Transcript: Inclusive Spaces: Mental Health and Social Justice in the Urban Outdoors

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

Inclusive Spaces, mental health, greenspaces, built environment

**SPEAKERS**

Maxwell Mutanda, Dr Liza Griffin, Kay Pallaris

**Maxwell Mutanda**: Good afternoon and welcome to the series of seminars on Inclusive Spaces at The Bartlett, faculty of the Built Environment. Today you have joined us on the seminar where the focus will be on mental health and social justice in the urban outdoors. I'm Maxwell Mutanda, a lecturer in environment and spatial equity at The Bartlett School of Architecture, as well as the director for equality, diversity and inclusion. And I will be a hosting this session.

Inclusive Spaces is our monthly seminar, led by The Bartlett, EDI group where we are showcasing the latest research ideas on all dimensions of diversity in the built environment. So, before we begin, I would just like to start with a little housekeeping. The session will be recorded and added to The Bartlett's YouTube channel, The Bartlett's EDI website and forwarded to registered attendees. So, the format for today will begin with an introduction of our guests who will present for the first half of the session. And this will be followed by Q&A before finishing promptly at 2pm. We really do encourage you to submit a question for the speakers at any point during the lecture by clicking on the Q&A function on the bottom of the screen. And you can submit your own questions, or upvote other questions.

So, today it is my pleasure to welcome my colleague from the developmental planning unit, DPU, Liza Griffin, who is a lecturer in environmental politics, a strategic environmental planner and director of Mapping Futures. They will present to us their research on the crucial role of urban green space with concerns for people's mental health. We will discuss how we can intersectionally discuss sexual, gendered and racialised barriers and challenges related to disabilities that prohibit the user engagement with the outdoors. And now over to our speaker.

**Liza Griffin**: Thanks very much Maxwell, I'm just going to share my screen with you. Right. Thanks so much for this invitation it's really exciting to be talking about our emerging work. We only recently concluded the empirical data gathering so we're working our way through the analysis, and we've picked out some, some key conclusions, to talk about with you this afternoon. There's a lot more to say and it's a really nuanced debate but we hope by talking about these key things we can give you a flavour of some of the work that we're developing. So, our, our research, looked at the, the ways in which Park users in North and South London derived and experienced wellbeing in green spaces during the recent pandemic and our research covered lockdown periods from 2020 to 2021. So, we were paying attention to the emergent social and spatial factors which mediated and shaped the different ways and the extent to which people experienced and felt wellbeing.

So, although we were concerned with mental health, we framed our work within a sort of wellbeing conception and definitions of wellbeing, are, you know, as we all know, very complicated, and definitions of them are bound. Most literatures consider wellbeing to do with a state of being. So that's either a description of someone's quality of life, or an account of how they feel that they can cope with everyday living. So, this means therefore that the determinants of wellbeing. The things that go to make it up and to mediate our experience with it or understood to be either internal or external. So, for example, the, the external determinants of wellbeing, often concerned with things like our living conditions levels of education, our relationships to other people. And the internal determinants of wellbeing, are often to do the things that go on in our head preferences, our ambitions, our attitudes and so on. And we clearly don't have scope here to outline the very many debates, involving thinking, but I think it's worth pointing to the useful distinction that often comes up in the literature between eudemonic and hedonic versions of wellbeing. And these, these different binary notions of wellbeing still very much characterize the field for many. I'm feeling good relates to notions of hedonic wellbeing, well doing and living well are often closer to notions of eudemonic characteristics of wellbeing.

