and present their ideas. They usually think they fit very well in here, but then there are actually some rules that projects have to fulfill. For example, projects have to be sustainable in a way. They have to deal with something that is encouraging people to think about sustainable ways of living. It has to also fulfill an aspect of participation. So it should be a project where other interested people could get involved. The tiny house, for example, was an open construction site where people could just come and help building it. One other aspect used to be that the structures should be mobile, possible to relocate. This is in case we have to change place in the future.

***You mentioned participation. I find it interesting that there are about 24% of Turkish residents in the immediate surroundings of their place. I think the ratio of Turkish people is much lower here. Why do you think they don't come here?***

I have no idea. I think in the very beginning there were a lot of people from the neighborhood involved. Even clearing the place of rubbish, building the raised beds and also contributing their experience in gardening. A lot of lay people were depending on knowledge of people with experiences. Now there are a couple of people from the neighborhood with the Turkish migration background, who come here and get some soil, and they are very

interested in the plants, but I don't really know why there is not any stronger involvement from that community, I can't really say.

***Do you think it could be related to the aesthetic of the place, which doesn't suit everyone because it looks specific?***

Yes, that could be. Yes, maybe.

***Perhaps a more general question. Imagine a hypothetical scenario where there is a place, an empty lot, like this used to be. Then you give it to people and say do whatever you want. You can build, rearrange ... here it is, work it. Do you think this would result in a good public space?***

Wow. Okay. I think if it's made with the process that involves a very balanced communication, so people talk about what they do, and if it's people from the same neighborhood, so they are closely to use it, then they design it according to their needs and experiences. If there is a good communication, so that things that are built don't challenge each other, I can very well imagine this could be a good public place.

***When this place was being created, are you aware of different considerations or priorities that people had about it?***

I think the main aspect was to create the place for people, where they can meet, come together and learn from each other. So it was functional in this way, but on a different level. Because if you look at it from the productional perspective, like producing vegetable, this place is not really functional because we don't have enough of outcome to be harvested and to be sold, but this is not the goal of the garden. It's rather for people to have a possibility to see and experience how the things we eat actually grow, and to show a great diversity of what could be possible. But it's also a lot of experimenting.

***One big priority, as you mentioned, is to create an alternative space for people to come together and collaborate, is that correct?***

Yes. Doesn't have to be an alternative place, but of course this place offers alternative ways of living and appropriating the space, so there are a lot of possibilities for people to participate and build. There are things like open wood workshop or kitchen workshop, where we try to have as many events as possible, as accessible as possible. This means they are mostly free, so

people with a low income can participate. Then you can start thinking through these workshops about what is possible for yourself in life.

***One of my hypotheses is that if people are actively involved in the creation of the place, or they have reasons for returning, like for watering plants and harvesting them, that they are going to grow place attachment through this continuous regular interactions and seeing the fruits of their work. Do you think people are more attached to this place than a regular square or a park or a garden in the city?***

Definitely, yes. I think through participation as you already phrased it, people do get attached. Because if you put your energy and time to something, you feel responsible because you think, this is a seed that I planted and I want to see it grow. I used this concept in my master thesis as well, it was one of my main points. So you do something, and you see that it has an effect. I think this is a very important aspect when it comes to place attachment. Of course, when you create something, you also want other people to enjoy it, or to have a function or just to be there.

***What was your thesis about exactly?***

My master thesis was about how urban gardening can challenge specific principles of particular hegemonic world views, given that we have a very functional world view, also regarding our relation to nature. This functional worldview could be called scientific rationalism. This is a perspective that involves the suggestion that there is only one truth, and that it is possible to see something absolutely objectively. Urban gardening is potentially challenging that view. I took Prinzessinnengarten as a case study, trying to show that encouraging or working with a lot of improvisation and experimenting, and also having a lot of people coming together, which involves a lot of different perspectives, this counters the perspective of only one objective truth. If you have a lot of different perspectives, then you have different views on the things. I came to the conclusion that participatory projects, which try to make due and make sense of something, and are trying to use what is already there, can to some degree challenge some of these particular principles. But of course not hundred percent, because this place is also existing within a certain system, which is modern society. It underlies particular economic forces, and places like this have to kind of adapt to that in order to survive.

***Somehow fit into the mainstream. That is very interesting. How many people coming here would you say participate in organized activities?***

There are around 70.000 visitors coming here per season. The garden is not open all year long. It's weather depending. By the end of October, mid-November it closes and then it reopens in April. I would say 10 percent of visitors participate, which amounts to about 8.000 people per year. Some only for some activities, coming for the community gardening which takes place twice a week, some of them participate longer, maybe for two weeks, because they just feel like it, and some of them are permanently participating.

***That's a really high number.***

Yes, but this also counts basic participation, where people just swing by and drop out again.

***So there are days when you can just come and do gardening work?***

Yes, there is a garden working list being created and updated every week together with Matthias. On the gardeners meeting we talk about this, and we go through the tasks. This work list is then the basis for the community gardening days. There are at least one or two people, who instruct these days and prepare some of the tasks that can be done. Then people just come and get a little introduction, for example where the tools and the working list can be found.

