



## PROPOSAL FOR QUALITY PARAMETERS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF SQUARES AFFECTED AND CHANGED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### COVID-19 PANDEMİSİNDEN ETKİLENEN VE DEĞİŞEN MEYDANLARIN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ İÇİN KALİTE PARAMETRELERİ ÖNERİSİ

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#### Abstract

Although studies on the COVID-19 pandemic and open public spaces are ongoing, few studies specifically address the impact of the pandemic on public spaces and the changes that have been made. From this point of view, the study aims to develop quality parameters for squares, one of the public open spaces most affected by the pandemic. In the study, quality parameters for squares were developed in three stages: 1st stage: research of the studies before and during COVID-19 and identification of the modified and added parameters; 2nd stage: development of the square-oriented public space quality parameters based on the identified parameters; 3rd stage: analysis of the square-oriented public space quality parameters on the selected squares. As a result of analysing the 'square-oriented public space quality parameters' developed for the selected squares, it was found that the green space studies emphasised in the literature review remained in the background. In contrast, these studies came to the fore in the analyses conducted on the selected squares. The study of public space quality parameters oriented towards square design, which was developed by adding new parameters that consider the current pandemic context, will fill this field's gap. The square-oriented public space quality parameters developed in this study can be used in the evaluation of existing squares as well as in the design of new squares.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, European Historic City Squares, Public Space, Square- Oriented Public Space Quality Parameters

#### Öz

COVID-19 pandemisi ve açık kamusal mekanlar üzerine çalışmalar hala devam etmesine rağmen, pandeminin kamusal mekanlar üzerindeki etkisi ve kamusal mekanlarda ne tür değişikliklerin yapıldığı sorunları üzerinden çalışmalar az sayıdadır. Buradan hareketle çalışmanın amacı, pandemiden en çok etkilenen kamusal açık mekanlardan biri olan meydanlar için kalite parametreleri geliştirmektir. Çalışmada meydan odaklı kalite parametreleri üç aşamada geliştirilmiştir: 1. aşama COVID-19 öncesi ve sürecindeki çalışmaların araştırılması ve değişen ve eklenen parametrelerin tespiti, 2. Aşama tespit edilen parametreler üzerinden meydan odaklı kamusal mekân kalite parametrelerinin geliştirilmesi, 3. Aşama meydan odaklı kamusal mekân kalite parametrelerinin seçilen meydanlar üzerinde analizi. Çalışmanın sonucunda COVID-19 sürecindeki çalışmalarda işlevsel ve çevresel kalite parametrelerinin ağırlıklı olarak ele alındığı, estetik kalite parametrelerine ise eklemeler yapılmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Seçilen meydanlar için geliştirilen 'meydan odaklı kamusal alan kalite parametrelerinin incelenmesi sonucunda, parametrelerin geliştirilmesi sırasında yapılan literatür taramasında vurgulanan yeşil alan çalışmalarının, seçilen meydanlar üzerinde yapılan analizlerde geri planda kaldığı tespit edilmiştir. Pandemi durumlarını dikkate alan ve mevcut durumu içeren yeni parametreler eklenerek geliştirilen meydan odaklı kamusal alan kalite parametreleri çalışmasının bu alandaki boşluğu dolduracağı düşünülmektedir. Çalışmada geliştirilen meydan odaklı kamusal mekan kalite parametreleri hem mevcut meydanların değerlendirilmesinde hem de yeni yapılacak meydanların tasarlanması aşamasında kullanılabilecektir

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Avrupa Tarihi Kent Meydanları, COVID-19, Kamusal Mekan, Meydan Odaklı Kamusal Mekan Kalite Parametreleri



