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THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE'S PARK IN PROMOTING CONVIVIALITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

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ABSTRACT

Particularly in Europe, which has long struggled to accept a diversifying population, urban neighbourhoods are increasingly heterogeneous. Change is accelerating as the crisis in the Middle East drives refugees to European cities. This current diversification has tremendous implications for the ways people use urban public places. The typology of the people's park is one of the contexts where this will play out. The people's park, characterized by an intent to design spaces for and with all members of a community, is an everyday space with potential to promote social well-being. In this research conviviality is understood as a social condition contributing to everyday quality of life. In defining conviviality, we have gone beyond the English definition, "to live together and/or dine together," incorporating other meanings such as the French, "ability of a society to promote tolerance and mutual exchange of ideas among the people and groups that compose it." Our research examines the people's park as an institution for fostering convivial behaviour in public life. The ultimate goal of this research is to inform urban planning policies addressing social life in the public realm, with a focus on peacebuilding and conflict prevention in multi-ethnic communities. The means to that goal is the development of a methodology for studying the relationship between design and convivial behaviour, that can guide the design of parks to promote peaceful coexistence and can assist communities in assessing and improving existing underperforming parks. The objective of this paper is to trace the development of the research methodology from the main findings of the literature review of conviviality in the urban realm.

Keywords: conviviality, quality of life, research methodology, peace-building, immigration, diversity, behaviour.

1 INTRODUCTION

How can a society that has traditionally been perceived as homogeneous make space for difference and deal with cultural diversity in a peaceful way? As the crisis in the Middle East drives an increasing number of refugees to the European Union, debates about integration, multiculturalism and ethnic relations have become central in immigration policies and public opinion [1]. These debates are heated and polarized [2]. After 9/11 there has been an increasing tendency to interpret our world in terms of a clash of cultures, more specifically between the *west* and the *world of Islam*. This perceived division has generated hatred and violence, [3], with conflict playing out in public space.

Parks have traditionally been places for social activities in the "public" [4]. They are also places that promote health and high quality of life in cities [5]. Ideally, parks can serve as powerful tools for multi-ethnic integration. Research evidence shows, though, that in traditional parks, even those located in mixed communities, each ethnic group tends to dominate its own section of a park, resulting in very little inter-ethnic interaction [6]. We are interested in studying the potential for a particular type of park, the people's park, to foster convivial interactions among diverse users.

This study forms one part of a larger research project. The ultimate goal of this research is to inform urban planning policies addressing social life in the public realm, with a focus



on peacebuilding and conflict prevention in multi-ethnic communities. The means to that goal is the development of a methodology for studying the relationship between design and convivial behaviour, that can guide the design of parks to promote peaceful coexistence and can assist communities in assessing and improving existing underperforming parks. The objective of this paper is to trace the development of the research methodology from the main findings of the literature review of conviviality in the urban realm.

We begin by defining the people's park typology as an everyday space for the purpose of this research. We identify an appropriate people's park as a case study for testing the methodology. Next, we discuss conviviality as an everyday social practice, identifying three key categories of convivial behaviour. Then, we examine the literature review for markers of convivial behaviour in those three categories, as well as settings for those behaviours. We build a research tool that incorporates those convivial behaviour markers along with design features that represent the behavioural settings. We conclude by presenting and discussing our contribution, the resulting methodology that operationalizes these findings.

2 CONVIVIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE PEOPLE'S PARK

This research expands upon the meaning of *conviviality*, developing and incorporating it as a new concept for the study of social life in urban space, and more specifically in a people's park located in a socially diverse urban context. The layers of meaning embedded in this new concept will inform the design of the methodology.

2.1 The people's park as an everyday space

Our research focus, the people's park typology, is a very particular type of park, motivated by an intent to design spaces *for* and *with* all members of a community. We draw from the Scandinavian meaning *Folkets Park*, usually established by local residents [7]. It is seen as an everyday space with potential to promote convivial behaviour that can help prevent violent conflicts and foster tolerance and mutual respect among multi-ethnic groups. Education through cognitive sources is an essential piece towards interethnic tolerance [8]. This strengthens the potential of the people's park as a place where local multi-ethnic groups socialize and get to know each other, fostering a neighbourhood's quality of life.