***What other participatory activities here would you highlight?***

I would mention the open wood workshop, which is open at least once a week. People can come and try to build something. Perhaps they need material or tools or advice. And sometimes they build for themselves, like making a shelf for their home, or they can work on the garden projects, which are prepared. Example of this would be the already mentioned palette benches, which were built during these workshop days.

We have regular waste cooking events, which are open to the public, so everyone who is interested can come, and we go to different supermarkets around the area and collect food that would otherwise be thrown away. And then we cook together with what we have. This also creates a certain sensitivity for our food behavior and highlights the value of food. Apart from that, we have the open bike workshop once a week where people can come

and get help fixing their bikes. There is a screen-printing office once a week every Friday. We have a workshop preparing syrups, which are then sold here at the bar. It's a lot of things. These are just some of those I can think of now.

***How do you communicate these activities with potential interested people?***

For one, it is written down on our event board by the entrance to the garden. If there are special workshops that don't take place regularly, then we announce this on Facebook and our webpage.

***So, Robert and Marco are the founders of this place, and this is representing the place being organized, and then you have a lot of other people, which represent a bit more the chaotic side. How is the power structure here like? Are there any frictions about decision-making?***

You experienced this dynamics a bit yourself I think. Each Friday we have the open garden meeting, where people can come and present their ideas, objects and potential collaborations. Everyone who is there at the meeting can say, I like that or I'm strongly opposed to that. Then we try to find the solution. People who take the responsibility are also contact persons for these potential projects. There are a lot of enquiries which come via email, and there we can say that Marco and Robert who are responsible for some of these general email accounts can be bottlenecks. There are a lot of project ideas coming in, but they are both so super busy, that it is not possible for them to take care of every single request. Very often it happens that they get a chance to skim the email and forward it to a person that could be responsible for that. For example, if there is an inquiry about having a workshop that is food or cooking related, then it is also being forwarded to me, and I take care of the communication and coordination from there on. Or if it is about people visiting the place and wanting to get more information, then it also might be forwarded to me or to Svenja. It works like that. But of course, people are different and have different priorities, and work differently, and of course there are frictions, as it happens in normal life as well.

***On the Friday meeting, when I was also there, there were three guests. How many guests do you normally have?***

It differs from time to time. I think three is the minimum of guest we have every week, sometimes it's even five or seven. This depends on the weather and the season, but I think we never had more than ten guests.

***Let me ask you about the social norms. What would be socially unacceptable behavior here?***

Treating the things that are being created together in the garden in a very bad way, like destroying things, stealing of course, going behind people's backs.

***How about drug use?***

There is nothing that is absolutely unacceptable. Drugs are being consumed here by people that I involved in different projects.

***Do you think more than in general urban environment in Berlin?***

No, not more than generally in Berlin (laugh). But I can maybe ease this perspective down a bit. For example, there was a situation, when I was an intern here in the garden. It was a day like this in the morning, and I came here and there was a random person sitting in a very open space here in the garden, cooking his crack and consuming it. He was sitting on the sunshine where people were just walking by. I asked that person to leave, because this is not acceptable - using heavy drugs in a public space on a weekend morning when families are around. So drugs are not being consumed here in the public. If people do that, they do it very discreetly. Of course you have to differ between different drugs, so there are people who smoke weed sitting around, and this is different from giving yourself a shot. We also try to keep people out of toilets for using heavy drugs and leaving the needles there.

***Since you're doing the walking tours here in the garden, perhaps you can tell me a bit about different parts or elements of the garden?***

Yes. A very prominent point in the garden is our info container with the roof. This is kind of the place where people can go and get information. When groups come for workshops or tours, they go there and announce themselves. But we also sell our vegetables and books there. Then there is the bar area, which is a very big part of this place. There is gastronomy and tables in that little forrest in the shade, which gives the option to people to sit down. At the bar you can get the drinks and also there is the kitchen, which makes one dish per day, which is sold at the bar. This is a big part of the

funding of the whole project - one third of income comes from the gastronomy and the bar. We also have a plant nursery, which is taken care of by Matthias. There are plants being grown and sold. Mostly they are plants which survive the winter, so they live for several years, but they also look very nice, there are a lot of blooming things. Then we have the workshop kitchen, which is the big long table behind the info container, where we do a lot of workshops, but it is also a convenient location to rent out. For example yesterday a private person celebrated their birthday there. It is convenient for about twenty people. Opposite from the info container is a container-sized wooden box, where we keep the books library. The books can be swapped. We are growing worms in the little benches in there, where you can sit and drink your coffee. So in these benches you have a lot of worms, which produce great humus. Just next to that is a free box, where people can leave or take clothes. There is the wood workshop container with a big roof so it's possible to work there even in the rain. We have the bike container, which also includes a lot of storage space for bike spare parts. Also very visible is the tall wooden tower construction. It's called Die Laube - German word for the arbor. It's a bit of an understatement, but this is very new, it was finalized last year, and it was a collaborative and open construction site. A lot of architecture students and people who were doing apprenticeships helped build it. This is also used as a workshop space, it has a tent that makes the space a bit darker, so you can screen movies and have presentations, hold workshops and seminars and other events.