## INTRODUCTION

Unlike in past periods<sup>1</sup>, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected many areas. However, public spaces, which are places of collective experience that facilitate social interactions, allow many activities, and are accessible, visible, and audible to everyone, and necessary for the healthy development of each individual in the city, have been affected most intensely (Carr et al., 1992; Erdönmez & Akı, 2005; Gökgür, 2017; Gürallar, 2009; Hansen, 2004; Oldenburg, 1999; Sennett, 2010; Sullivan, 1953; Tonnelat, 2010; Weber, 2010). According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat, 2015), public spaces consist of three physical categories: streets, which include bicycle paths, arcades and galleries, pavements, squares and spaces, broad avenues and boulevards; public open spaces, consisting of the river and sea shores, public beaches, children's playgrounds, parks, and gardens; public facilities, consisting of public libraries, community centers, markets, and public sports facilities that are publicly owned and accessible to users without charge. Open public spaces within the scope of the study can be categorized under different categories. William and Green (2001), analyzed open public spaces under two headings: green spaces within the city (natural and semi-natural green areas, green corridors, sports facilities, parks and gardens, children's playgrounds) and open spaces with hard surfaces (squares, market areas, pedestrian streets, promenades). Craig and Brett (2001), classified these spaces by scaling them: local open spaces where the local community can quickly enter, neighborhood open spaces, regional open spaces large or unique spaces that attract a wider population, private or institutional open spaces, national parks, and wildlife areas. As can be understood from the definitions, although studies on these spaces, which are used by many people in their daily lives and can be categorized under many different headings, are ongoing, there are few studies in the literature that investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public spaces, and what kind of changes have been made in these spaces.

This study target examines the existing literature on public spaces before and during the pandemic in detail, develop square-oriented public space quality parameters based on the findings, and address the lack of research in this area by creating new parameters that consider pandemic situations.

From this point of view, the study aims to develop quality parameters for squares, one of the public open spaces most affected by the pandemic. In the process, the following questions were asked in relation to squares, and attempts were made to suggest solutions:

- What kind of public space quality parameters have been developed in studies before and during COVID-19? Which parameters stand out?
- In the light of the data obtained, which quality parameters can be recommended for squares? What are the changes observed in the squares where the proposed parameters are used?

In selecting squares to test the developed 'square-oriented public space quality parameters,' the criteria considered included cities most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, active use of the square during the pandemic, and the continuation of public space activities. This study was conducted between 2020 and 2023, a period during which fieldwork was significantly limited due to pandemic-related restrictions. Consequently, the selection of case study areas was guided by criteria such as ease of access to online data, the availability of prior research, and the applicability of the developed parameters. Additionally, to ensure geographic and socio-cultural diversity, squares from different cities and contexts were included. Accordingly, ten urban squares were identified to form the basis for analysis and comparison within the scope of this study. Plaza Mayor, Madrid, Spain, 2. Place De La Bastille, Paris, France, 3. Nottingham Old Market Square, Nottingham, United Kingdom, 4. Marienplatz Square, Munich, Germany, 5. Alexanderplatz Square, Berlin, Germany, 6. Trafalgar Square, London, United Kingdom, 7. Radhuspladsen Square, Copenhagen, Denmark, 8. Rynek Główny Square, Krakow, Poland, 9. George Square, Glasgow, United Kingdom, 10. Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, Albania (Figure 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Plague: 1346-1353, Cholera: 1817-1923, Tuberculosis: 18th and 19th century, HIV-AIDS: 1976- etc.