We have chosen one particular people's park, Superkilen, in Copenhagen's Nørrebro district, as the case study for this research. According to the Danish statistical office, population has shifted in Denmark in the past years and Nørrebro is a good example of this trend. In 2015, 26% of Nørrebro's residents were immigrants. Denmark's official website advertises it as one of the most ethnically diverse and socially challenged districts [9]. In Scandinavian societies – especially Denmark – lower classes and minorities, have been historically mobilized in political movements, such as grass-roots organizations, which served as educational and empowerment tools [10].

Nørrebro has been the setting of recurrent riots from the 1980s until the opening of Superkilen in 2012. The park resulted from a local grassroots effort that claimed a community green space. The park design project was launched six months after the Mohammed cartoon crisis [11]. The designers' point of departure, following the commission's brief, was to deal with the district's diversification and ameliorate the resulting conflicts through park design. Superkilen was conceived as a multi-cultural space. The design concept organizes the park into three zones containing artefacts characteristic of the multiple countries represented in the immigrant population of Nørrebro. Recently the park was awarded the Agha Kahn Award, as a public space promoting integration across lines of ethnicity, religion and culture.



2.2 Conviviality as an everyday social practice

Our research is designed to test whether the people's park serves as an institution for fostering convivial behaviour in public life. To do so, we first have to define conviviality and convivial behaviour. In this research, conviviality is understood as a social condition in the urban realm contributing to everyday quality of life. More commonly used terms in peacebuilding terminology or urban studies, *coexistence*, *sociability*, or *liveliness* were studied and later rejected due to their baggage, ambiguities and connotations. Conviviality, on the other hand, is a less frequently used term in urban studies. It is more specific and can be re-defined and given form for the purpose of this research. The term is more commonly used in sociology to characterize relationships between individuals [12] and there is no evidence of urban research-based studies that use it. In defining conviviality for urban research, we have gone beyond the English definition, "to live together and/or dine together" [13], incorporating other meanings such as the French, "ability of a society to promote tolerance and mutual exchange of ideas among the people and groups that compose it" [14].

Certau has written on everyday social practices, arguing that they should be considered part of the "everyday", or ordinary human experience [15]. Conviviality, as it is understood in this research, is an ordinary and everyday social practice, as Peattie puts it, "Urban conviviality is about evanescent, sociable pleasure, reflected in the daily physical and social recreation of the self" [16]. There is a wealth of literature on the health benefits associated with physical and social recreation.

Caring is a human ability that needs to be nurtured and developed if it is to thrive, and as Andrews [17] points out, caring and feeling cared for are at the heart of well-being. It is easier though, to care for those that are like us. Nurturing the ability to care for those that are different is more challenging, but also more important, especially in terms of conviviality and peace-building goals. Korten [18], says we are hardwired to care and connect: "For all the cultural differences reflected in our richly varied customs, languages, religions and political ideologies, psychologically healthy humans share a number of values and aspirations." (p. 242) [18]. Maslow [19], defended a similar thesis: all needs surrounding human actions and behaviour are met through relationships (we need other people if we are to feel safe or accepted). This research proposes the people's park as the place to nurture conviviality among diverse people.

Some authors have paired the concept of conviviality with another term, to explain very interesting ideas related to everyday interactions among people. Gilroy [20], talks about "vernacular conviviality" and employs the term conviviality in a way that foregrounds openness between people. In the book *Market Place: Food Quarters, Design and Urban Renewal in London*, Parham explains the expression 'convivial ecologies', referring to the sociable that revolves around everyday food activities in public places [21]. Later, Pennycook and Otsuji write about the "ethics of conviviality" in "Metrolingualism: Language in the City" [22].

Shaftoe [23], talks about conviviality as an everyday, quotidian matter intimately connected with the design of the public realm and that most times operates beyond institutionalized economic exchange. "Convivial urban spaces are more than just arenas in which people can have a jolly good time; they are at the heart of democratic living" [24] and "are one of the few remaining loci where we can encounter difference and learn to understand and tolerate other people" (p. 12) [25]. Convivial urban places are spaces that are sociable and liveable, where people enjoy spending time. But they must also be places where difference can exist, where we tolerate those that are different from us, and we all share a common space.