Sarah White, a sort of key thinker here in this field that we draw on centrally in our work. She's a professor of development studies criticizes this dominant cultural complex that divides our human lives into these different domains. And in this she thinks restricts the analysis of wellbeing, to individuals at the cost of reflecting on boarder power structures. So, by focusing on individuals’ own self responsibility, these discourses of wellbeing frequently move the discussion away from what we might call the structural determinants about how people live well. However, in centring these external relations and making them, you know, the key to our analysis, there's a tendency to miss recognize the very personal experiences of wellbeing that are also central to how people relate to the world and how they feel that for this reason, and because of this difficult dichotomy we've taken an approach to wellbeing designed to transcend this dichotomy. And our own relational perspective that k will elaborate on a bit later . Is attentive to the intersecting mental, emotional, environmental, and contextual factors that together in an intersecting way amount to our experiences of wellbeing. We think that this relational perspective invites us to understand how wellbeing behaviours and our experiences have it manifest within wider social relationships which we obviously think are crucial. So, as well as being central to academic debates on development, wellbeing is of course a really key idea for Urban Health and Mental Health. And if we look at definitions of wellbeing - sorry of health - they often refer back to wellbeing and vice versa so these, these two notions of living well, and being helpful are intimately related.

So, if you take the World Health Organization's recent definition of mental health. They say that it concerns a state of wellbeing, where an individual realizes her, or his abilities can cope with the normal stresses of life and work productively and is able to contribute to her or his community. Mental health festival is fundamental to our collective, and not individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living, and enjoy life. So, these things are incredible. In fact, incredibly central to everything that we do and everything that we are. Our rationale for saturating this work in London, despite being a member of the development studies unit which does research all over the world, is this long-established link between mental health, and the city. Urban living is considered to be a risk factor for depression, anxiety, and said to double the risk of living with schizophrenia.

Despite this acknowledgement and long association, policymakers have only very recently been paying attention to the ways that urban life impacts upon our mental health. So, our London based research then was focused upon periods of lockdown, when one of the very few healthful activities that we could legally engage in was exercise in an outdoor space. So, if you recall, government messaging encouraged us to leave home for up to an hour a day, only for the purposes of exercise, not for socializing but just for going out and getting moving and of course that changed over the course of the pandemic. Open green spaces then became a really vital resource, particularly those people living in London with no outdoor space, and no access to a garden. We took another starting point, some of the recent literature on disaster and quarantine related mental health research. And this demonstrates that long periods of isolation can have really detrimental impacts on our mental health and wellbeing and in recent studies that are currently being published I've also evidence and increased prevalence and worsening of mental health disorders like depression and anxiety.

It was clear and emerging research is telling us that these were experienced most profoundly by minorities and disadvantaged groups. So, that we drew upon the social determinants of health concept which tells us that, ethnicity, gender, disability, and socio-economic position of categories that help to shape and predict the distribution of ill health within society. Like structural disadvantage experiences of stigma and racism also contribute to health inequalities in cities. So, for example, experiencing racism prejudice and discrimination is highly stressful and has a negative a documented negative effect on mental an overall health. We drove on postcolonial think Jennifer Nash and arguing that these kinds of discriminations and sexist and racist oppressions evince themselves in diverse ways and in different contexts, and the context that we explored most obviously was of course green parks and green spaces.

So, during on lashes work we attempted to be more attuned to the subtle manifestations of these kinds of oppressions. And we designed a narrative-based research methods which table discussing a bit more detail to illuminate some of these subtleties. So, we focus there for on the, on the lived experiences of disadvantaged and minority test people. And of course, these were communities and individuals had already been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and pandemic measures. And of course, given the, the effects of the pandemic on overall mental health, and the reputed benefits of green spaces for improving health. It was clearly important to pay attention to this, this complex relationship. So, we looked at the relationship between pandemic responses green space use and resulting wellbeing benefits. So, as well as being one of the few places that people could exercise and seek solace during periods of lockdown green spaces have long been associated and valued for their wider contributions to public health. And as a burgeoning amount of literature on this on this topic as Kayla test and we've been reading it and analysing it recently. And you know, there's been, you know, qualitative research in depth narrative-based research like ours, and some more quantitative research, that's the highlights and quite important relationships. So, for example, regularly use of an open space or park or forested area is associated with about a 43% lower risk of poor general health, and with each additional use of any natural environment, per week.