***This is more Marco's project, right?***

Yes, this is what Marco takes care of, together with the neighborhood academy. They have a focus on urban development, and on how people can co-create the city. It's more on the meta base, so talking and thinking about concepts, whereas the gardening part is maybe a bit more practical. The neighborhood academy organization was founded two years ago, and it's based here in the garden.

Some other areas here include the bees. We have seven beehives in the garden, and they are also the subject of our environmental education. We are organizing open workshops about beekeeping and bee tours. It is a very important part of the garden community because you can learn a lot from the bees.

***Are you aware if there was any kind of plan at the beginning? How organized was the direction of the development of this place?***

I have no idea, because I was not involved in the planning. I got involved three years ago, when everything was set up already.

***Are the position and the layout now pretty fixed?***

Well, there is less space left for putting things now, so there are still some areas that could be changed, and they are still transformable or in transformation. But I think the general setting, where the planting beds and pathways are, is pretty much set.

***You mentioned funding before. Can you talk about other sources of income?***

As I said, the kitchen and bar are one third of the funding. Another third is the horticultural business. This involves building offsite gardens at schools and cultural institutions like museums or refugee homes. It's not just about building these gardens but also about maintaining them. In schools we are taking care of them together with kids, which is part of the environmental education. The last third of funding combines a lot of different things, like selling products from the garden and harvesting. So people can come here and read on the harvest list what can be harvested. Also we sell pre-grown plants, books and postcards. There is a small part of income coming from private tours, donations and specific projects. We write funding applications for some small specific projects. The source of this funding is coming mostly from various foundations, which are likely to fund specific projects.

***This plot if I understand correctly is owned by the Friedrichshagen-Kreuzberg borough. Are you aware of their attitude towards this place?***

I think they look at the garden in a positive way and I think (of course I don't know for sure), that they see it as a place that is contributing to a positive development of this area. In the sense that it is offering a public place where people can come and retreat just a tiny bit from the city. But also as a platform for people to meet. However, we still do have a temporary renting contract. The contract we are on now is expiring in 2018 with the option of prolonging it to 2020. This is to keep the possibility to give it away to an investor to build something here. But I don't know what the long term plans of the district are with this area.

***But it's possible that maybe it's not infinitely extended and that's why everything is movable?***

Exactly. Everything is mobile. I think it is even a condition within the contract.

***I think we will wrap this interview up pretty soon. Just to compliment the earlier question about the funding - could you tell me more about the expenses of this place?***

So the organization of this garden is not exactly an association, but it's a non-profit company. On the one hand this grants the opportunity to be financially and also politically independent from the government or the state. We are not dependent on any funding from the state or from the city or the borough, and this might be critical when the government changes. So it's a company which has to raise all the funding itself and all the surpluses have to be reinvested in the educational mission of the garden. But of course, as you already said, it is a kind of social entrepreneurship, so we have to also think economically and be like, okay what can we offer to make the money to sustain the organization, including the people who are actually employed. So I think at the moment there are eleven people, who make entire living in the garden. They are not in full time positions though. As a principle, we think that people should have time in lives for other things besides just work. Now in the summer, even more people works here for money because the bar and the kitchen are open. It is social in a way that people can actually make living from this place. But also they have to create their own positions, meaning that people who work here do something that also contributes to the funding of this garden here and to their own wages.

***Another expense is also the lease, right?***

There is of course the monthly lease, and also the fees for street cleaning, bills for the water and electricity, but I don't know the exact numbers. We also have a back-office, where people are doing the accounting and bookkeeping. It's just across the street, and that is also being leased, which is another expense I can think of.

***I think we exhausted the main questions for now. It was a real pleasure talking with you, thank you.***

## APPENDIX 8

# INTERVIEW

## ROBERT SHAW

CO-FOUNDER OF PRINZESSINNENGARTEN | 39

19<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017 | 17H | PRINZESSINNENGARTEN | BERLIN

*Hello. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I would like to ask you a general question to begin with, not specifically related to this place. Imagine you have an empty lot like this one used to be, somewhere in the city and you just give it to people, to do whatever they want. Random people come, everybody does what they feel like ... What kind of public place do you think will result from this kind of process? What would happen?*

I think it depends on the area of the city and on the financial situation of people living in the surroundings. I think here it would become a place where people build their own huts for living. There would be a lot of arguments among the people and with the city.

*What you're saying is that they would not create a public space, but privatize the plot?*

Yes. Well, it depends on how you define it. There could be privatized units, or maybe a certain group would privatize the whole place and keep it only partially open. People would enter, but in general the chances are, that it would become more privatized, especially over time.

*What did you do that this didn't happen here?*

We set a frame.