Some authors, although not using the word conviviality per se, are actually describing very similar phenomena to the ones explained above. Bauman's "modus conviviendi" refers to how people accommodate one another in the everyday business of living together and what contextual features, projects and everyday tactics are involved in shaping these relationships [26]. Marcus and Francis use the expression 'street democracy' to describe those streets that have meaning for people, that invite access for all, and encourage use and participation. Already in the 1980's, they pointed out that these basic qualities may be vanishing from our towns, cities, and neighbourhoods [27].

Gehl unites the terms social sustainability and democracy in his studies and discourse. After observing public life in the squares of Italian cities, Gehl developed his methods for interpreting human behaviour in relation to spatial configuration. "Cities must urge urban planners and architects to reinforce pedestrianism as an integrated city policy to develop lively, safe, sustainable and healthy cities. It is equally urgent to strengthen the social function of city space as a meeting place that contributes toward the aims of social sustainability and an open and democratic society" (p. 6) [28]. Even though our cities are experiencing a gradual privatization of the public realm [29], places that are not fully public may still remain equitable. More than just the possibility for a discourse or debate (the Greek definition of public space), the level of "equity" of a place can be measured according the active participation of its users and residents, as well as by how accessible it is to them, both physically and psychologically.

We have looked at a range of meanings of conviviality in different languages and disciplines. We also find the Scandinavian interpretation of conviviality and the social practices associated with it particularly relevant since this investigation is focused in a park in a Scandinavian city. Conviviality, in its ordinary and everyday dimension, is related to the Scandinavian terms *lagom* (Swedish) and *hygge* (Danish). *Lagom* is used to describe when something is "just right" or exactly the right amount (very connected to Scandinavian design). More interesting, *lag* means "team" in Swedish and *om* means "around", so embedded in the concept in a sense of togetherness or "social solidarity" [30]. The Danish term *Hygge* is used to describe a good social atmosphere or coziness [31]. In Danish it means to find happiness in small things. *Hygge* seems to be an intrinsic part of the Danish national character. According to Linnet, the evolution of the concept leads us to a melting pot where Danish climate, the history of a small autochthonous culture, the welfare state and an idea of equality, all blend together [32]. According to Söderberg and Lynggaard, *hygge* can involve a variety of activities related to different fields, such as conversation, social bonding, food or interior design [33].

The findings we extract from this literature review are numerous and varied. Especially relevant is the fact that convivial behaviour can be appreciated more easily when associated with certain everyday activities. This research defines three main categories of activities that can occur in a people's park, in which conviviality can be recognized and measured: eating and drinking (food), playing (play), and communicating (conversation). This informs the methodology and the investigation to be carried out in the research case study of park users' behaviour at Superkilen.

3 METHODOLOGY: HOW TO STUDY CONVIVIAL BEHAVIOUR

In order to find out exactly what role the people's park plays in promoting convivial behaviour among its users, we have developed a methodology that will help us identify, record and analyse, convivial behaviour across the three categories of activity identified in the literature review.



Post-occupancy evaluations are essential to discovering whether design interventions have the desired impacts. Our methodology, a form of post-occupancy evaluation, will serve the critical function of assessing the degree to which the government's social objectives for Superkilen have been realized in the lived experience of the park. Using a mixed-methods approach [34], we will collect quantitative and qualitative data, since the research goals are a mixture of social and physical inquiries into the effects of design on the conviviality level of park users.

The research methodology has two instances of data collection and metrics. The first step defines the design variables through an inventory of design features present in the park, through maps, drawings and photographs. The second step identifies markers for convivial behaviour using two methods: observation of park-goers' behaviours, and a short survey to gather park-goers' characteristics. At the end, we will code and analyse both sets of data, to find out which design variables explain variation in convivial behaviour level. We will use the findings to define urban planning policies and design principles that foster convivial behaviour in multi-ethnic park users.

The literature review will inform the definition of the design variables by providing information on the types of places in which convivial behaviour occurs. From the literature review, we will identify the design features present in those types of places. The three categories of activity identified in the literature review enable us to identify 3 sets of study sites within the park that are characterized by design features associated with the three types of convivial behaviours. The study sites and their design features will be documented in maps, drawings, and photographs. The maps will guide the researchers to specific locations for data collection. The drawings and photographs will indicate the particular views that will form the basis for photographic data collection capturing specific behaviours in relation to specific design features.