You apparently, get a 6% lower risk of poor mental health, regular use of natural environments for physical activities can cut the risk of suffering, poor mental health by around half so these are quite staggering figures. So, clearly, green space access and green space use is an important tool and urban space for remediating some of these poor health outcomes, several more recent studies have examined how experiences of nature, help people to cope with lockdown measures and of course, many of us bought more plants and enjoyed green things. But with emerging research in this area suggests that the existence of even having you know some a green vista from our window was associated with better self-esteem, more subjective happiness and decreased levels of depression, anxiety, and loneliness, so these are quite startling research. Much literature highlights the associations between green spaces and wellbeing, but very little of it manage it examines the actual pathways. Beyond noticing that green spaces can facilitate social interaction and physical activity, both of which are important for our overall health. But of course, these, these things are not unique to green spaces.

So, our research tried to address this sort of this gap if you like to examine these new, more nuanced pathways, and we tried to examine the multiple ways through which people experienced wellbeing during the green space visits, we explore the factors that help to facilitate its fulfilment and the limits to different people's experience of it. We draw upon the growing research that's explored factors which inhibit people's experience of an access to outdoor environments, and there is a growing amount of work, dedicated to exploring the important area of green space in justice, several recent reports by organizations working in this field, and have been published just in the last couple of years have highlighted how people living people from minorities or disadvantaged backgrounds and much more likely to live in areas of the city with a deficiency of access to green space fields in the trust and trust for example reported that there are over two and a half million people in Britain without access to green space within a short walk and evidence clearly shows that green space use and enjoyment and proximity, clearly disproportionately benefits, white able bodied, and more affluent communities.

However, it's really important to note that proximity is not the only factor in determining equitable access. So, we tried to pay attention to the, to the other spatial dynamics. What became clear for us and our own study is that even when green spaces were close by positive green space experiences are not realized why everyone to the same degree, such as know very little about how multifaceted and dynamic processes, contribute to reinforcing these kinds of inequalities and that's some of the things that we wanted to explore. So, we we've tried to pay attention to the, to the complex interplay of factors that work to shape differential personal and community experiences of wellbeing. I'm now going to pass over to Kate who is going to tell you a little bit about our research design

**Kay Pallaris**: Thanks! As Liza mentioned we already have exposed by the media and how people are benefiting from green spaces during this time. And so, we came up with five key research questions to help us unpack some of the key issues that were emerging. So, first question was, who uses green spaces during the covid-19 lockdowns and how are they used. And this was trying to expand on these really typical images that we did not see in the media or packed parks, increased use, and especially during that first summer in 2020 when the weather was much finer. And of course these started to emerge in the literature too, but less was being said on these pathways and mechanisms in which people were experiencing while being there. For our next question which I had to focus on trying to elicit thoughts and therefore, our next question we tried to focus and try to elicit thoughts and feelings and memories and emotions interpretations that will result in expressed towards people's sort of personal experience in relationship to those green spaces so the question on what ways, and to what extent did it direct wellbeing, from green places. The third key question, the motivation around that was really, as we said, a number of key national reviews also started to emerge around how access was not equal. Therefore, another fundamental question was very much around trying to understand what threats and exclusions were experienced by users and how these manifested. And finally, in exploring the literal relational dynamics and all these very complicated interrelated sorts of influencing people use an experience of green spaces, was key to understand further so a wider questions but also been asked to see whether we identify anything in relation to the wider situated issues or outside factors that are impacting people's choices and decisions and actions and behaviours to the green spaces that they connected to.

So, what relational wellbeing factors motivated people's use on one use of green spaces, was another key question, because we didn't ask it in a direct way like that but we were trying to elicit how people are experiencing the pandemic generally, and they're sort of general connections to the spaces themselves, etc. And finally, the last question wasn't a question we set out to address fundamentally initially but in speaking to the friend’s user groups. We wanted to them understand the role of friend’s groups, and community groups as advocates and shaping people's user experiences acquaintances. So, these forms the fundamental sort of overarching questions next slide, Liza.