*What do you mean?*

I will give you an example from my old work. I've been working with a performance group for seven years before the garden and we were doing participative theater in public places. It was not classical theater, we tried to

break open the theater. What I learned in these seven years of work, is that you don't achieve participation if you leave things fully open. People don't know what to do with it. They are overwhelmed, which is totally fine. We were fighting for this participation for years and years, and we wanted the people to just join and participate in minutes. This doesn't work. I think you got to set a frame if you want productive participation. And that's exactly what we did here. Our framing was that we wanted to create a model of education where we're learning from each other as we are doing. So on one hand, we needed a place to build this garden, but we also needed a community. So we set up the rules, which make it very easy to participate here, to attract people to come here.

We set a content-wide frame, which is gardening and sustainability. We had restrictions on how to garden, for example food only in the boxes, independently from the ground, no chemical fertilizers. We want to be sustainable, and if you want to be sustainable as well, come here and do something.

We set a financial frame at the beginning, which was like, we don't have any money, so if you want this place to work, help us. At the beginning we said it doesn't matter if people spend their time or some money here - they are both the same value. No matter if someone gives us 100 euros or half an hour of working time. For us it's the same value, or we even prefer the working time.

The kind of background frame we set from the beginning is this: If we want the exchange of knowledge we have to make this interesting by getting different kinds of knowledge in here. So we didn't only try to attract people who are interested in gardening, we tried to address universities, organizations with different topics, like for example, a group of Turkish women in the first years had a cooking project. You know, to get different knowledge that you exchange is really fertile and makes sense - it's interesting for the people and for us, so that people really learn. When I come here I can learn something.

***Was this the main motivation or a priority when you were establishing this place?***

Well, there is a personal motivation and motivation by concept. Both to me were equally important. In the beginning I was fascinated by the gardens in Cuba. When I was studying documentary movies I was there and I got to learn about their model of urban farming, which is very special. In short, after

the breakup of the Soviet Union, Cubans didn't have enough food in the country, and kind of bottom up, just for the purpose of growing food, neighbors got together and started their own gardens. Properties were available, because they were not allowed to be sold, so they could just do it. This developed into a society movement and then the state came and made it a state system. Community gardens and urban farms changed into a state supported food supply system, which still exists and which led to the situation, where Cuba nowadays is the only sustainable national agricultural system in the world. This means, that they put less energy into agriculture than they get out. This started community based, and I was fascinated by that process. The reason for wanting to do the garden was because I was interested how we can translate what happened there into our system. Would that be possible?

So this movement in Cuba was born because there was not enough food. But people here have different needs. Nobody needs our food. The first translation was that we will not do food production, but knowledge production. It is going to be the place which is producing knowledge.

The second translation was a community movement in a public space. The Cubans are using public space to work together, community learn and share. We don't have that culture, especially not on public places. We use our public places mainly for transit and consumption. So we had to create a place with rules which helped to form a community around it, to be able to do community learning. So that kind of public space must be vital and accessible for anybody and active in what it does.

The third factor here is the money thing. The Cuban state came and saw that their community gardens could be part of the solution of the food supply problem. They said, this community gardens are now state gardens, which means that 80% of vegetables people grew belonged to the state, but they were allowed to sell or to use 20% for private purpose. To understand how important this was for a Cuban person, you had to be there and understand that at that time, you weren't allowed to sell anything for private profit. You were not allowed to make extra additional private money. This meant huge difference in quality of lives for many people, since they could suddenly sell vegetables. They could sell it to tourists and get one dollar for something. So the third factor was that this garden had to have economical relevance for the people. With us this translation was done in two steps. The first step was the concept that people who garden, have to be able to live from it,

otherwise it wouldn't work. And I know a lot of gardens which invest so much time on inner organization, which is worth a lot, I'm not saying that's bad. Projects which exclude money are in a way always right, because money always is and always will be a problem in such projects. Money is shit. But you can address money and the function it has. You have to have that conflict about money, don't stop talking about it, it will never ever end. We always have to deal with who gets what. People will always have the desires, they want to buy a car, to become parents, they have to wish for more money. So we're kind of forming a bubble here and the outside of it is this pressure from money everywhere.

***You can't just totally escape from the system.***

Yes, but the interesting thing is, that if we are the bubble, here is the inside, the garden itself. Not for people doing it, but all the participants coming, for them it works kind of money free. For those, who do the garden, and we who are kind of the skin of the bubble, we always have to deal with that problem. But it means that we don't just ignore the system around us, we deal with it. It is dangerous, because we might lose the overview that money is not the most important thing here. But it's a way of addressing things that go wrong with money as well. I know a lot of people don't think that way. And it enables us, which is a positive side-effect, to do a lot more than without money.

***Esta es una plaza in Madrid is not giving any jobs even though they really need them in Spain. I think this is one crucial difference to this garden.***

It's not even so much in jobs. We can invest that money in equipment for workshop kitchen, which enables people to cook for themselves and learn about healthy cooking. We can invest this money in a campaign.

