

The Utility of Parks, Squares and Urban Gardens as Social Spaces in the City of Tepic, Mexico.

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Abstract: *The following research has as main objective to know the utility and the social benefits that the parks, squares and urban gardens of that city provide. Likewise, the collection of information was chosen: General Esteban Baca Calderón Park "La Loma", Barrack Square "Plaza Principal", and the Garden Fraccionamiento "Las Aves", thus, a simple random type cluster sampling was established, where a questionnaire structured by 9 questions was applied, to a sample of 130 inhabitants. It should be noted that the information obtained was processed in frequency tables, elaborated through the statistical program SPSS. Finally, the results are presented with their respective graphs.*

Keywords: *Environmental education, health, public parks, recreation, social benefits.*

Date of Submission: 08-09-2017

Date of acceptance: 20-09-2017

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, attention to the citizen of the cities and their image has been imposed as the core of action for municipal entities that try to provide a model of urban habitat pleasing to citizens, adequate in volume to the needs of recreational areas of the city and obviously sustainable (Puyuelo and Gual, 2009).

It is understood that park users, more specifically children, the elderly and other elements of the inactive population, they find in the green areas the satisfaction, which must do mainly with the ludic and the rest, benefiting, at the same time, all the other favorable effects that these spaces give (Gómez, 2005). Likewise, Díaz and Curiel (2012) affirm that well-being is considered as the result of having access to basic materials such as water, have health, have safety in the face of disasters, enjoy good social relations and spaces of harmonious coexistence.

Similarly, the city's public spaces, such as parks, green areas, gardens, squares and pedestrian paths, strengthen the sense of community, help people live longer, affect the physical well-being of the individuals and increase the subjective feeling of well-being (Obando and Salcedo, 2015).

Therefore, the research has as geographic frame the city of Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico. Also, some parks, squares and gardens were selected that frequents the citizenship in general. Therefore, the main objective is to know the utility and social benefits provided by the parks, squares and urban gardens of that city.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of public parks, squares and gardens

These public spaces are places in the city where people occupy and circulate continuously through their daily lives. Common places within a society, which are designed for different uses, according to the need or functions for which they have been created (Fonseca, 2014). The following describes what is a park, square and garden:

- Urban parks: those physical spaces that can be built, designed or reconstructed for the development of activities aimed at the recreation and exercise of recreational, artistic or sports disciplines whose purpose is to promote physical and mental health, and requiring infrastructure for public gatherings (Ocampo, 2008). For CONAFOVI (2005), an urban area is defined as an area of variable length between 10,000 and 1'000,000 m², with a width of at least 100 meters, and presents the possibility of performing different sports, recreational and cultural activities.
- Squares: is a small portion of open public space, adjacent to the sidewalk and closely related to the street. They are spaces usually used for brief periods of time, whether resting, waiting, etc. They can be of different types: expanded sidewalk to one or both sides of the street, pedestrian link between two streets (Ochoa de la Torre, 1999).
- Garden: it is recognized as an element of great importance in urban conglomerates, this represents an aesthetic and cultural representation and implies values or meanings of an environmental type, configuring a landscape, with a certain biodiversity incorporated in the city (Vélez and Herrera, 2015). Thus, a public

garden is one constructed for the recreation of the users in neighborhood areas, they have dimensions that fluctuate between the 2,500 and 10,000 meters, and must have a minimum width of 50 meters, have the essential function of recreation (CONAFOVI, 2005).

Within this context, they are intermediate zones that function as both spaces of use and of circulation, which are squares and parks, the so called urban green areas, from the environmental point of view, the public trees and the private gardens, together with the function of being the lungs of the city, are jointly fulfilled (López, 2013).

2.2. Importance and function of parks, squares and urban gardens

According to Cedeño (2005), parks, gardens and recreation areas are necessary because they bring light, air and the sight of corners of greenery, refreshing, refreshing, amid the fatigue and daily concerns of the life of the great Cities, towns, and allow all inhabitants to enjoy a few hours each day in the open air, which is essential especially as the city expands and the rural proper itself moves away from it.

Thus, parks, squares and urban gardens are key elements in the structure of cities and in the lives of their inhabitants, because they appear as islands of comfort and environment, they also play the role of recreational spaces and / or social interaction (Martínez, 2010). Also, the vegetation that forms the areas of the city has a different origin: some of the existing trees are redoubts of original vegetation, on the other hand, it responds to the green spaces created by the man as part of the city's equipment (Meza and Moncada, 2010). It should be mentioned that the environmental quality of cities depends on the frondiness of their parks, squares and parks (Reyes and Gutiérrez, 2010).