We will define markers for convivial behaviour by analysing the types of interactions characterized as convivial in the literature review. The three categories of activity identified in the literature review help us to organize the markers for convivial behaviour into three types and to associate these types of behaviours with the selected study sites.

In order to determine whether the park goers' interactions are truly convivial, we must measure them against our definition of conviviality, that brings together the English meaning "to live together and dine together" with the French meaning "ability of a society to promote tolerance and mutual exchange of ideas among the people and groups that compose it." The markers for convivial behaviour will measure behaviours that characterize living together and dining together. In order to measure the extent to which tolerance and exchange are occurring among the people and groups that compose the park's users, we must learn the extent to which these behaviours involve heterogeneous actors. To this end, we have developed a brief survey that asks respondents to identify with one of the park's artefacts characteristic of the multiple countries and cultures that represent the population of the surrounding Nørrebro district.

3.1 Conviviality as associated with food

Related to spatial arrangements and design elements: In "The Table in Space: A Planning Perspective", Parham pointed out the important connection between street outdoor dining spaces and a sense of conviviality [35]. In her recent book, *Food and urbanism: The convivial city and a sustainable future*, Parham explains some of the relationships between design arrangements in spaces for eating, and expressions of convivial behaviour among those using them [36].



The interaction between people and food, promoting expressions of convivial behaviour, can be strengthened at many different scales from city planning to interior design: from metropolitan policies, to kitchen layout. The table, where we enjoy food, is one of the key elements in designing for conviviality. A table can be individual or for groups –encouraging sharing food. It can be private or public. The absence of tables can undermine conviviality [36]. For example, Alexander et al. [37], points out the quality of light, a sense of protected enclosure or communal eating space, as key ingredients for convivial behaviour (p. 844) [37]. The kitchen (or barbecue) is another key element in designing for conviviality [38].

Based upon this literature review of conviviality related to spatial arrangements and design elements associated with food, the following have been identified for study and incorporated into the methodology:

- Spatial arrangement used for eating and drinking (designed or spontaneous)
- Chairs, benches or tables
- Kitchen/barbecue
- Character (private or public)
- Use (individual or communal)
- Lighting (adequate or not according to climate)
- Sense of protected enclosure

Related to sharing behaviour or commensality: For Grignon [39], conviviality arises out of terms such as commensality. Many cultures have institutionalized *commensality* in spatial ways, such as eating from the common pan [40]. Commensality is defined by Grignon as “the gathering aimed to accomplish in a collective way some material task and symbolic obligations linked to the satisfaction of biological, individual need” (p. 24) [39]. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *commensality* as “the practice of eating together” or “a social group that eats together” and *commensalism* as “a relation between two kinds of organisms in which one obtains food or other benefits from the other without damaging or benefiting it.” Commensality means, literally, “eating at the same table” [41], or “eating with other people” [42] and in most cultural contexts it signifies unity and sharing [43]. Many sociologists speak of the social importance of commensality [44]. Eating together has gained sociological interest particularly in its capacity to solidify social groups and reinforce cultural identities [44]–[48].

In the “Anthropology of Food”, Tierney and Ohnuki-Tierney describe food’s central place in anthropology from its earliest days. They examine food as an important tool through which cultures and societies connect and view commensality as both a source and an expression of group identities [40]. Peattie also defends these ideas and explains how sociable activities that are somehow related to the act of sharing food make a mundane event special, for example the act of sharing coffee or enjoying a meal together [16].

Some literature defining conviviality in relation to food emphasizes joy gained from sociability rather than the sensory pleasure of eating [49]–[52]. Simmel defines sociability as a democratic, playful association in which an individual’s pleasure is contingent on the joy of others. Therefore, sociable interactions require a group of interdependent individuals that are all equal. By this definition, for meals to be sociable or convivial, those present must be motivated by a collective desire for amicability and cordiality [50].