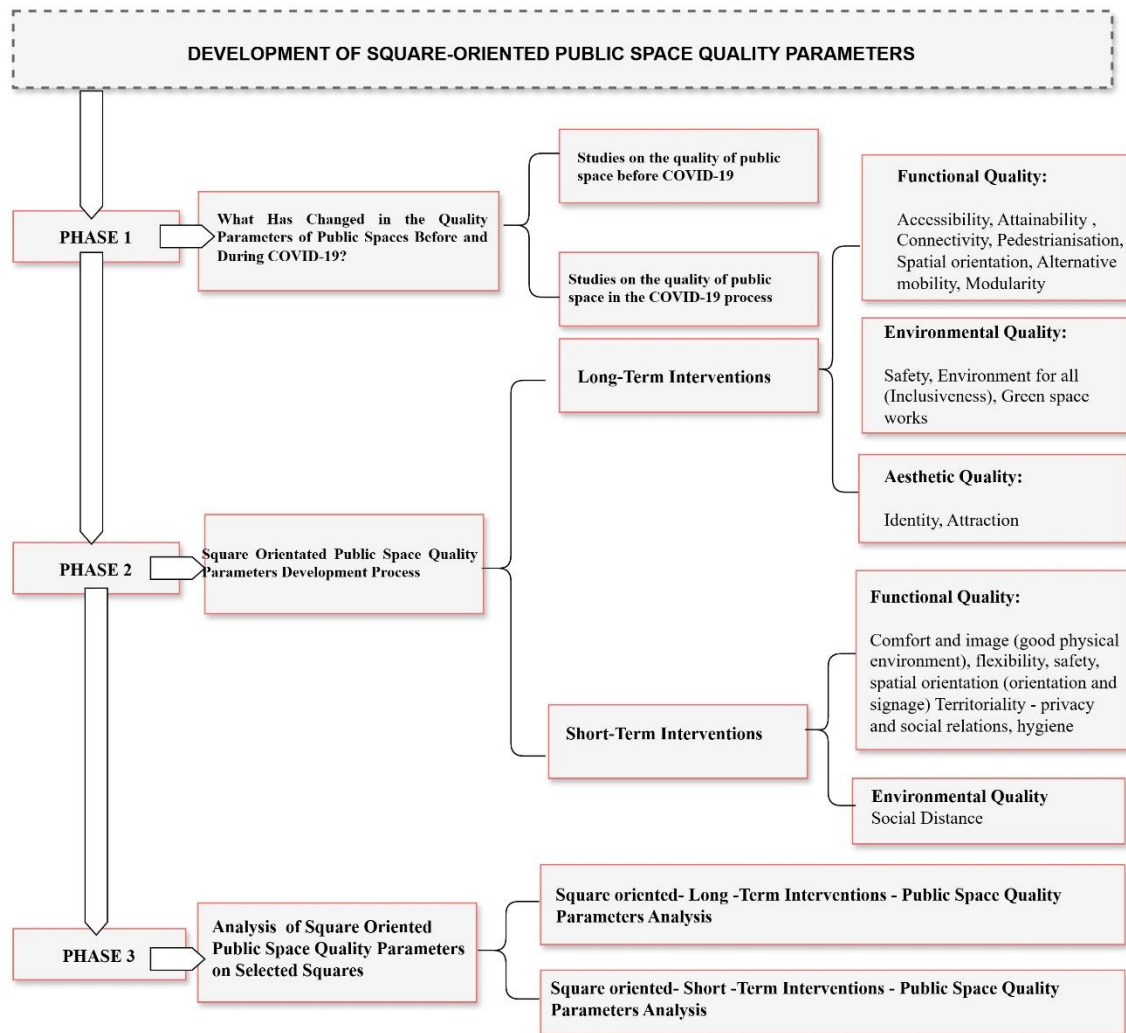
**Figure 1.** City squares where square-oriented public space quality parameters were tested<sup>2</sup>.

## **METHODOLOGY: DEVELOPMENT OF SQUARE-ORIENTED PUBLIC SPACE QUALITY PARAMETERS**

The square-oriented quality spatial quality parameters were developed in three stages (Figure 2):

- First Stage: Investigation of the studies before and during COVID-19 and identification of the changed and added parameters.
- Second Stage: The development of square-oriented public space quality parameters based on the parameters identified in the first stage.
- Third Stage: Analysing the square-oriented public space quality parameters on selected squares.

<sup>2</sup> Image created using snazzy map and edited by the authors



**Figure 2.** Development and evaluation of square-oriented public space quality parameters- method phases.

### Phase 1: What Has Changed in the Quality Parameters of Public Spaces Before and During COVID-19?

According to the report Urban Design in Planning: Towards Better Planning, prepared by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in the UK (CABE & DETR, 2000), the quality of public spaces is defined as creating public spaces that are attractive, safe, organized, and work effectively for everyone in the community, which is considered essential for urban spaces. As stated by Andrews (2001) the quality of public space is a concept that includes many sub-headings related to sustainability that combine the concepts of livability, economic development, environmental protection, and social equality and that vary according to Maslow's (1970) psychological logic and Inglehart's (1977) post-materialism thesis. According to this discourse, the quality of urban space can be about aesthetics, economics, social aspects, political, environmental, human health, public safety, and other related issues. The fields of study can cover regions, neighborhoods, municipalities, market areas, states, borders, and countries. Therefore, during the literature review, while creating square-oriented public space qualities,