2.3. Social benefits of parks, squares and urban gardens

According to improvements in air quality, due to vegetation, they have positive impacts on physical health, such as the decline of respiratory diseases. Perhaps less evident is the fact that these spaces, especially the larger ones, reduce stress by contributing to an aesthetically pleasing and relaxing environment (Frutos and Esteban, 2009).

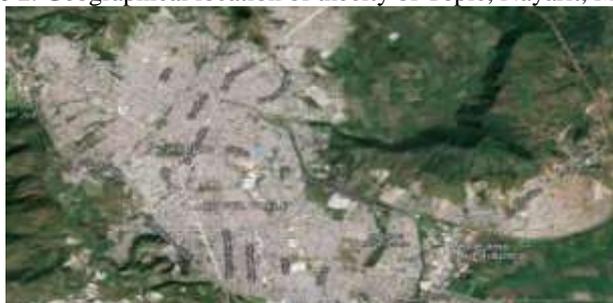
Likewise, recreational spaces are the most visited by society as the squares and parks both provide physical development, fun and mental health for man. Thus, squares and green areas are the best spaces for recreation, games, fairs, exhibitions and all kinds of manifestations of society (Amacifuen, 2015). That is, in the cultural context these offer benefits to residents that include recreational opportunities, close refuges for urban life, economic and social diversity (Rodríguez and Alarcón, 2003).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study area:

The present research was carried out in the city of Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico, Fig. 1, which has a total population of 413, 608 inhabitants (INEGI, 2015).

Figure 1. Geographical location of the city of Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico.



Source: own elaboration from images of Google Maps (2017).

Also, the main objective is to know the utility and social benefits that the parks, squares and urban gardens of that city provide. Thus, the collection of information was chosen: General Esteban Baca Calderón Park "La Loma", Fig. 2, Barrack Square "Plaza principal", Fig. 3, and the Garden Fraccionamiento "Las Aves", as shown in Fig. 4.

Figure 2. Geographical location of the General Esteban Baca Calderón Park "La Loma"



Source: own elaboration from images of Google Maps (2017).

Figure 3. Geographical location of the Barrack Square "Plaza Principal"



Source: own elaboration from images of Google Maps (2017).

Figure 4. Geographical location of Garden Fraccionamiento "Las Aves"



Source: own elaboration from images of Google Maps (2017).

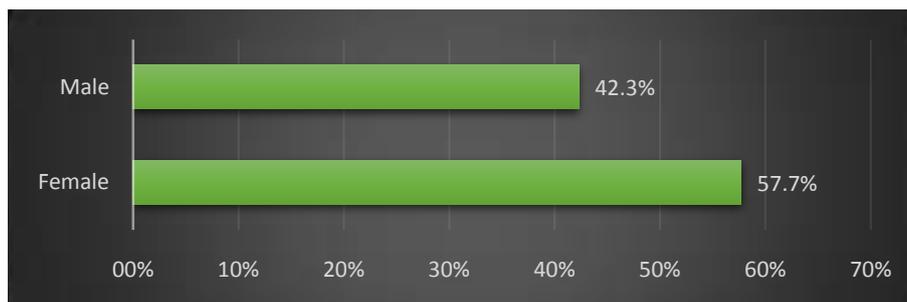
From the above, a simple random type cluster sampling was established, where a survey structured by 9 questions was applied to a sample of 130 inhabitants that make use of the park, square and garden. It should be noted that the information obtained was processed in frequency tables, elaborated through the statistical program SPSS. Finally, the results are presented with their respective graphs.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Through the survey applied in the General Esteban Baca Calderón park "La Loma", Plaza de Armas "Plaza principal", and the Garden Fraccionamiento "Las Aves" of this city, the following results are presented.

People who use the parks were asked, what is their gender? and the results were the following with 57.7% women and 42.3% men, as shown in Fig. 5.