Based upon this literature review of conviviality related to commensality, the following convivial behaviour markers have been identified for study and incorporated into the

¹ Mensa means table or canteen in Italian.



methodology:

- Size of groups that are eating or drinking
- Sharing of food and drinks
- Attitude: smiling and/or joyful
- Position: Standing, sitting or lying down
- Use: places specifically designed for eating or other spaces

3.2 Conviviality as associated with play

Related to spaces for physical activity, sports or games: Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “play” as: “a particular act or manoeuvre in a game: such as (a): the action during an attempt to advance the ball in football (b): the action in which a player is put out in baseball.” Another strand of meaning is “recreational activity; *especially*: the spontaneous activity of children” or “the moving of a piece in a board game (as chess)” and “the action in which cards are played after bidding in a card game” [13].

In line with these definitions, Huizinga asserts that play is more than a purely physical or biological activity. It is a *significant* function – there is some sense to it. In play there is something “at play” which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. This explains why we often understand and experience sports as competitions (at one level or the other). In his book *Homo Ludens*, Huizinga explains his study of the play element in culture, defending that almost everything (culture, arts, weapons...) developed in history because of humans’ instinct to play. His discourse revolves around the claim that play is the most important thing in life [53].

Often, playing is associated with physical and mental health. *Homo Ludens* describes psychology and physiology studies that deal with the observation, description, and explanation of the play of animals, children and grown-ups. Some studies describe playing as a discharge of superabundant vital energy, others as the satisfaction of some “imitative instinct”, or the “need” for relaxation. According to some theories, play might go beyond health and even constitute training of the youngest for adult life. According to others, it serves as an exercise that is absolutely necessary for the individual. Yet others regard play as an “abreaction” – an outlet for harmful impulses, as a necessary restorer of energy, as wish-fulfilment, or as a fiction designed to keep up the feeling of personal value [53]. Most of these clearly relate to health and wellbeing and “in this intensity, this absorption, this power of maddening, lies the very essence, the primordial quality of play” (p. 2) [53].

Based upon this literature review of conviviality related to spaces for physical activity, sports, or games, the following design features have been identified for study and incorporated into the methodology:

- Spatial arrangements used for physical activity, sports or games (designed or spontaneous)
- Game tables, courts, gadgets
- Types of games or sports designed for
- Materiality of the spaces (hard/soft, concrete/grass or sand)
- Character (private or public)
- Use (individual or team)
- Lighting (adequate or not according to activity)
- Accessibility: presence of fences, ramps

Related to leisure and atmosphere: Andrews explains the importance and many benefits of play in terms of a child’s development and adjustment to the world [17]. But like we see in



the studies collected in *Homo Ludens*, play goes beyond childhood, extended throughout adult life [53]. Play is “an approach to life in which everything is done purely for its own sake, purely for the joy of it ... it should be purposeless ... not done for money or status or health ... It’s something done for the pleasure of the experience ... it is absorbing (opposite to today’s more common multitasking); it is time away from ordinary life.” (pp. 117–118) [17].

But today, Andrews asserts, we don’t really “play” anymore; we don’t do things for the joy of it and we always rationalize our recreational activities by focusing on secondary benefits (for example, we tell ourselves that we walk for fitness rather than enjoyment or develop contacts rather than friends). In her book, *Slow is beautiful: New visions of community, leisure and joie de vivre*, Andrews makes a connection between the lack of playing in our contemporary societies and the lack of leisure time, and she explains how this is having a negative impact on our communities and social relations [17].

Andrews shows how significant and important leisure is. He mentions how academics in the 1950’s talked about the importance of educating people for leisure, but their voices were ignored over the years, people had lost their traditional communities and pastimes, and did not know what to do anymore [17]. The people’s park might be a space that brings back the importance of play in adult life. Some of us would include in leisure activities such as reading, sitting in the sun, gardening, walking. Others, though, might include shopping or watching television, primary non-working activities. But Andrews makes an important distinction between escape activities and leisure activities. Escape activities get our minds off our problems, but they do nothing to deepen our ideas or our experiences. Leisure activities, on the other hand, are reflective and joyful. We are interested in the potential of the people’s park to engage users in leisure activities.