all pre<sup>3</sup> and post-COVID-19<sup>4</sup> studies under the titles of livability in urban space, urban space quality, urban design, urban space design and planning, urban neighborhood quality, residential spaces, quality of physical environment, public space network design, quality of space were examined; the public space quality concepts obtained as a result of the examination were classified under the titles of functional, environmental, and aesthetic quality. Examining the sources in the literature analysis reveals that, during the pandemic, individuals preferred public spaces such as open green areas, squares, and waterfronts, where they could maintain social distance (Gehl Firm, 2020b; Legeby et al., 2022; Sepe, 2021). Some studies include pedestrianisation policies, such as improving access to public spaces, widening streets and squares to facilitate social distancing (HM Government, 2020; Cuba, 2021; El Khateeb & Shawket, 2022). Other studies report on 'temporary and permanent public space interventions during the pandemic' by organizations working to improve public spaces (UN-Habitat, 2020; Knight Foundation, 2021; Sepe, 2021) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Classification of studies on interventions in public space during COVID-19.

Preferred public spaces	Interventions in public space	Short-, medium- and long-term studies to improve the quality of public space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open green areas</li> <li>• Squares</li> <li>• Pedestrianized streets</li> <li>• Waterfronts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street pedestrianization</li> <li>• Construction of bicycle lanes</li> <li>• Organization of idle spaces and use of public space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term interventions: Transformation of market areas, and parking lots, often localized interventions</li> <li>• Urban scale intervention in medium and long-term planning, organization of public space networks</li> </ul>

The functional and aesthetic quality parameter headings are based on the studies conducted by Van der Voort and Van Wegen (2005) and İnceoğlu (2007), while the environmental quality parameter headings are based on the studies conducted by Lynch (1981) and Bonaiuto et al. (2003). These headings were chosen because they are more comprehensive than those in other studies. When compared under these headings, it was found that most of the additions were made to the functional and environmental quality parameters during the COVID-19 studies, while no additions were made to the aesthetic quality parameters (Table 2, Table 3, Table 4).

The most commonly used functional, environmental, and aesthetic quality parameters obtained from the literature review before and during COVID-19 are summarized as follows:

- **Functional Quality Parameters:** It has been determined that the most intensively used functional quality parameters in the studies on public space before COVID-19 are functional diversity (6), accessibility (6), function (5), flexibility (5), ease of mobility (5), cleaning (4), sustainability (4). In the COVID-19 process, these parameters were accessibility (9), pedestrianization,