And we reviewed the literature on relational approach to wellbeing as possible to sort of pick out some highlights of the complex dynamics at play. And the relational lens really allowed us to look at factors like personal agency so things like our personal reference points our personal intimate relationships with ourselves and our relationships ourselves to place ourselves to others within place, etc. So, there's a sort of rich body of literature that sort of starts to sort of unpack the relational lens and we thought we were mindful to this, and we wanted to therefore, sort of choose an in-depth interview approach, up to an hour long to give us that that personal narrative of people's experiences to sort of explore this complexity. So, we undertook interviews they took place online, often, but in some cases, they also took place in situ in the parks themselves.

Another key thing to our research design was that we consulted an expert panel of researchers that experience and conducting more being research, and all the research and social exclusion and when our times communities to sensitize us to some of the ethics in the kind of research in this kind of research and to help us shape our research design, so that was really key to obviously notice, sort of, knowing or noticing our own position in that space.

The interview questions were designed to sort of directly answer the research questions such as how you used the partner in lockdown, did your use change, and other instances it was indirect to ameliorate problems such as respondent simply reporting expected trips and wellbeing. So we asked users to really let us know about their feelings their experiences and their motivations for visiting. Next slide. Another thing that we were mindful a lot of was the different types of green spaces. We began by choosing three parks in North London and parks in Lewisham, because we wanted to look at a range of sizes and functions. In reality, however when people spoke to us about their experience in green space they never really just spoke about the space that we sort of engaged with and through was all independent and they were all talking about very different spaces and visiting different spaces during this time. But this was a starting point and we were sort of linked by the local authority to friends groups so these are groups, which informally manage community, sorry, informally managed the parks, through volunteer days, and friends groups are key stakeholders because of their involvement and caring to the green space, often in informal, but in doing this role allows them to really notice and know their space well, and often know things that the local community isn't mindful to say for this reason we felt that they were an important stakeholder group to kick off our interviews and ask questions for them to reflect on their observations of their parties or have parties of their users.

Of course, the questions were worded slightly differently, and the friends’ groups then linked us to users that they knew or, you know, a connected to so this tended to be active volunteers who are also helping out in green spaces. And finally, the final user group were the just the general users so these users who use green spaces for their own personal use and enjoyment. And we approached people in various ways, so we visited parks and try to engage with them that way, that wasn't as successful because we found that people tend to not to want to engage in the moment often being there for their own quiet reflection for their own purposes and didn't want to engage, another way was to join to some of the park events, and this allowed us to recruit some further interviews that made it slightly easier to approach people because they were out there sort of enjoying the social aspects of it. This was in the summer of 2021 when obviously events were allowed by that point and finally, through community garden meeting list so inviting users for an interview by mailing lists that some of the green spaces were connected to.

It's important to know that we recruited respondents through this snowballing effect and we did not set out to target specific social groups. And instead allowed our respondents to self-identify, therefore we by no means have a representative sample of different groups. And it's also important to know that we interviewed green space users who are obviously using the park and therefore we're not able to explore fully the factors that keept people away. And in total we interviewed 18 stakeholder group seven which were former parks friends’ group six more community gardens so more led by the community to other green space initiative groups, who set up sort of initiatives in green spaces at the time, and three national organizations who actively work within the research and green space policy arena. And we interviewed just over 13 individuals too. So, Next slide please. Liza.

As already mentioned, sort of this relational lenses green awesome as a framework. To begin, we sort of transcribed all the scripts, we and use the magic analysis as the main approach to try and categorize people sentiments that means the feelings that they were sort of mentioning, and the transcripts were reviewed encoded and highlighted within the themes of the research questions, and also with repeated sentiment. To scale, some of the coding approach and the third one was really using this relational and wellbeing framework which is represented here by whites diagram of interlocking loops and it captures the three wellbeing dimensions of personal relationship with ourselves and with others, the social relationships and then the environments and the relationship to space. So these three sort of interlocking wellbeing dynamics also showes an important lens through which how we understood wellbeing. How was constituted and derived and how exclusions and on sort of unequal being impacts manifest, and therefore formed another sort of categorization layer, if you like, and allowed us to appreciate how actually relational thinking has a rolling green space and wellbeing conceptualization. And, in reality, what we found was that relational approach, of course, is very complex and complicated and difficult to conceptualize. Next slide.

