



AFRICAN FORUM
ON URBAN FORESTS

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Green Horizons: Shaping the Future Resilience of African Cities through Urban Forests

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in partnership with:



Assessing the perceptions and experiences of crime in
public urban green spaces in the Eastern Cape Province,
South Africa

by

TSHEPISO SEBOKO



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

GHIDA

**(Challenges for Inclusive Urban
Development in Africa)**



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

BACKGROUND

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

USE OF PUBLIC URBAN GREEN SPACES

FREQUENCY OF PUBLIC URBAN GREEN SPACES USE AND TIME OF DAY

DETERRENTS FROM PUBLIC URBAN GREEN SPACES

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND CRIME IN PUBLIC URBAN GREEN SPACES

EXPERIENCES OF CRIME IN PUBLIC URBAN GREEN SPACES

CONCLUSION



BACKGROUND

Urban Challenges and the Role of Urban Green Spaces

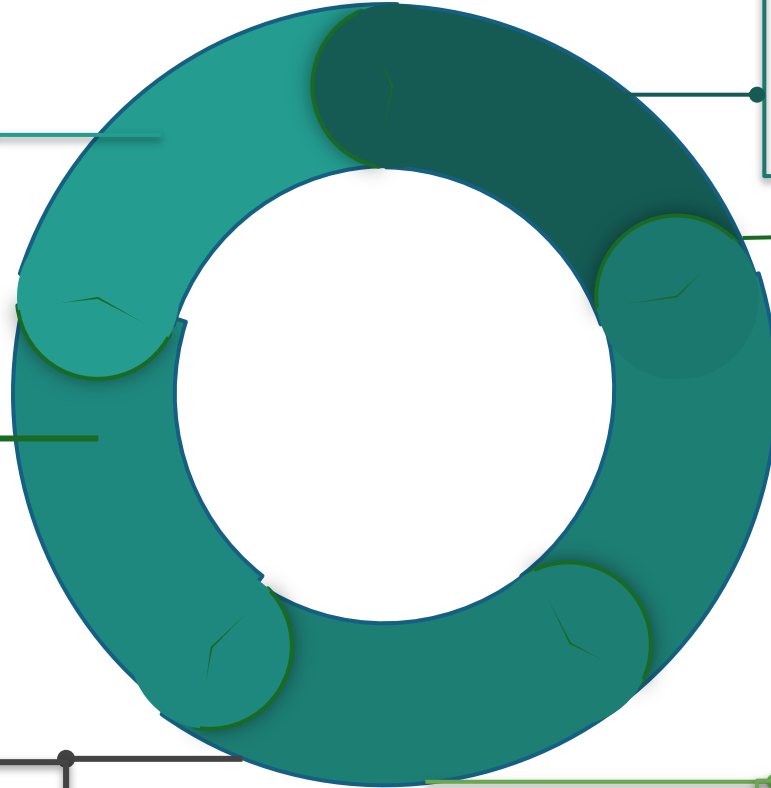
- Urbanisation and climate change have intensified societal challenges¹.

The Multifaceted Benefits of Urban Green Spaces

- Provides crucial ecosystem services^{2,3}.

Urban Green Spaces and its role in crime

- Research on the role of Green Spaces and crime⁴.



Crime as a Complex Urban Phenomenon

- Crime is shaped by social-economic and environmental factors^{4,5}.
 - Globally, 60% of urban residents⁶

Contribution of the Study

- Generates insights on UGS.
 - Provide evidence-based recommendations for urban planning.
 - Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 11;15;16.

Study Focus: Eastern Cape, South Africa

- Poorest province in the country⁷.



¹Dorst et al., 2019; ²Shackleton, 2021; ³Hanna et al., 2023; ⁴Shepley et al., 2019;

⁵Barnum et al., 2017; ⁶Ceccato & Nalla, 2020 ; ⁷Statistics South Africa, 2024.

