

And the winner is? Comparing urban green space provision and accessibility in eight European metropolitan areas using a spatially explicit approach

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Urban green space (UGS) provision is fundamental for the well-being of people living in cities and for sustainable urban development. Assessing, quantifying and monitoring UGS is relevant for researchers, practitioners and city administrations. To date, a great deal of research has been concerned with UGS provision and accessibility. Several studies compare UGS across different cities while local governments look for benchmarks to boast about their UGS in national and international marketing strategies. However, two major obstacles in comparing the cities' performances in terms of UGS provision can be identified: (1) the mismatch between administrative borders of cities and the actual urbanized area; (2) the criteria for defining UGS and the heterogeneity of databases. We proposed spatially explicit delineations of the contiguous urban fabric (CUF) of eight metropolitan agglomerations as a comparable spatial reference, independent of administrative boundaries, to analyze potential distortions in the UGS calculation. Using a standardized methodology, we then compared qualitative and quantitative differentiations of UGS spatial patterns as well as the overall UGS provision in a set of eight metropolitan areas in Europe. Our investigation shows the relevance of clear spatial and conceptual assumptions while assessing UGS provision and accessibility, providing strong ground to inform urban planning. © 2020 Elsevier

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