It's very difficult to do it justice and draw it out because as soon as you draw it out it doesn't quite make sense anymore. And we found that actually the personal social and environmental interactions were situated in time and situated in place, and were operating at different scales so how to capture that sort of scalar sort of interactions as well. In the next diagram we try to, if you like reframe it slightly and capture, to see how we might capture this case, you know scalar complexity and presenting it where these interlocking loops, which dissolve into sort of this nebulous interconnected space in the middle which will constitute wellbeing experience. In reality the size of these sort of interlocking sort of loops, sort of change with space and time. So, for example, we found that the same person might go to the same green space on a different day. And while the personal dimension and the spatial dimension is the same, the same part the same person, other things might influence that experience of the space so the environment will be impacted by the weather and the social will be impacted by the fact that different people in different day or a different time they'll create a different atmosphere and therefore different mood and interaction, etc. So, people's experience changes over time and so this is really dynamic and constantly changing.

And the reason why we decided to present it in this way, was really not to necessarily capture, sort of, and really define relational wellbeing, but to really just try to highlight the fact that scales is important, especially as we start to come and think about how to think about interventions and sort of the policy arena system moving forward, so that hopefully it gives you a little bit of flavour of why and how we designed the research and, as I said, we can talk a lot longer on the relational wellbeing framework and there's a lot a lot more to say and to unpack but I will pass on to Liza to elaborate on some of our findings.

**Liza**: Thanks Kate. So, our research demonstrated that green spaces we use more widely and by a greater range of different constituencies, and then prior to the pandemic both people were reporting that they were going to green spaces that they hadn't visited before even if they were in their local neighbourhood. And when we talked to friends’ groups, read the scripts reported. Lots more volunteers from different parts of the local vicinity. We won't go through the slides in detail, but this is just to give you a sense of the different ways in which people talked about their experiences of wellbeing, we categorize them during on the relational framework, so we sort of provided a topology of experience. And these we could categorize them around safety temporality, and scenery and being in place. We also developed a topology for thinking about how people derived and made and connected to their wellbeing around peace and tranquillity, social connections and connecting to place that was actually surprising and really important to us. And we looked at the contextual characteristics and the sensory properties and the symbolic associations. So, as I mentioned before, there's a lot of research showing that there's a relationship between wellbeing and green space use and access.

But little of this research is kind of unpack the pathways and that's what we try to do in our relational framework typology, so we've tried to pull out some of the key factors that people talked about. So, these were related, and the factors that kind of mediated people's experiences, wellbeing, what to do with the physical constraints of the topography, the perceptual qualities it's layout the facilities, the weather lighting conditions signage, of course was important for people living with visual impairments, for example, the social atmosphere was crucial to people talks a lot about anti-social behaviour and people talked about conflicts with other green space users. And those users themselves may not have been aware of the different conflicts so there's lots of intersecting social dynamics at play. People talked about their own personal agency. There, their feelings of enhanced wellbeing or not often connected to people's prior state of health or wellbeing, their life stage, and there, their own circumstances. So, one of the things that that came out for us, as well as providing these important spaces for providing helpful things for us, green spaces are actually important social places to, and as well as providing restoration reflection and this kind of sensory stimulation which abounds in the wellbeing literature, green spaces, served as important locations for social pair identity making and belonging.