AIM: To assess the perceptions and experiences of crime in public urban green spaces in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa

SEVEN TOWNS IN THE EASTERN CAPE (N:400)
 1. GCUWA (BUTTERWORTH)
 2. GRAAFF-REINET
 3. KOMANI (QUEENSTOWN)
 4. MAKHANDA (GRAHAMSTOWN)
 5. MALETSWAI (ALIWAL NORTH)
 6. KARIEGA (UITENHAGE)
 7. PORT ALFRED

Demographics	Additional info
Age	Age range – 19 – 77
Language	81% isiXhosa
Education	Secondary = 4% Matric = 52% Tertiary = 44%
Gender	Females = 58%

HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

Use of urban green spaces

Perceptions of crime in urban green spaces

Experiences of crime in urban green spaces

Demographics

Descriptive stats
 Thematic analysis
 Multivariate analysis

USE OF URBAN GREEN SPACES

Over 70% of the participants used URBAN GREEN SPACES

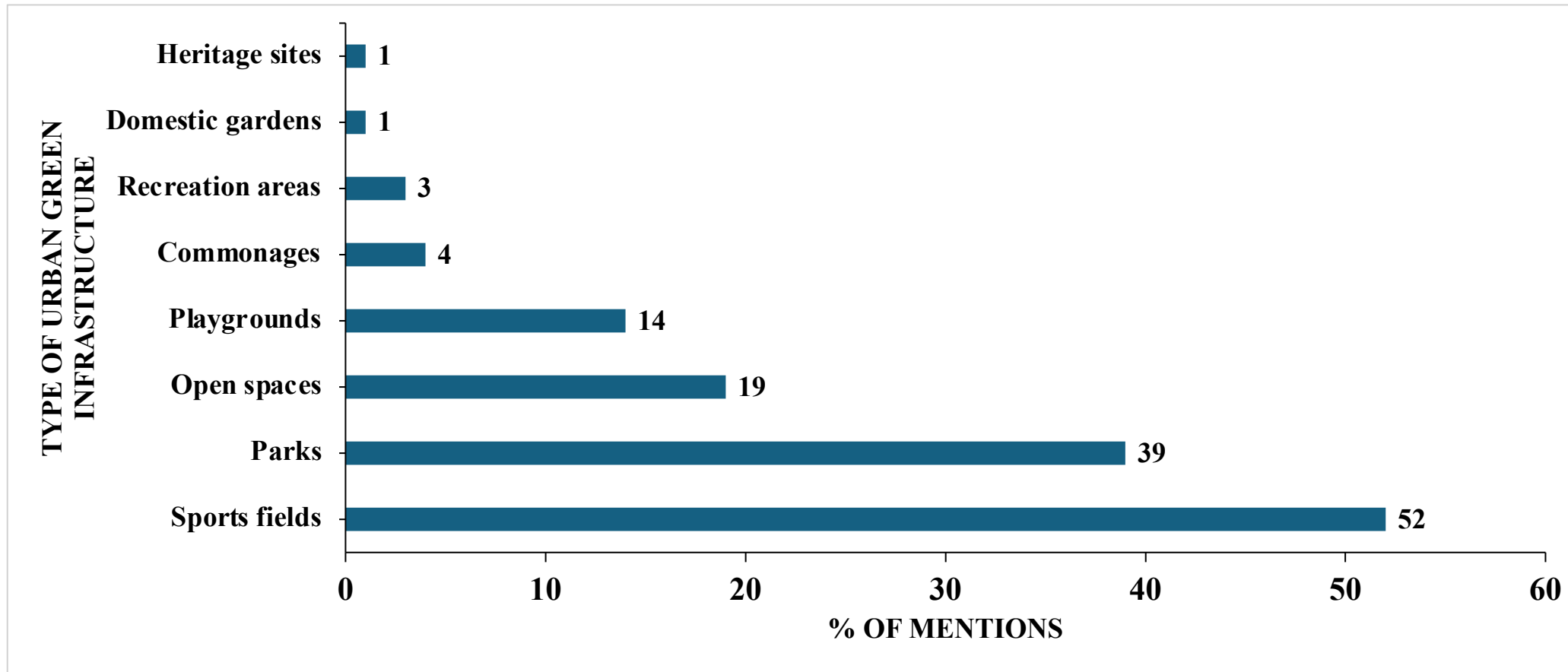


Figure 1: Type of urban green space used by respondents

REASONS FOR VISITING URBAN GREEN SPACES

Table 1: Reasons for visiting and activities engaged in public urban green spaces