***Some of it has to go into the lease as well. This is another difference in comparison with Madrid, where they just kind of occupied the plot and only later legalized it.***

I find this good in a way. It enables a larger group of people in these "squatting" gardens. I've been working now in collective structures for 17 years, and those groups, for example, an art collective, who didn't give shit about the money, the people in the group has changed a lot over the years. Only those who were able to make a living, because that is the world we live in, were able to stay in the project and improve their work and knowledge.

***Would you call this garden grassroots or kind of bottom up project?***

Yes.

***I'm asking because some people I surveyed, were kind of surprised that this would be a bottom up, because it's a company, even though it's a non-profit.***

I know. They were surprised because they weren't there when the thing started. I personally think, that we have a huge problem of becoming too famous. Too much media interest is a problem for the garden on different layers. If you look at the balance of participants, and people who come here to take a nice photo, it's starting to get out of balance. Sometimes there is a situation where three people garden, and four people stand next to them and shoot photos and ask questions. One reason for that is that people, because we've been in the media so often, can't imagine that we are shortly before being broke, that we are not fully safe, we are not institutionalized. They see this as an institution because it's been here for so long, and it's so famous, and it's in the travel guides. If you read about something in a traveling book, like a restaurant in Morocco, you think if it's in the traveling book it always have to be there. And that is the status the garden probably has for some people. But not for me.

***47% of people who I surveyed were here for the first time and a lot of them are from other countries, and basically tourists.***

Amazing. This is a touristic problem. We are seriously thinking about moving the garden because of that. We couldn't just leave without taking things that are here. The wooden thing over there could be a good example. For example, showing a movie - it doesn't matter if people are tourists or not, it's not about participation. Or being in the audience of a discussion is also not really participation. For the participational parts of the gardening or wood workshop, and all the other things which are invented for participation, we are seriously thinking of moving in 2018 and 2019 to locations which can easier deal with that.

***Does the lease also run out next year? And then you can extend it for two more years?***

Yes, but probably if we wanted we could even extend it for another two years, they wouldn't dare to throw us out.

***You told me earlier, that your main priorities or motivations were community learning and sustainability. Could you explain a bit how these theoretical values translated into physical space here. Who made decisions about the layout and the structures?***

It's not easy to explain, because it's not a very clear process. So, you know there is a hierarchy in the NGO running the place. That hierarchy is mainly manifested by so-called CEO's like me and Marco, who know about the administrative side, the contract side and maybe political side. It's not necessarily the decision-making here. We try to divide that. I see my work more as protecting the frame and people. Now surely the internal decision-making is not absolutely democratic and equal, because people who come here for the first time, and enter for example the Friday meeting, don't have the weight and knowledge to decide as much as people who are here for seven years. So there is a second hierarchy, kind of a knowledge and responsibility hierarchy. But still if someone is good in presenting and engaged with their issue, they can do their project here.

***So the second hierarchy is totally informal?***

I think so yes.

***Based on personality and experiences people's opinions gain value tough time?***

Well, these hierarchies are not so clearly defined. We had a row of difficult decisions here. They were decisions about questions from companies wanting to do advertising with us. There is a lot of money in that, and the garden always said no. The garden said no in situations when even I, and I don't like advertising, would have preferred to do it because we had too little money to pay the people for example, and I knew the money situation.

***What kind of advertisement offers did you get?***

Oh we had many. Microsoft wanted to shoot an advertisement movie here, we had Unilever wanting to become a lifestyle company. We had Continental, American Spirit, Jameson ...

***So it's about using this place for their marketing or image purposes, not billboards and stuff?***

It's mostly events or shooting a movie. We had VW wanting to do a two day event for their new Transporters here. BMW also contacted us. It is a huge amount of money that we never took, which I think is right. But from time to time, when I know about the money situation and I'm stressed that there is no money coming in for December, how are we going to do it, Jesus Christ. We never fired a person, and we had to do that. And I think, and I get weak, and maybe we should do this Jameson thing, and I like whisky (laugh). And then the garden says no. But still then, for that reason the hierarchies sometimes mix in the meeting. So I would be in for yes, we should do it. Just once. Just one exception. But you see, the first hierarchy does not enable me at the meeting to push things through. And I would never do that. If the garden meeting says no, then it's a no. A lot of decision making just happens without any formal meeting in the all-day process. Someone just builds a bench and doesn't know where to put it and puts it there. Which is a no-hierarchy decision making. And I would say for the physical design of the space, about seventy percent happens like that.

***So it just kind of come from people. They imagine an idea and they build it.***

Sometimes they even start to build it and they forget about it or they ... you know it's a chaos, which is also beautiful.

***I think so too. But some decisions had to be made more actively. What about this big wooden tower at the entrance? It couldn't possibly be built as a result of an instinctual impulse, because it's too big for that. Were there things you decided already at the beginning, how and where they should be?***

There was a group from the very beginning on.