And these spaces were not only valued by respondents for their naturalness, but also for their fundamental social function. So, our work emphasized how social connections and then interactions were absolutely crucial to people's experience of wellbeing. This is a little quote from one of our respondents. And the respondent says it's an open space for the local community to come out and get some air, you've got older people come from walk, and you just and you know to socialize with people, it's important to have some green space, because a lot of the surrounding areas, don't have a garden so it's good to have this park. So, people talk about using it as a, as a way to connect. And during periods of lockdown parks and other green spaces became really important community hubs or places if you like that played an important role in supporting people and different groups with diverse needs and there were activities that were put on for people spaces were opened up. There were mental health services being utilized in green space community centres. And it was interesting for us that while pandemic media reports praise the rise of so-called community champions. The role of green space, community groups in covert responses was not widely acknowledged or celebrated and we found this quite perplexing given that, given that going out and the green space was one of the few things that you could do. Another finding was the importance of green spaces as kind of hyper local infrastructures of wellbeing.

So, people that worked running green spaces park managers friends groups, volunteers organizers could liaise with people and open up spaces open up parks and allow people to use their spaces. And one quote here says that we've had local families email and say look we really need a space for the children just to run around feeling cooped up, do you mind if we use the reserve, and we unlock it and let them in and say you've got an hour. It's also, we also found that green spaces played a wider role in place making through things like planting and this respondent she's a volunteer I think talks about planting in the green space in ways that's visible to the, you know, wider community walking past to create a kind of overall pleasurable experience.

Friends groups, perform several crucial roles we found these were informal but they were crucial roles in from raising green space maintenance coordination of volunteer sessions running activities and events and liaising with local authorities and community groups, they will kind of mediating social governance structures, green spaces of long comprise public health infrastructure, and offer proactive alternative interventions for health, but little credit is given to these important voluntary lead organizations we think they often run with little no funding. We found that these friends’ groups were particularly important in co-constituting this hyper local infrastructure during the pandemic. And they did vital work to maintain and activate spaces, through the events and organization activities that they put on. When we asked them whether they did anything specific for wellbeing, they often didn't recognize that but clearly if you look at definitions of wealth being the things that they did were centrally about making people feel well and improving mental health.

And we drew on provider who says that by strengthening the relationships of people living in geographical proximity the problems of health isolation discrimination and employment and housing, and no longer experienced these abstract societal issues, but as local realities affecting people you know personally. So, it's perhaps this realization then that such hyper local infrastructures for wellbeing are the best place to address issues like green space equity. One of our studies key findings was the importance of these, these organizations these friends’ groups in the ways in which they mediated people's experience with wellbeing. Interviews revealed that the ways in which community groups directly or indirectly addressed equity issues of inclusive participation democratic decision making and redressing exclusions what often highlighted and the extent to which they were able to do this. We've been aware of the requirement and need to do this. Most groups, talked about having increased numbers of volunteers or inquiries and perceived at least a greater diversity of participants.

Many organisations acknowledged challenging challenges and facilitating active participation from the wider community around green spaces. For example, the majority of respondents noticed how the white middle class, women often in older age groups dominated committees, or volunteer memberships. Some groups want to facilitate spaces or activities that cater to specific communities or constituencies. So, one organization, ran sessions for women who'd experienced domestic violence. So, the idea, they say, is that women will have a safe space with no men in the environment, because obviously some of the trauma, they may experience will be sex-based trauma. And they come with their children, and they can enjoy the experience of growing sharing making things like herbal tea bags. And it's an opportunity to sit and talk in a safe space. So, the interview is often pointed up the importance of creating a networks of different kinds of spaces, which address different socio cultural needs. We interviewed one group that focused on growing Black Heritage Foods, for example, and, however, others worryingly saw the importance of producing environments that were ‘fully inclusive’, and they were blind to some of the ways in which this might be exclusionary.