Type of urban green space	Category	Reasons for visiting	Frequency	Percentage
Sports fields & open spaces	<i>Community Engagement</i>	Community events, meetings	119	42
Sports fields & parks	<i>Physical Activity</i>	Exercise	60	21
Parks	<i>Leisure & Recreation</i>	Recreation, watching sports	30	11
Open spaces	<i>Aesthetic & Nature</i>	Aesthetics	22	8
Parks & open spaces	<i>Family & Social Time</i>	Spending time family/friends	17	7
Parks & open spaces	<i>Rest & Breaks</i>	Just taking a break, relax	18	6
Open spaces & commonages	<i>Utility & Maintenance</i>	Collecting firewood, livestock herding	12	4
Commonages & open spaces	<i>Cultural Activities</i>	Cultural, traditional and spiritual purposes	8	3

FREQUENCY OF USE AND TIME OF DAY

-Participants also indicated that time of day was of importance when using UGI.

-A higher percentage of females preferred using UGI during the day (52%), while males used them at any time.

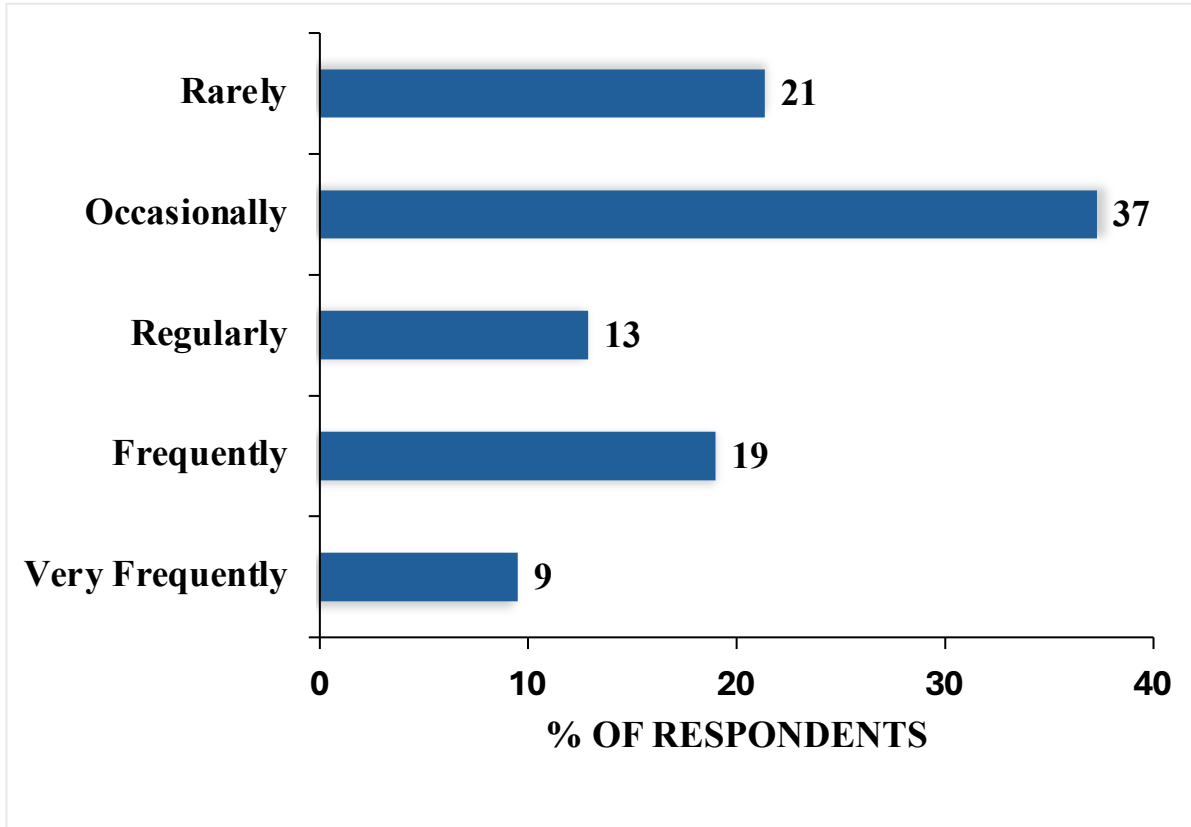


Figure 2: Frequency of urban green space use

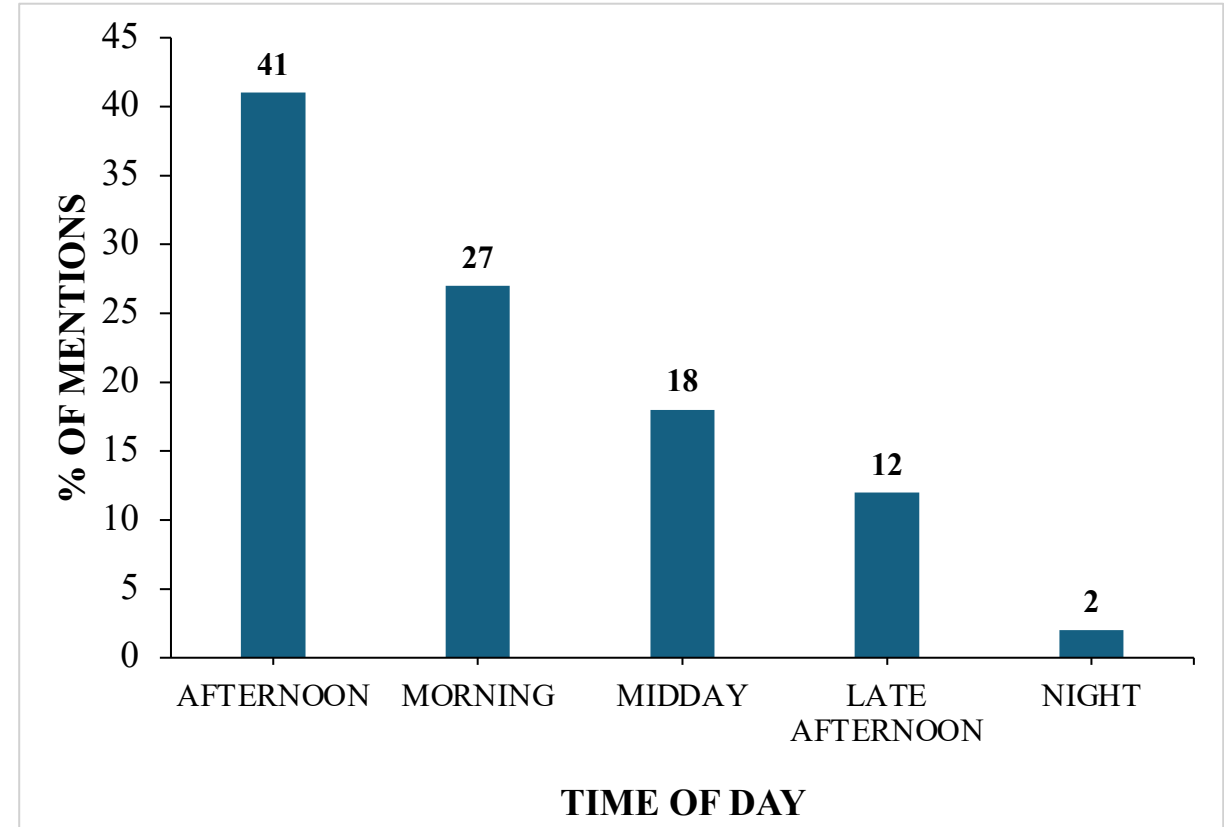
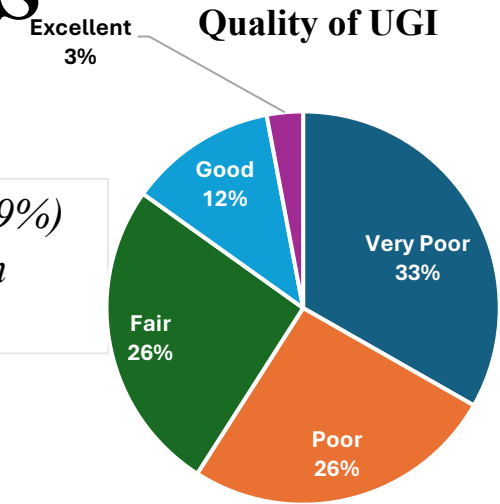