***You walked in here for the first time, when it was literally nothing, and maybe you had some kind of brainstorm or imagined how it could look like, how it could be?***

The first day, I remember, was 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2009. It took us four months to go through the bureaucracy to get the keys. We knew we will get them on that day, and we climbed over the fence, because we were not allowed to go on the property before, so we couldn't really know what exactly was inside. We couldn't make proper plans. We climbed the fence with a journalist who was interested in this new concept of urban gardening. We saw how much rubbish was lying around here, it was just the two of us, and it was a bit like

Jesus Christ, how can we do the gardening here, we have to get rid of the rubbish. And how do we pay for that? It could have taken us months. So we have decided to create an open day to clear the rubbish, instead of starting the garden right away. The journalist published a very short article, inviting people to help with cleaning, and we were expecting four, five, maybe ten people to show up on the day, and we had 150 people coming. The handicapped guy, who you have seen in the info container, was one of these people, and he stayed on since then. And on that day, surely the people were asking, where can we put the rubbish, and there was a decision made, but it is very hard to describe how it was like. It was like a natural process in kind of deciding what to throw away, what to keep and then suddenly people started to collect nice pieces of rubbish and making photos of it. It carried on so that most of the decisions were a result of kind of the spontaneous will of people.

It took us six weeks until we installed the Friday meeting. In the beginning it was gardening and organizational things together on that one meeting, now they are separate meeting. And that meeting took over all physical decisions here.

This wooden structure is the only example of the opposite. Four years ago some architects came into the garden, and said they wanted to help the garden by building rooms for winter. Basically building a house here. Marco and I had very different opinions about that. I thought that they want to use the publicity of the garden for gaining their own publicity by building a building here. Marco was very interested in architecture and the design process. I from beginning on went against that project, and said that it's not my cup of tea. Marco instead followed up with them, and so they started a two year planning process. At the end of that process, they have already invested so much time into thinking about this, that when they asked, although most of the people didn't want that thing, we couldn't say no anymore, due to politeness reasons and social reasons. Because someone from the garden said yes two years ago and the thing wasn't really well organized, and they invested two years of working time.

Then we had a very difficult six weeks process. The structure was originally planned three times that size and there was no financing for it, and it was meant to be located directly over the entrance door. So a lot of conflicts happened in these six weeks about how to adapt the structure. It was the reverse process. Normally, with the kitchen for example - someone said they

would find it lovely if we had a kitchen for people to cook the products from the garden and participate. And we said yes, that's a good idea, let's go for it. Then it took over eight months to crystalize how much money we have, what can we afford, what we need. It went through the Friday meeting again and again and again I think over ten times until he had decided on a container and the roof and all that kind of stuff.

***What do you think about the wooden structure today?***

I still find it difficult, but it has positive and negative sides. The positive side is that it's a symbol to the outside, that the garden has managed to stay here. And that's a good thing. It's almost political and it's saying we don't go when you want us to go. It has concrete foundations, it's massive, it's there. So what it transports to the outside is something I support.

To the inside it's a different symbol. It hasn't been following the rules the garden normally went with. It wasn't participative because there was this knowledge about statics and you had to have professional carpenters and builders. It wasn't participation for the people or participatory decision making, except afterwards, to kind of reduce it in size. It is not very well liked here due to that process. You can see what happens if you break the rules of decision making. Unfortunately, it also doesn't provide any room for winter, which was the original plan.

You can see that I had a very difficult time with that building. Nowadays I think this could be the future of this space somehow something like this, but not of the garden and current participatory activities. If too many non-participative people are here, we could move the garden and use this place for less participatory activities. It's okay if you have a lot of people watching a movie. So in that sense I made my peace with it, thinking if the garden would move, this could be a sort of future of this plot.

***Everything here has to be able to move. Is that wooden structure movable?***

One exception to that rule is that structure itself. Well, you could have taken it down, which would cost 20.000 euros, and build it up again, which would cost the same. In addition to that, you would need to build new foundations, which cost 35.000 euros and deal with the bureaucracy for over a year to get the permissions to do it.

***Was there anything else in this garden that involved architects, urban planners, designers, landscape architects, anything like this?***

Yes involved, but not in the professional knowledge hierarchy. Sure, there were architects involved in building the tiny house, but they were building it by the same rules as the garden, and they did it out of their personal interests. If we want the building permissions for the containers and stuff, the law says the architect has to stamp it. So there were architects involved but never in that way.

***Would you say that this place has a particular vibe or urban atmosphere compared to the rest of the city.***

Yes, but the atmosphere changes depending where you are. It's very different here than it is at the back of the bicycle container. And it's very different there than at Matthias' place. At the bar area, people come to enjoy a drink and go for dates, which is perfectly fine.