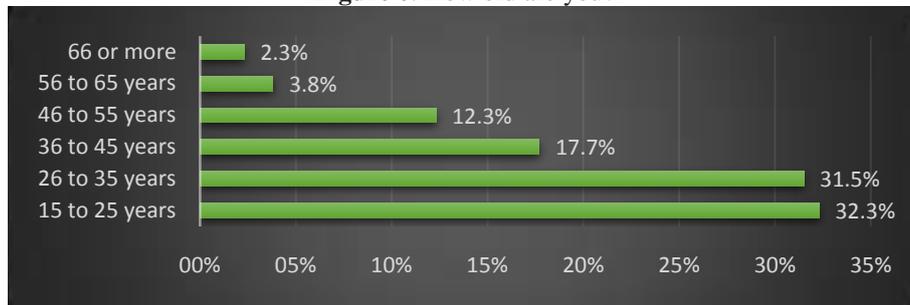
Figure 5. What is your gender?



Source: Made by myself.

He also asked himself, how old are you? and the results are as follows, from the age group of 15 to 25 years represents 32.3%, from 26 to 35 years from 31.5%, from 36 to 45 years from 17.7%, from 46 to 55 years from 12.3%, from 56 to 65 years old 3.8% and 66 years old or more only 2.3%, as shown in Fig. 6.

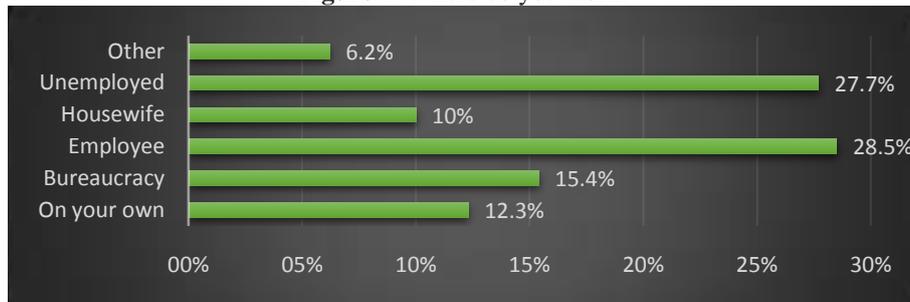
Figure 6. How old are you?



Source: Made by myself.

The following question asked: where do you work? the results were as follows: 12.3% work on their own, 15.4% work in bureaucracy, 28.5% are employed, 10% are housewives, 27.7% are Unemployed and with 6.2% have another type of employment, as shown in Fig. 7.

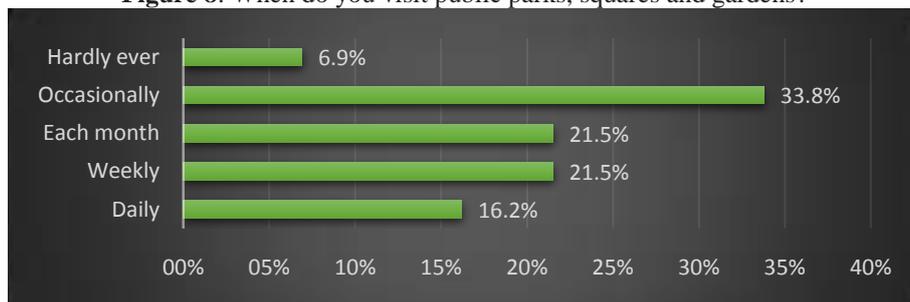
Figure 7. Where do you work?



Source: Made by myself.

So, the next question was, when do you visit public parks, squares and gardens? the results are as follows, with 16.2% for people going daily, 21.5% weekly, 21.5% each month, 33.8% occasionally and 6.9% almost never attend a park, square or garden of this city, as shown in Fig.8.

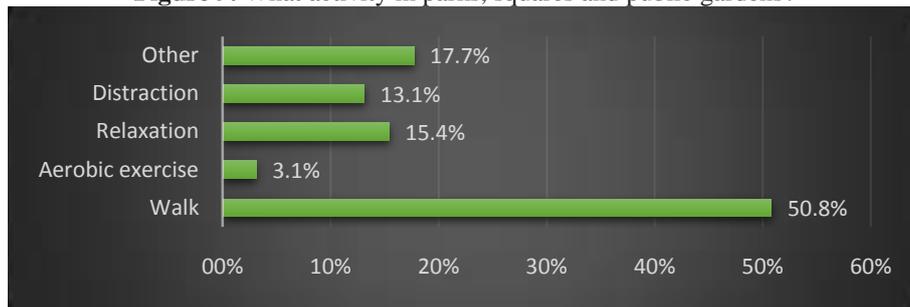
Figure 8. When do you visit public parks, squares and gardens?



