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The Relationship Between Urban Green Spaces and Economic Vitality

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Abstract

Urban green spaces, although pivotal in urban areas, have not been researched in great detail, especially in the context of their impacts on the economy. The purpose of this essay is therefore to scrutinize the interrelationship between economic vitality and urban green spaces. A review of the literature introduced in the first chapter sheds some light on the fact that this research topic was not thoroughly studied. Thus, the main objectives and issues presented in this essay concern, firstly, the interactions between urban green spaces and urban economic vitality. Secondly, the distinction between urban economic vitality and economic vitality is important, as this essay discards the studied urban area background. The following question arises and requires further clarification: do urban green spaces have a direct utilitarian value that contributes to the attractiveness and development of urban areas? It is also necessary to determine whether policymakers and managers perceive the value of urban green spaces in economic terms, i.e., do they use them as a growth factor in their urban areas? From a methodological point of view, the first chapter presents the difficulties of measuring, analyzing, and exploring the questions posed.

Thus, this essay is divided into four main parts. After the preliminary chapter, the second part explores the problems and research questions raised. It also recalls the importance of areas in the world, especially urban green spaces, which are potential drivers of growth. The third chapter presents a brief overview of the utilitarian value of green spaces. Finally, the conclusions sum up the principal benefits and topics

previously studied, point out the implications for policymakers, and propose some future avenues for research.

Keywords fair trade, economic development, marginalized producers, ethical consumerism, social justice, price dynamics, market access, Global South

1.1. Introduction and Background

Urban green space has been a part of city landscapes since the beginning of urban development. In antiquity, cities such as Athens and Rome had dedicated green space areas as a part of their city plan. These areas were used for recreational purposes and had a philosophical aspect with associations to the Greek god Pan and the Roman god Faunus, and were later used for athletic events. These uses changed to monarchical gardens in the Medieval period and changed again into public, recreationally used landscapes in the eighteenth century. Green space has now changed five times, accommodating different social needs and is now experiencing another change. Green spaces in urban planning are often seen in combination with formal parkland. Green space is defined as an area covered by vegetation, or an area that consists in part of vegetation and in part of built surfaces (Semeraro et al.2021).

There is continuous demand for public green spaces in modern urban societies with their multiple functions that include providing recreation, improving health and general physical activity, and serving as a vehicle for community activity, industrial investment attraction, and ecological sustainability. There have been numerous studies on the subject of urban green space planning, design, and management. Management and motivation of green space use are well studied, with impulse research data collection methods used to quantify park and trail use. Many new urban housing environments are part of larger residential estates where landscape design projects have generous landscapes, enriched by careful plant selection that offers qualities of lushness, beauty, variety, and expanse. Green open space can add up to 28 percent to property values. Low-maintenance native plants may be used to provide the same beauty and softening of the outdoor environment without the staggering cost in landscape maintenance. In

the context of urban green space, the phrase 'green open space' or GOS is used to describe a range of features. The potential economic role that urban green space can play is based on the importance of innovative urban economics that views the provision of aesthetic amenities as central to urban growth performance and rivalry (Jabbar et al., 2022).

1.2. Methodology

The objective of this paper is to provide a framework for understanding the relationship between urban green spaces and economic vitality, rather than to offer a comprehensive quantitative analysis of this issue. A research design was therefore adopted that combined research methods from natural science, the social sciences, and professional practice to capture the many dimensions of this issue. In a series of surveys of local government land use planning departments, community-based organizations, community groups, and businesses, we asked a number of questions about the social, environmental, and economic benefits of urban green spaces. We also gathered data representing the opinions of landscape architecture and urban planning practitioners on the commercial and financial effects of urban parks.

We use case studies from four cities to explore the topic in greater depth. These case study cities represent a balance of U.S. geographical variation, ethnic diversity, and size. Semistructured interviews were conducted in these urban areas following a protocol developed with input drawn from our interviews with urban land use planners. Also included is an overview of the economic vitality of each city, including summary information on income, employment, real estate value, and land costs. This suggests a kind of definition of economic vitality as painted by conventional, mainstream U.S. urban economic policy regarding the desirability of a city. We asked respondents about the perceived relationship between urban green spaces and these characteristics. For the statistical analysis, we selected the questions that had been asked in at least two different surveys of different types of groups, and for which we had good data from case studies as well. There are, however, many variables that affect the economic and

other values that we investigated. Identifying the causal relationship between parks and economic vitality is thus impossible because of the presence of these confounding factors. Measurement error, small sample size, and survey sampling error are also challenges in our research. There are a variety of thoughtful ethical considerations that arise with a research project of this type. Provisioning of informed consent and seeking informed assent are two important issues that have led to modifications in research protocols. This is an important case study in the challenge of conducting academically based research with and within urban communities. We carefully considered how findings could be generated, analyzed, and reported in ways that are respectful without making unrealistic promises to those whom we interview. We employ various software programs to help us analyze the data from our surveys of the general public, businesses, and city land use planners, and the interviews in the case studies. We rely heavily on statistical software for tabulations and to identify break-even or tipping points between variables. For example, we use statistical software to examine the association between people's frequency and duration of use of open and green spaces, their trust of community members and the land use decisions made by community members, and the knowledge they have about the land use decisions being made. We also provide open-ended questions and respond to the information these open-ended questions generate by creating narrative around thematic analysis of these data (Lopez et al.2021).