A while ago we did a survey of about two thousand visitors, and most of these people wrote a little sentence why they liked this place. I would say about sixty percent of guests in a gastronomical part said they liked it because it's such a nice and green space. This is not really relating to our context, but when you first come here I think that's the general atmosphere. It's not so loud, it's a bit cooler than the outside, it's a bit of a hideout. There are sometimes very many people here, but that doesn't disturb them, because there are always very many people in the city. The garden has a different atmosphere. If you go to the garden, you learn a very different side, where plants are the main thing, where watering them is important, and you zoom in to that thing. Ecological farming is very important. If you go to the bicycle container, especially building and doing and learning by serving and drinking beer and smoking weed, is again specific. If you go to Matthias, he has a highly specific knowledge about very specific plants from India, sitting around, drinking beer, having discussions, you know. And then, if you go to the garden on a rainy day or when the people are gone, most of the people would sit over there under the roof in a little kitchen. There is this "oh what can we do", "new plans" atmosphere. Shouldn't we and what if's. The atmosphere in these microclimates is very depending on the people and not on the garden necessarily. Sometimes you have a totally different atmosphere there when there is a school class. So I'm sorry, the answer is that it's very diverse (laugh).

***How do you see the role of this garden in Berlin?***

There is a big gap between how certain kind of people see the garden from the outside and how we really are. We are kind of presented as the role model for the city of the future in all these city development discussions. And if you look at who we really are, it's just a bunch of people who used to be unemployed, and not the great thinkers of new and innovative whatever stuff. We're all political in our way, but we have the tendency not to be permanently active politically, but to see the garden as a political place through its existence. The things how a city looks at the garden is a bit blurry as well. This is somehow considered a political place that stands for city planning and ecological things, a bit chaotic place where people drink a lot of beer and hang around, and it looks pretty untidy. There are no signs explaining what is where, which I think is a very important in the garden, because the first step to participation is asking, and if you explain anything on a bloody sign, people walk around here like in a botanical garden. And because of this fuzzy definition of the garden, many people are asking us for many things. Some ask us to do yoga here, or to organize walking on the burning coal, or to do some architecture projects or speeches in front of VIP's ... It's not a hundred percent clear what this place is. It is a political and economic laboratory, social entrepreneurship, ecological farming and permaculture. If we say we're into urban planning issue, only planners would approach us. If we say we are just about ecological farming, the same. It's not a lot of ideological dogmatism here.

***In the survey, place attachment was rated very high by people. Much higher than place identity or place dependency. Why do you think people are so attached to this place?***

Because they can adapt their own thinking on it. Some people come here for community reasons, some for ecological reasons, some for other interests. Because they are all allowed to project that on the garden, and nobody tells them that they are wrong. Part of the reason is that you can come here and do stuff. You can plant a plant, and return only in three months to see it how it grows. It's free, and if you don't take personal care of it, somebody else will, and you will still see the results of your effort. You can do things here and leave a mark, which makes it your place as well.

***Thank you for this very insightful conversation. I wish you all the best with the garden in the future.***

## APPENDIX 9

# TABLE

## DETAILED QUALITY CRITERIA RATINGS

Quality Criteria	Esta es una Plaza	Prinzes sinneng arten	Argumentation	Comment about the criteria system
<b>Protection agains traffic and accidents - feeling safe</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>		
Protection for pedestrians	10	10	No cars in the place anywhere.	
Eliminating fear of traffic	10	10	No traffic at all.	
<b>Protection against violence - feeling secure</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>9.5</b>		
Lively public realm	10	10	Both places are filled with people, and there are a lot of activities.	
Allow for passive surveillance	7	9	Tower in Prinz. You can also look in more from the street. Esta is more isolated, however, there are plenty of windows from neighboring buildings overlooking it.	
Overlapping functions day and night	/	/	Closed at night	Assumes that public places are opened 24/7, but these places aren't.
Well lit / lightning in human scale	/	/		

Quality Criteria	Esta es una Plaza	Prinzes sinneng arten	Argumentation	Comment about the criteria system
<b>Protection against unpleasant sensory experiences</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>8.2</b>		
Wind/draft	10	9	Esta is more enclosed by wall, buildings, trees. Prinz is also good, but it's a bit more drafty.	
Rain/snow	5	8	Prinz has some protection against rain, while esta only has about 12 sitting spaces under the roof. Raining is a much smaller problem in Madrid though.	To compare directly, climatic effects should be taken into account. More protection is needed where the weather is more adverse.
Cold/heat	9	9	Plenty of shade on both places.	
Pollution	7	8	Madrid in general is more polluted than Berlin.	
Dust, noise, glare	6	7	Because of the dirt ground, dust can be a problem at both places, but in Madrid a bit more because it's more 'dusty' ground.	This factor includes too many different components.
<b>Opportunities to walk</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>7.8</b>		
Room for walking	10	10		
Interesting facades	6	9	Prinz has more sense-stimulating structures, including a bar, restaurant, info container, wooden tower etc. Esta has less prominent structures and more prominent solid wall surrounding the perimeter.	Facades considered here are not those of the surrounding buildings, but rather of various objects and structures inside the places.