Play can also be related to mood or atmosphere. Another definition for *play* in Merriam-Webster Dictionary is “the state of being active, operative, or relevant; brisk, fitful, or light movement; scope or opportunity for action”; such as “a move or series of moves calculated to arouse friendly feelings.” This definition clearly relates to conviviality. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *playful* as, “full of play: frolicsome, sportive; humorous, jocular; happy and full of energy; eager to play; showing that you are having fun and not being serious” [13]. This is very connected to Andrews’ notion of *joie de vivre* (or the state of feeling vital and alive). Laughter is a bond with other people, she explains, helping form relationships as the best way of all to improve your health [17]. One study found that humour may significantly boost a person’s level of hope, which in turn, researchers feel, stimulates a person’s ability to solve problems creatively. and laughter, a tension-reliever, is also a gesture of conviviality.

Based upon the literature review of conviviality related to spaces for physical activity, sports, or games, the following convivial behaviour markers have been identified for study and incorporated into the methodology:

- Size of groups that are playing games or sports
- Types of activities: football, basketball, reading, sitting in the sun, gardening, etc.
- Individual or collective playing
- Attitude: smiling and/or laughing
- Designated Use: places specifically designed for playing or other spaces

3.3 Conviviality as associated with communication

Related to spatial arrangements of conversational encounters: Whyte conducted a seminal experiment on street conversations. Using focus time-lapse cameras on several street corners,



he recorded activity for two weeks. On each corner, he and his research team plotted the location of conversations taking place, and how long they lasted (they only noted those lasting a minute or longer). The results of the activity were not at all as expected. It showed that people who would stop to talk did not move out of the pedestrian flow; and if they had been out of it, they'd move into it. Whyte observed that most of the conversations took place directly in the middle of the pedestrian flow, which he calls the "100% location." So, why do most people engage in conversations in the middle of a crowded area? According to observers in different countries they noted that we have a tendency to self-congest ourselves [54].

Ciolek Eisler [55], has studied self-congestion and also found that the great majority of people in his studies selected their sites for social interaction within or very close to the traffic lines intersecting the plazas; and relatively few people formed their gatherings away from the spaces used for navigation. In his article, "The social life of small urban spaces," Whyte also states that the best places to look at people for his study are street corners. As a general rule, almost 100% of all conversations are spotted most often at the busiest crossroads locations. Whyte mapped 133 conversations, over a period of several days, and found out that 57% of them were concentrated in the highest-traffic locations. He also noticed that one of the most noticeable rituals is schmoozing (nothing talk), political opinions or sports talk. Basically, it means idle gossip. Whyte noted that schmoozers are fairly consistent in choosing locations, showing a preference for well-defined spaces, such as curb or ledge. According to Hollingsworth Whyte, back and forth movements in street encounters have their parallel to speech [54]. Goldman-Eisler has found that in her studies, 40–50% of spontaneous speech is silence, which might mean that we very often use gestures to aid, reinforce, and sometimes also replace speech [56].

Based upon the literature review of conviviality related to spatial arrangements of conversational encounters, the following design features have been identified for study and incorporated into the methodology:

- Location and number of street corners, benches and main paths
- Street corners: size, spatial arrangement, material, characteristics
- Benches: individual or collective
- Main paths: with number of benches and street corners linked to them
- Lightning (adequate or not according to climate)

Related to social behaviour and conversation: As social creatures, we have a need to be around others, to see and be seen. Oldenburg describes the home as the first place where we socialize and work as the second place. He then claims it is essential to have a third place, a place to gather and talk and just hang around. Oldenburg states that societies with a third-place culture are less affected by advertising, since there is less television watching. But the third place, he asserts, also inoculates people against the need to impress others because they feel accepted for who they are. A third place has variety and diversity; it is usually non-commercial, informal and casual and enjoys political freedom. It also acts as a social leveller. It is an inclusive place that is accessible to the general public and does not set formal criteria of membership and exclusion. There is a tendency for individuals to select their associates, friends, and intimates, from among those closest to them in social rank. When formal associations tend to narrow and restrict social gathering, third places serve to expand possibilities. People usually act being open to all, no matter the status [57].

Simmel would describe this phenomenon as "pure sociability," the opportunity to get together for no other purpose, higher or lower than, for the "joy, vivacity and relief" of engaging others' personalities beyond the contexts of purpose, duty or role. Simmel describes



this as a unique occasion, a truly democratic experience that we can all have to be ourselves [51].