One friends group organiser told us, there's no particular section of the community which feels they need a separate space. We don't encourage that, we just don't want to encourage that in any shape or form, because the government is doing a lot of integration. And just because we have to adhere to certain communities, it brings about division. And it just goes on increasing that gap, and we don't want to be part of it. We want the park to be a big space, a big umbrella, so that everyone underneath it, not just to have corners with different people. However, some respondents were concerned that this this talk of inclusion smack divided ticking boxes or more worryingly created environments where exclusions were less visible but it's still very much palpable. So, the friends groups mediating role was not always positive. One green space user reflected on the need to have open and difficult conversations based on her experiences of discrimination. Another repeated message from respondents was that people felt they needed to see themselves in community activities, simply repeating that all is welcome was not enough. Some respondents talked about obvious manifestations of racism or threatening behaviour, and the ways in which gendered sports, make people feel unwelcome. Another interviewee talked about gentrification of the area and no longer fitting in. Respondents talked about how lockdown measures gave them renewed reason to visit. And they saw perhaps a potential for creating a greater sense of belonging, but felt that it needed to be facilitated by wider social networks. Rush Beth, proposed the idea of curated sociability approaches, as possible frameworks for supporting more equitable participation and offering pathways to greater engagement. All work clearly establish the importance of having representative community organizers to help connect change behaviour address prejudiced and better represent the wider community. So, green spaces clearly have a clear and significant potential, and facilitating inclusion and belonging.

Just a few small conclusion points then so, green spaces, we felt were crucial places of encounter that enabled urban dwellers to live and feel well. But this was a mediated and uneven experience, wellbeing isn't just a static state, it's not either achieved or not. And it's not simply out there. Neither is it simply in us either. It can't be separated we think from the embodied and situated contexts people's lives and our by physical surroundings and manifestations. It's something that's made and co constituted by our socio material interactions. So it's something that that's activated and facilitated by the stuff around us and by the social networks too and, and the two things are actually implicated and interact together. That's why I call them socio-material. So wellbeing is relational is mediated its processional, and it's experiential. And as a mediated experience of course, not everyone will have access to the same socio material conditions and resources to experience it in the same way.

Therefore wellbeing is always a matter of, and for justice. What does this mean in practical terms? Well, Atkinson suggests that a relational approach can help us shift away from, how to enhance resources for wellbeing for individuals and towards attending to the socio material and spatially situated relationships that facilitate and co-produce wellbeing. This might require a focus on relational goods. So, these are the resources that don't belong to individuals particular party but belong to relationships, and we see the potential for friends roles and playing this role, and they often do this you know without any resources. Or it might be a way to open some of these important relational goods, but great care must be taken that these groups are fully situated representative of neighbourhoods, knowledgeable about diverse needs and experiences of users, cognizant and reflective about the more nuanced discriminations and injustice that can happen in these hyper local spaces.

So, while these kinds of studies that show how the spatial proximity of a green space is important. There are lots more nuanced factors that we feel are important to pay attention to. We think that there needs to be a diversity of space and a diversity in space. And we think that it's really important to pay attention to these mediating factors. Our research points to the

importance of facilitating a diversity of spaces to facilitate a diverse sense of belonging, within and across different communities, and ensuring that each hyper local space of governance encompasses a sense of openness, respect and understanding to enable it to connect with the users and those outside too.

Thank you very much.

**Maxwell**: Good, thanks very much. So, let's start with a question from someone in the chat. You talk about the benefits but are you considering the harmful activities that can accommodate and disturb the mental health of neighbours to open public green spaces, such as loud music, barbecues, drug taking and debris of conflict between different groups, using the space.

**Liza**: That's a really important question to address. Kay, do you mind addressing that because I know it's something that you were looking at specifically.

**Kay**: Sorry, I missed the first part of the question, but caught the essence at the end so sorry for not answering it properly. We can talk about these different views of conflicts. And the fact that sort of dog owners would use it in one way and would not necessarily be considerate to other users and antisocial behaviour was a huge thing that people noticed and was concerning to them. So, some respondents told us that they avoided the park at certain times because that's when those types of activities, complicated. So, even sort of some users, and especially women felt that they didn't get certain times. Whereas if they would go to the park during a certain time during the day, whereas that sort of quietness and tranquillity that they were searching for their mental wellbeing, actually then turned to eeriness and feelings of and unsafety.