Figure 3: Time of day when using urban green spaces

DETERRENENTS FROM URBAN GREEN SPACES



Over half of the respondents (59%) rated the quality of urban green spaces to be of poor quality.

Table 2: Factors contributing to deterrence from urban green spaces

Deterrents from UGS	Additional Information	Frequency	Percentage
Poor maintenance	<i>Includes poor upkeep of vegetation, facilities and infrastructure.</i>	311	40
Safety concerns	<i>General safety, safety at night, loiters and gangs, and safety especially for women.</i>	138	18
Disorderly behaviour	<i>Mentioned in the context of safety, related to gang activity.</i>	93	12
Lack of facilities	<i>Lack of amenities, insufficient facilities for activities, and poor functionality.</i>	82	11
Vandalism	<i>Destruction or defacement of property.</i>	70	9
Personal reasons	<i>Financial constraints personal experiences that impact willingness to visit.</i>	59	8
Lack of comfort	<i>Concerns about the lack of comfort in PUGS - surroundings.</i>	26	3



PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND CRIME IN URBAN GREEN SPACES

The variety in the levels of SAFETY and CRIME in UGI were related to the time of day.

The overall ratings suggest that property and violent crimes may be of greater concern compared to sexual crimes.

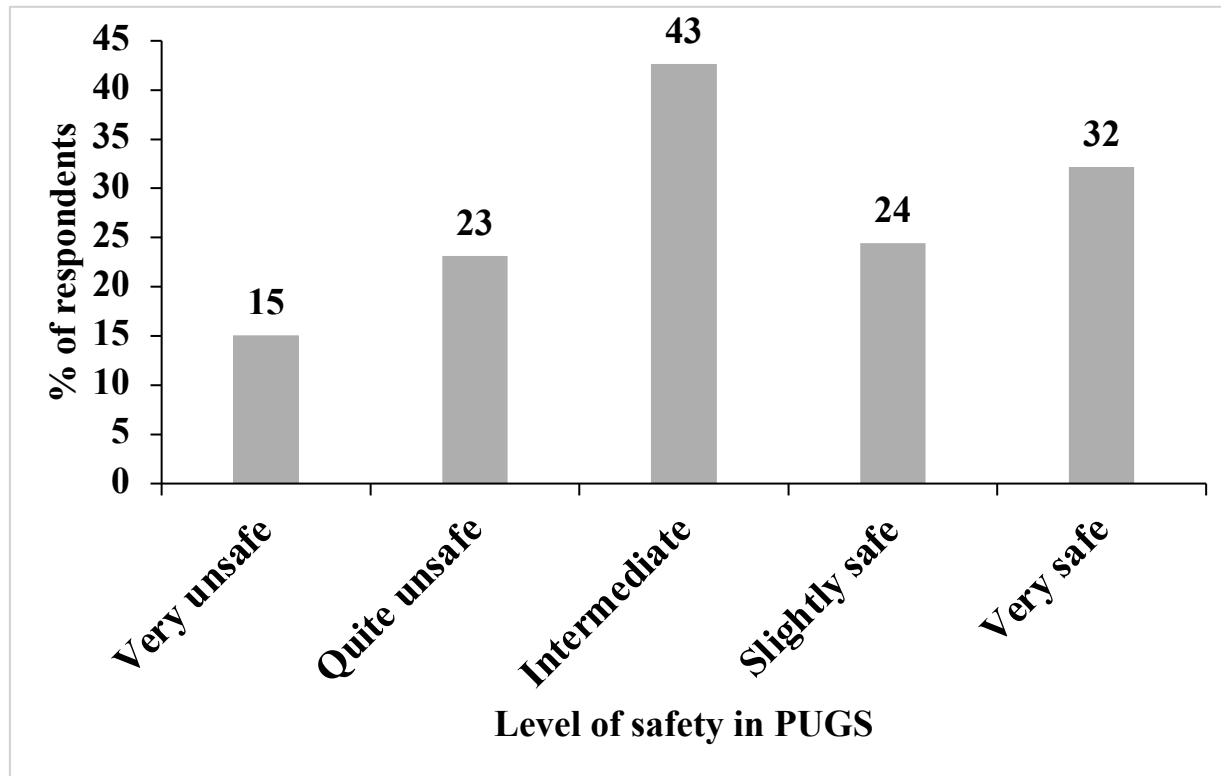


Figure 4: Perceived level of safety in urban green spaces

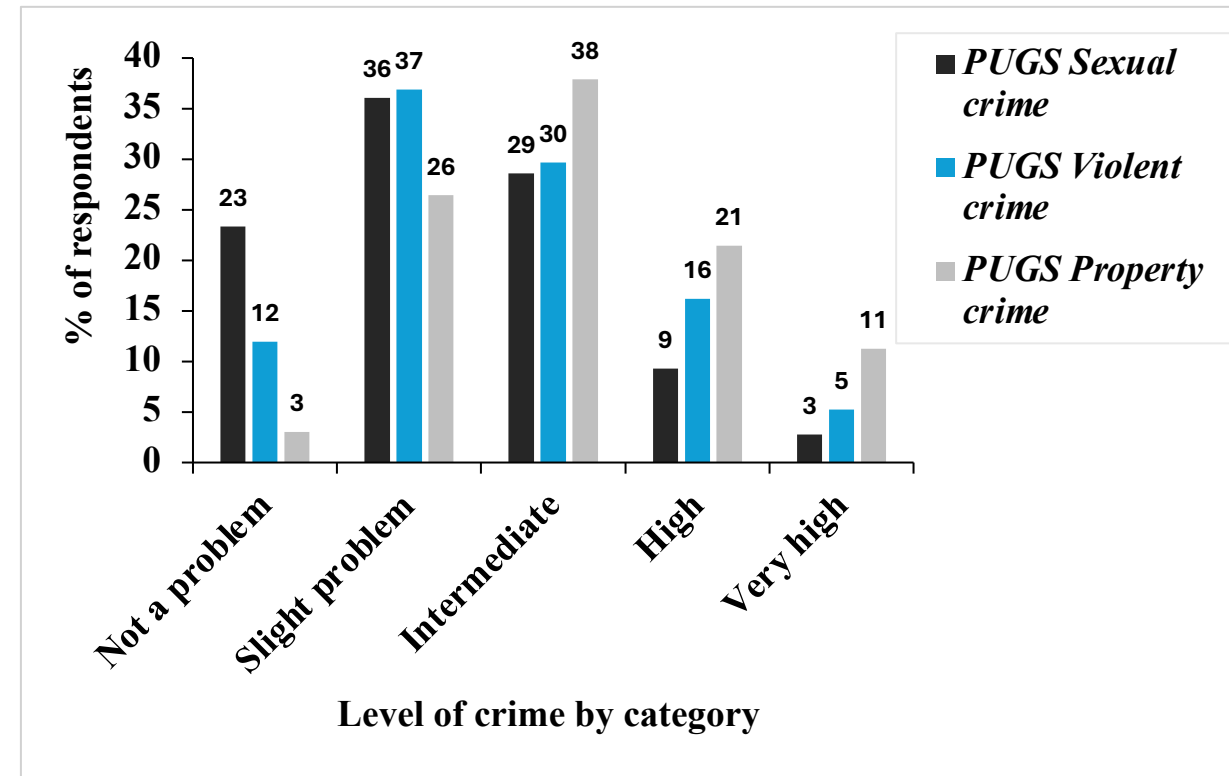


Figure 5: Perceived level of crime in urban green spaces

EXPERIENCES OF CRIME IN PUBLIC URBAN GREEN SPACES

47% of participants indicated that they have experienced crime before within UGI or in proximity to UGI.

