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Kazmierczak, AE and James, P

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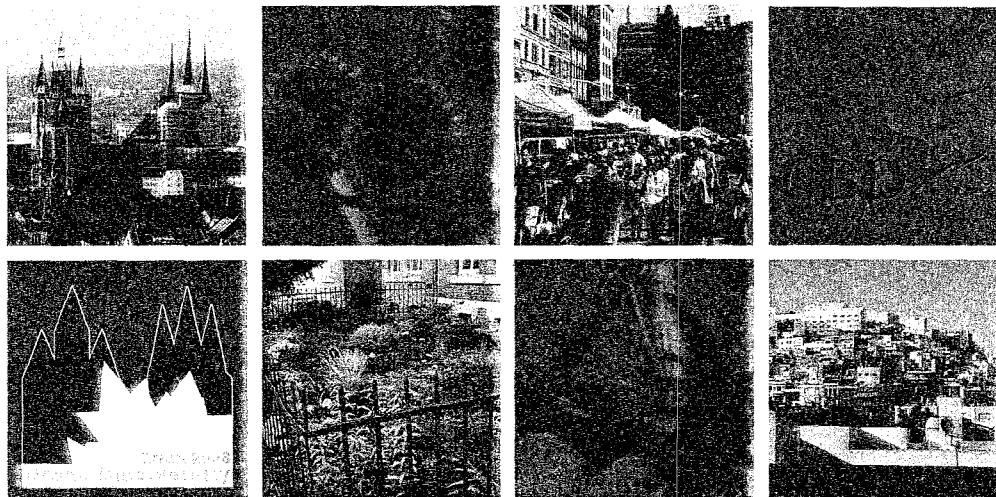
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Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity in towns and cities



Biodiversity and usability of green spaces in Greater Manchester, UK

Aleksandra Kazmierczak^{1*}, Philip James¹

¹ University of Salford, Peel Building, The Crescent,
M5 4WT Salford, United Kingdom

* Presenting author: a.e.kazmierczak@pgr.salford.ac.uk



A general notion exists that the presence of semi-natural green spaces can be very important for inner-city residents, especially those living in areas threatened by social exclusion and community disintegration. However, the actual potential of these sites to sustain biodiversity and simultaneously provide services for the people needs to be investigated in more detail. This paper summarises the results of field studies carried out in socially excluded areas of Greater Manchester, UK that aimed to assess the potential of green spaces to sustain biodiversity and meet the needs of local residents alike. A random sample of 80 sites was assessed, using vegetation structure, habitat diversity and successional stages as surrogates for biodiversity, and accessibility, cleanliness and safety, provision of facilities and state of repair as surrogates of usability. The results indicate that the potential of the sites to contribute to higher biodiversity in urban areas is not associated with their usability for local residents. The results are discussed in light of the current policies on urban green spaces in the UK.