So, those types of things did very much feature in the reasons why people told us they either didn't visit us at some times that they avoided a certain park or that they it's while they did go, they went with others, or you know and some issues like that.

**Maxwell**: There's a question from Carolyn that asked about the connection to the three ecologies that affect the relational framework. I'll just drop a link into the chat. And I will in the meantime, quickly rush to another question that I thought was quite interesting that we got from Twitter. So, Karen asked, and she wasn't able to join whether you have any thoughts on the parks for health framework.

**Liza**: Yes, parts for health is some comes in in Islington parts for health framework. Yeah, I was actually involved in working with Camden interesting turn on a dimension of that with another couple of projects, actually. And so, it's really it's been really interesting to do some of this qualitative research that has helped to inform our discussions with Camden and Islington to on that framework and some of the work that I've been involved with other colleagues in The Bartlett actually Gemma more and refines as we've been trying to develop a framework for park managers to help them better understand how their green spaces and parks can promote health, and we wanted to make issues of injustice and inequality, central to that framework so we're currently working on that right now.

The three ecologies notion by Guattari, not directly is the short answer but Guattari is assemblage thinking is central to our notion of socio materiality, and we want to move beyond notions of relationality which are purely social and sort of bring in material elements to it a

**Maxwell**: Thank you. I quickly jump to a question from Samantha, that asks if you look at wellbeing impact of the loss of informal green spaces.

**Liza**: No, we haven't. It's a really, it's a I mean Kay works on green spaces as a practitioner, as well as working on this project with me so perhaps you'd like to answer this one?

**Kay**: Of course we didn't ask that as a direct research question, but it came up during our interviews. There were a lot of users or a number of users that we spoke to spoke to who obviously were using their green spaces outside their estates, so there are in flux and the green spaces around it formed very important green space function for them. And, and very much saw those as their parks, and at the same time as some people were enjoying those incidental and informal green spaces in nearby estates, those spaces will be lost and was a lot on Twitter about that loss, and people who were interviewed reflected on that and actually reflected on the fact that all green spaces were important to them. We also found that people use different green spaces for different reasons and depending on their mood or the day. So, we can't just think of these incidental green spaces as that incidental and informal and not necessary they actually do perform a role in themselves, and yes there is a sort of that connection with people do have a connection to them, and they are important for wellbeing.

**Maxwell**: Okay. One more question, apologies to everyone who submitted, such thoughtful question, but the question. Thank you. Do you think that urban or green landscape, interacts with housing for wellbeing in terms of future urban planning in and around the city?

**Liza**: I think it's absolutely central to to planning. Given the importance of green spaces for overall health, but also other co benefits to do with climate change mitigation and adaptation, you know, green spaces as floodplains and green spaces of areas of cooling. We know that urban heating will cause a great number of deaths. So, these spaces are central, they're crucial, they need to be valued and protected, and they need to be absolutely central to planning in every way I'm not a plan, I'm a geographer, but I know it's something that Kay thinks about and works on in her day job.

**Kay**: I mean I may add to that is that we can't just look at parks and green spaces as isolated islands. And we need to think about a connected green space so very much. And especially during the pandemic. People were going to green spaces and that walk, walking experience to him from different parks and to perform different mismatches was just as important as the green space itself. So very much the urban realm, and the public realm around these screens based on the housing estates needs to be cleaned up and the way we designed them very much is important and has to be very much part of the thinking of how we design our living environment.

**Maxwell**: That's wonderful. Thank you. Unfortunately, I'm going to have to wrap up. But I would like to thank everyone for joining us today, and Big thanks to the both of you for sharing your insights with us. I will also just add that Inclusive Spaces will be back on Wednesday 8 June with Queering Public Space, a UCL collaboration with Arup and the University of Westminster that will explore the relationship between queer and public spaces.