Source: Made by myself.

People were also asked what activity in parks, squares and public gardens? 50.8% were walking, 3.1% aerobic exercise, 15.4% relaxation, 13.1% distraction and 17.7% performed another type of activities within these green spaces, as shown in Fig. 9.

Figure 9. What activity in parks, squares and public gardens?



Source: Made by myself.

Therefore, people were asked what benefits do the parks, squares and public gardens provide? 66.2% answered that the greatest benefit these spaces give them is health, followed by 33.8% said that security, as shown in Fig. 10.

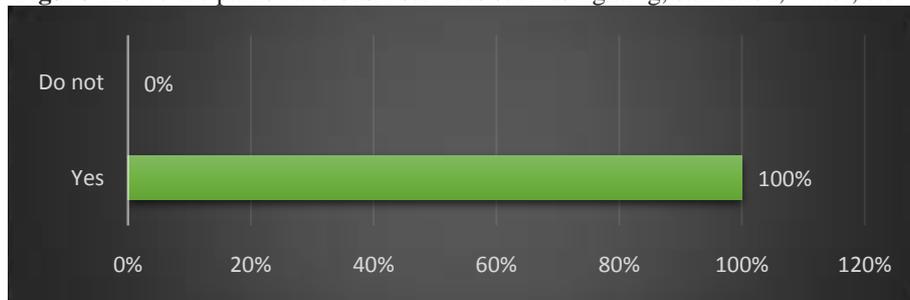
Figure 10. What benefits do the parks, squares and public gardens provide?



Source: Made by myself.

In this way, it was asked: do the parks have basic services such as lighting, sanitation, water, etc.? of the total number of people surveyed answered that if you have the basic services in the parks, squares and gardens of this city, as shown in Fig. 11.

Figure 11. Do the parks have basic services such as lighting, sanitation, water, etc.?



Source: Made by myself.

People were also asked if they would like to have more parks, squares and gardens? 77.7% answered that if they would like to have more parks, squares and gardens, and 22.3% said they would not like to have more parks, squares and gardens, as shown in Fig. 12.

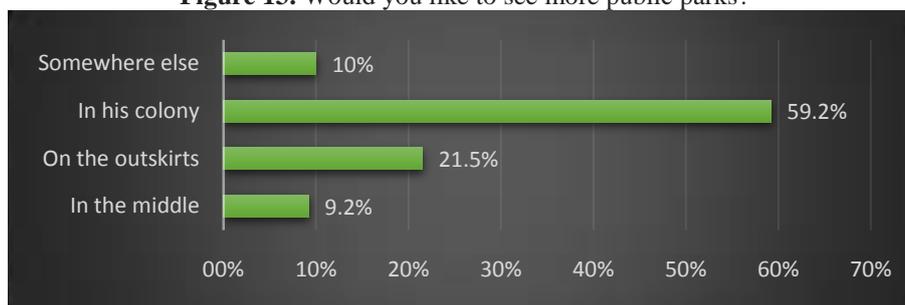
Figure 12. Would like to have more parks, squares and gardens?



Source: Made by myself.

Finally, he asked himself, where would you like to see more public parks? the results are as follows: 9.2% in the middle, 21.5% on the outskirts, 59.2% in the colony, and 10% in another the city, as shown in Fig. 13.

Figure 13. Would you like to see more public parks?



Source: Made by myself.

V. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the parks, squares and urban gardens of the city of Tepic, Nayarit, are frequented by people of different ages, to carry out some physical or social activity, it is worth mentioning that this type of space is a priority for society, observes that adults, the elderly, young people and children are those who use this type of places. Therefore, they are people who seek the physical and mental conditioning to perform some activity. With respect, to the results obtained, most people perform activities such as walking, aerobic exercise, relaxation, distraction. Thus, it is mentioned that the greatest benefit obtained by parks, squares and gardens is that they provide health. Finally, these green spaces are at the service of the population in general, being lungs of the same city, yielding a landscape of comfort within the urban spot.

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PhD. Gilberto Mejía Salazar. "The Utility of Parks, Squares and Urban Gardens as Social Spaces in the City of Tepic, Mexico." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention(IJHSSI)*, vol. 6, no. 9, 2017, pp. 67-72.