Convivial behaviour can also be associated with conversation and dialogue among people. “Laughing or smiling is a gesture of conviviality – an invitation to approach, a promise to be hospitable” (p. 122) [17]. Andrews puts an emphasis on the power of conversation. “In conversation humour is worth more than knowledge” (p. 122) [17]. Sociologist Etzioni says that we bring about social change by creating a national conversation. He calls it “metalogue” [58]. Oldenburg speaks of the playful mood of third places. “Those who would keep conversation serious for more than a minute are almost certainly doomed to failure. Every topic and speaker is a potential trapeze for the exercise and display of wit. Sometimes the playful spirit is obvious, as when the group is laughing and boisterous; other times it will be subtle ... joy and acceptance reign over anxiety and alienation” [57].

Putnam discovered that neighbourhoods where people talk to each other over fences tend to vote more. (pp. 192–202) [59]. This proves that conviviality feeds civic life, making people talk more about social issues. This also implies that you can create opportunities for people to enjoy each other’s company. Promoting places for convivial behaviour can lead to sociable experiences. Creating opportunities for convivial conversation might be a vector of social change.

Based upon the literature review of conviviality related to social behaviour and conversation, the following convivial behaviour markers have been identified for study and incorporated into the methodology:

- Number of people having a conversation on street corners / benches / main paths
- Duration (length of conversations)
- Position: walking, standing, sitting or reclining.
- Size of groups
- Character of groups (heterogeneity or homogeneity)
- Attitude: smiling and/or laughing
- Simultaneity: conversation while doing other activities

4 CONTRIBUTIONS

Conviviality is a wonderful holistic term that encompasses many other terms typically used in urban studies. It also pertains very specifically to the everyday context of the people’s park. As the literature review demonstrates, convivial behaviour can be recognized in everyday activities, such as the ones identified in this methodology: eat, play, communicate.





















The contribution of the present study is a methodology for studying the relationship between design features and convivial behaviour in a people’s park. The following chart organizes the design features found in the people’s park typology and behavioural markers for conviviality across the three categories of food, play, and communication.

Table 1 codifies the elements of the proposed methodology for measuring the level of conviviality in a people’s park. Used as a tool for post-occupancy evaluation, the methodology can provide fine-grained information on the relative success of specific design features in providing appropriate settings for convivial behaviours. Once the methodology has been put into action and a body of data collected, the results can be interpreted to inform the design of new people’s parks in order to realize their potential as places for building peaceful multi-cultural societies.

Change is accelerating in Europe due to the influx of refugees to towns and cities. To avoid conflict in integration processes, it is essential to educate people for tolerance and peaceful interaction. In order to learn, one needs to experience multi-cultural interaction in everyday settings. The people’s park represents a type of environment where adult society

interacts and where children become socialized to see diversity as ordinary. Educating European societies in the ordinariness of a multi-ethnic reality should be a primary goal in integration policies and planning. The people’s park can become a useful resource for increasing communities’ peacebuilding capacities and thereby preventing conflict, both in the the European context and in other places facing similar problems around the world.

Table 1: Elements of the proposed methodology for measuring the level of conviviality in a people’s park. (Source: done by the authors for the purpose of this study.)

Mark the ones that apply	FOOD	PLAY	COMMUNICATE
DESIGN FEATURES			
Spatial arrangement	designed spontaneous	designed spontaneous	street corners #_ paths #_
Furniture	 #_ #_ #_ #_		benches #_ chairs/tables #_
Materials	hard / soft cold / warm rough / smooth	hard / soft artificial / natural	hard / soft artificial / natural
Character/use	private public	individual communal	private public
Lightning	poor adequate too much	poor adequate too much	poor adequate too much
Enclosure/ Accessibility	sense of protection completely open	visible hidden	easy access poor access
CONVIVIAL BEHAVIOR SIGNS			
Group-size	 #_ #_ #_ #_ #_ or +	 #_ #_ #_ #_ #_ or +	 #_ #_ #_ #_ #_ or +
Activities			
Sharing			
Attitude	 #_ #_ #_ #_	 #_ #_ #_ #_	 #_ #_ #_ #_
Position	 #_ #_ #_ #_	 #_ #_ #_ #_ #_	
Use			

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