Quality Criteria	Esta es una Plaza	Prinzes sinneng arten	Argumentation	Comment about the criteria system
No obstacles	9	8	Generally no obstacles in both places. Prinz is slightly more difficult because it has some cables and wires on the ground.	
Good surfaces	2	3	The simplest possible dirt ground at both places. Slightly rougher at Esta, larger stones at Prinz.	I think the surfaces work for the places, but what Gehl considers good are surfaces like high quality cobblestone.
Accessibility for everyone	9	9	Both places don't have any steps or curbs, so they are accessible. Not ten because of the general ground quality.	
<b>Opportunities to stand/stay</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>9</b>		
Attractive and functional edges	6	9	Edges are more visible at Prinz. With more structures and higher fragmentation into smaller places. Esta basically has two spatial areas, while Prinz has plenty more. More fragmentation of space means more edges. There are also commercial activities, which are more engaging.	Edges not considered to the outside, but sort of separations of space on the inside.
Defined spots for staying	10	10	There are plenty of places, nooks and crannies where people meet and stay.	
Objects to lean against or stand next to	8	9	Plenty of objects and structures to stand next to. Somewhat denser in Prinz, where there is also a forest.	

Quality Criteria	Esta es una Plaza	Prinzes sinneng arten	Argumentation	Comment about the criteria system
Facades with good details that invite staying	6	8	More defined places at Prinz.	Again, facades here are replaced by structures
<b>Opportunities to sit</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>		What about the comfort of seating?
Defined zones for sitting	10	10	Plenty of seating spaces at both locations. One can always find a place to sit.	
Pleasant views, people watching	10	10	Both places are quite small and manageable to command with the eye. Plenty of greenery and activities to look at. Seeing positioned so that this is possible.	
Good mix of public and cafe seating	/	/		This list of criteria is addressing a more typical public places, where there are cafes needed to attract people. People come to Esta for other reasons. Counting this factor would be unfair to both case studies.
Resting opportunities	10	10	Places are too small to really need resting opportunities for walking, but there is plenty of seating everywhere.	
<b>Opportunities to see</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>8</b>		
Reasonable viewing distances	10	9	It is possible to grasp Esta in one view. Prinz is more complicated to understand the first time. Still good viewing distances.	The size is really important. Because esta is smaller, it is possible to grasp more easy.

Quality Criteria	Esta es una Plaza	Prinzes sinneng arten	Argumentation	Comment about the criteria system
Unhindered views	9	5		Problem is that if a place is too large you don't want unhindered views. Prinz is so large that u don't want them, yet this criteria reduces overall rating for opportunities to see.
Interesting views	10	10	Plenty to see at both places.	
Lighting	/	/	Prinz has some lightning, Esta nothing. Doesn't even have electricity.	Not open at night makes this factors irrelevant.
<b>Opportunities to talk and listen</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7.5</b>		
Low noise levels	10	7	Traffic noise is more present at Prinz. There are also usually a lot more people. Esta is really quiet.	
Public seating arrangements conducive to communicating 'talkscapes'	10	8	There is this amazing talkscape (theater) in Esta. Prinz has only one small sitting talkscape sculpture by the info container. Wooden tower could be somehow considered a talkscape.	
<b>Opportunities for play and exercise</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7.5</b>		
Allow for physical activity, exercise, play and street entertainment	4	5	No sports at any place. Playground areas are present in both places. Gardening as a physical activity. More tables at Prinz are more conducive to card and board games, which was not apparent at Esta.	

Quality Criteria	Esta es una Plaza	Prinzes sinneng arten	Argumentation	Comment about the criteria system
Temporary activities (markets, festivals, exhibitions etc.)	6	10	Many more activities (tours, workshops, screenings, concerts ...) at Prinz. Esta still good, compared to regular squares.	
By day and night	/	/		Both closed at night
In summer and winter	/	/		Prinz is closed for public in the winter, which would make comparing unfair.
<b>Dimensioned at human scale</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>		
Dimensions of building and places in observance of the important human dimension in relation to senses, movements, size and behavior	10	10	Both places completely built by humans for humans.	People know what is human scale and they will not plan huge roads and over dimensioned billboards like official planning and design disciplines.
<b>Opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of climate</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>10</b>		
Sun/shade	10	10	Plenty of opportunities to find shade or sun at both locations.	
Heat/coolness	10	10		
Shelter from wind/breeze	9	10	Even though Esta is a bit less windy, Prinz has more places to hide from it.	
<b>Aesthetic qualities + positive sensory experience</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5.5</b>		

Quality Criteria	Esta es una Plaza	Prinzes sinneng arten	Argumentation	Comment about the criteria system
Good design and detailing	2	4	Not up to the official design standards. Not pretty. Prinz has the wooden tower, which raises the design element of the place. In general it looks a bit less amateurish than Esta, but still ...	
Good materials	3	3	Recycled wood and metal at both locations. More brick at esta, more plastic at Prinz. But tower material is high quality, hence the same ratings.	
Fine views/vistas	5	6	Esta doesn't have a viewpoint, but it is surrounded by the dense city, so the buildings frame it quite well. Prinz has wider view from the wooden tower, but it's setting is somewhat less interesting.	Here Gehl refers to external views.
Rich sensory experiences: trees, plants, water	8	9	Very rich plants, Prinz even has a small forrest. Neither has a water element.	