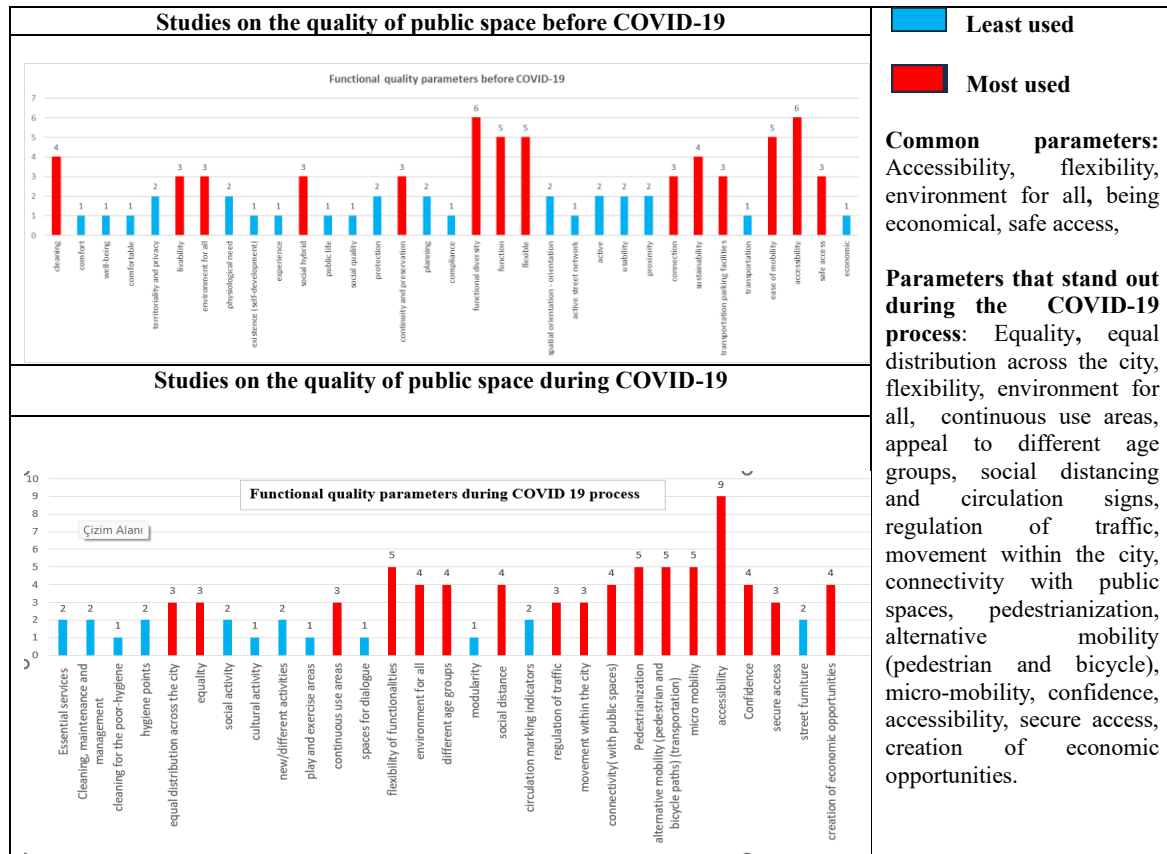
<sup>3</sup> (Appleton, 1988), (Nasar, 1989), (Rapoport, 1990), (Lang, 1994), (UN-Habitat, 2015), (CABE & DETR, 2000), (English Partnerships the National Regeneration Agency & The Housing Cooperation, 2007), (Communities and Local Government, 2007), (The Bartlett School of Planning UCL & Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), (Bonaiuto et al., 2003), (Greene, 1992), (Lennard, 1997 as cited in Kahraman, 2014; (Van der Voort & Van Wegen, 2005), (İnceoğlu, 2007), (The Ministry of Local Government and Modernization, 2019), (PPS, 2009), (Lynch, 1981), (Appleyard & Jacobs, 1982), (Gehl, 2011), (Gehl, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> (Gehl Firm, 2020a), (Gehl Firm, 2020b), (HM Government, 2020), (UN-Habitat, 2020), (Xie et al., 2020), (Harrouk, 2020), (Sepe, 2021), (Mouratidis, 2021b), (Knight Foundation, 2021), (Cuba, 2021), (Florian, 2022), (El Khateeb & Shawket, 2022), (Legeby et al., 2022), (Yüksel, 2022), (Gongadze & Maassen, 2023).