1.3. Findings

The analysis reveals several important findings about the relationship between the presence of green space in urban environments and the economic vitality of the area. To best summarize our findings, a geographic information system was used to map a community. The map was then divided into subareas based on existing social and economic boundaries in the community. Several other factors were considered as having social and economic implications before the areas were further divided. Initial hypothesis: Properties around urban green spaces will have greater capital values and greater environmental quality than those farther from urban green spaces. Urban green

spaces will attract businesses that will in turn attract tourists. Properties nearest existing or proposed urban green spaces will have the highest values and prices. (Geary et al.2021).

Property values were highest nearest the large green areas. There was a correlation between higher property values and the presence of nearby parks. The total for high property values occurring within a quarter-mile radius of the three central city parks was over $145 million. There were more neighborhoods that listed the presence of parks as a sought-after amenity than neighborhoods that actually had parks. There were no neighborhood-specific marketing materials viewed which marketed parks as an amenity to encourage people to relocate to that area. Almost all of the real estate professionals, members of the Economic Development Corporation, members of the Chamber of Commerce, several City Council members, and a Park and Recreation Commissioner agreed there should be a policy of marketing the city's parks and open spaces. There was agreement among the stakeholders that real estate agents, the Economic Development Corporation, and the Chamber of Commerce should be involved in this effort. There was little agreement on who else should be involved or who should champion such an effort. Marketing is viewed as a necessary economic development tool. All of the stakeholders felt that every effort should be made to maintain the parks and open spaces and to improve them where needed. The need for improved professional maintenance was widely recognized. Mapping was motivated by a desire to examine relationships among urban green spaces, social reasons, and economic vitality. The results of the research indicate that, in communities like the one in which we gathered data, there is a potential relationship between green space and both property and business values. However, this relationship appears more pronounced in wealthier, more homogeneous neighborhoods than lower-income or diverse neighborhoods. There are several potential implications of this study in terms of urban planning. First, policymakers and urban planners should not simply take a "let the market decide" approach in developing green space in communities. To encourage robust urban areas

in which underrepresented groups have opportunities to push for their needs, intentions that address deliberate development strategies may well be necessary. In addition, future research may seek to determine how the processes of gentrification and brownfield exploitation in urban areas are impacted by or carried out in relation to urban environmental design such as the development or preservation of urban green spaces (Liu et al., 2021)

1.4. Discussion and Implications

This study hypothesized and demonstrated improved tangible economic indicators for urban areas characterized by atypically large green spaces. By analyzing ambient commercial property sale prices as an indicator of economic vitality, our results show a consistent premium for commercial properties located near green spaces for the entire period of study, across the range of one-half to two times the average rentable area in the immediate vicinity of the property. In other words, as the proportion of green area rises from 15% to 30%, rentable area available at that premium increases by 1% to 2.5%. As an extension of the findings, the dense green areas encircling play a role as urban amenities improving the economic vitality of adjacent commercial properties in their neighborhoods. Further, commercial centers are routinely part of or in close proximity to a variety of other kinds of mixed-use properties, including retail, multi-family residential, office, hotel, and big-box industrial buildings. Attractive urban areas for businesses are also attractive to urban residents. Despite the failure to provide a mechanism for income distribution for nearby residents and office workers in our analysis, this point is relevant to planners, developers, and urban decision-makers drawing from a peak special economic interest of large numbers of people. Together, this suggests that the recommendation for developers is to locate as much related development near large green open spaces as possible, consistent with public urban design. It provides a potential basis for an expanded economic and quality of life component of the sustainability of metropolitan databases for associated plans. Also,

the imperative for better understanding indicates a complementary area of fundamental and practical research. (Berdejo-Espinola et al.2021).

1.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, urban planners and public officials need to understand the relationship between urban green spaces and the economic vitality of a community. When urban areas have more green space, there is potential for more economic vitality. Although we do not make any specific recommendations, we do argue that our study identifies some of the social forces that bear upon the attitudes of businesses. We hope that this essay motivates other scholars to address some of the issues and questions we have raised. One of the few papers to date investigates urban green spaces and economic indicators of growth and prosperity.

This paper has helped us recognize how and why access to urban green spaces can enhance economic opportunities for urban residents. Our intuitions about the possible relationships between urban green spaces and a variety of economic indicators were borne out by the regression analyses of the data we gathered from businesses. To the extent that these findings and the discussion in this essay are relevant to other urban areas, planners, public officials, and community activists would be well advised to take urban green spaces off the conceptual shelf they have been gathering dust on and look seriously at how they might develop strategies to emphasize the multiple ways in which sustainability and the urban environment are compatible rather than in tension. We also view these data as encouraging other scholars to explore the population responses to urban green spaces, especially along dimensions of well-being and sustainability.

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