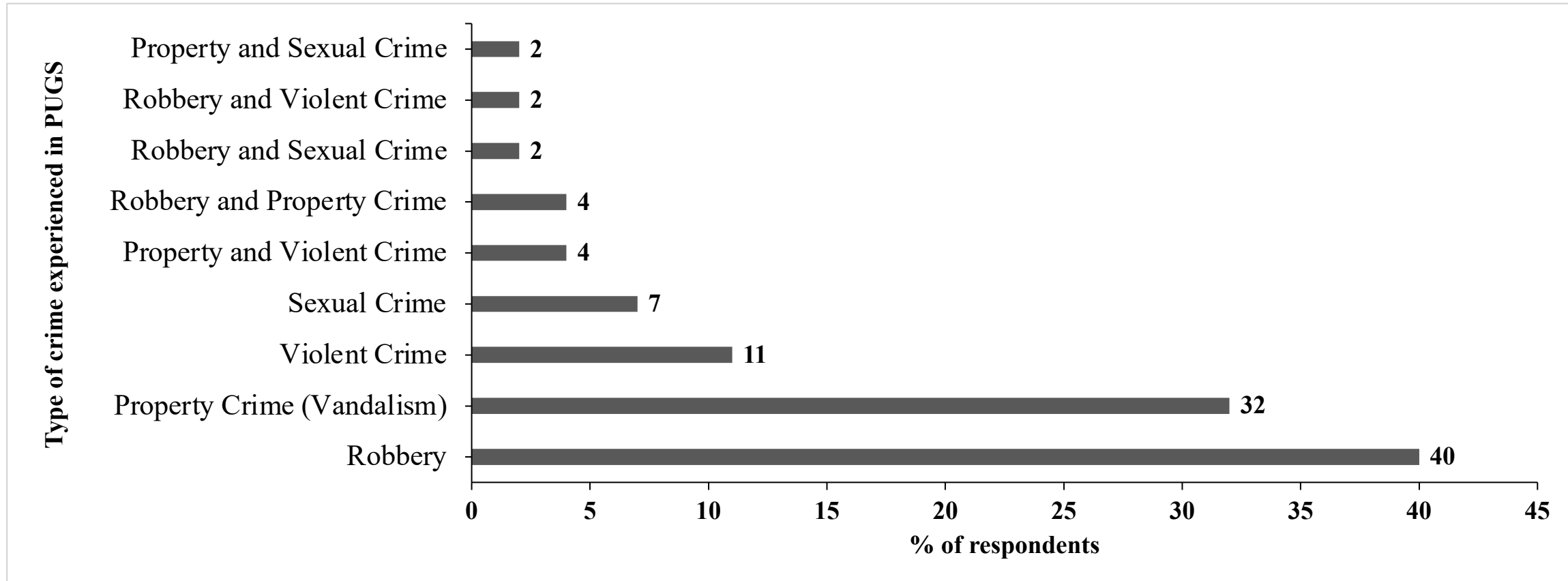


Figure 6: Crime experienced in urban green spaces

CONCLUSION

Despite perceiving green spaces as being of poor quality, many individuals continue to utilise these spaces.

The lack of proper management in PUGS poses a challenge - improving access and promoting well-being and even mitigating crime.

Without intervention, these spaces may fail to reach their full potential as functional, safe and inclusive urban assets.

We hope our results will be able to inform policies and intervention strategies on how urban dwellers perceive urban green spaces

Authorities should implement targeted awareness campaigns to ensure these spaces effectively contribute to public well-being and urban safety.



Thank You.



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