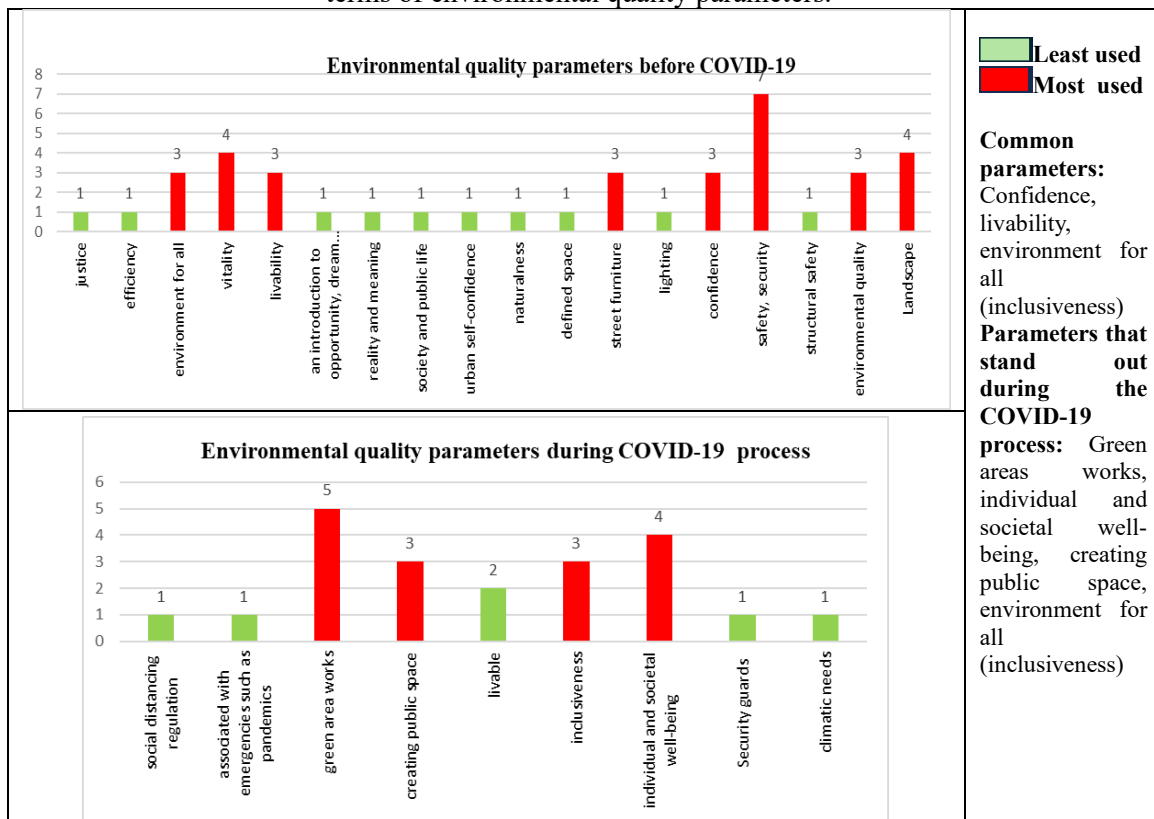


alternative mobility, micro-mobility, and flexibility of functionalities (5), environment for all, different age groups, connectivity, creation of economic opportunities, social distance, and confidence (4). Here, the most important quality criteria sought in public spaces focus on accessibility, pedestrianization, mobility, (micro and alternative) and flexible use of space. (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Comparison of studies on public space quality parameters before and during COVID-19 in terms of functional quality parameters.

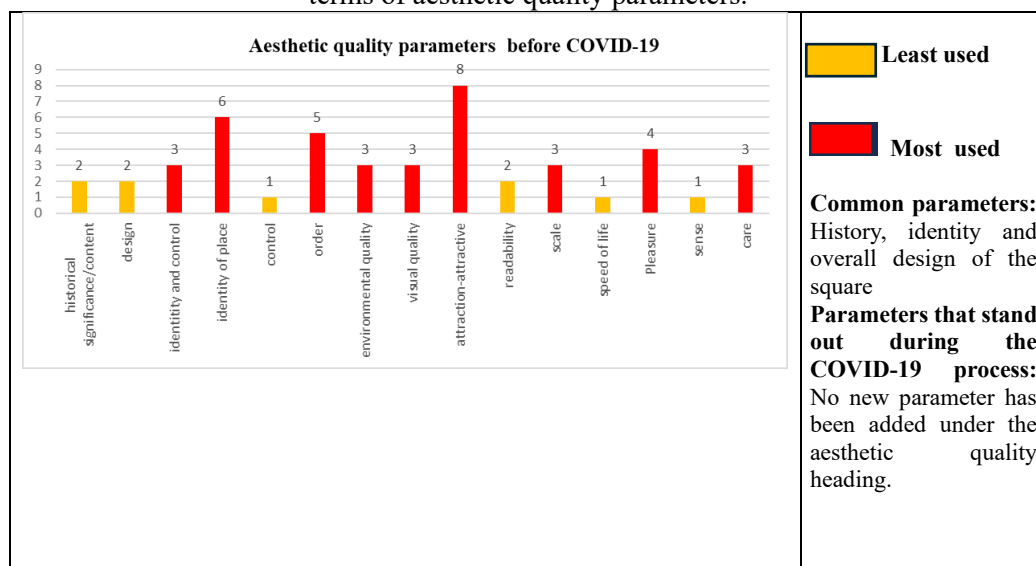


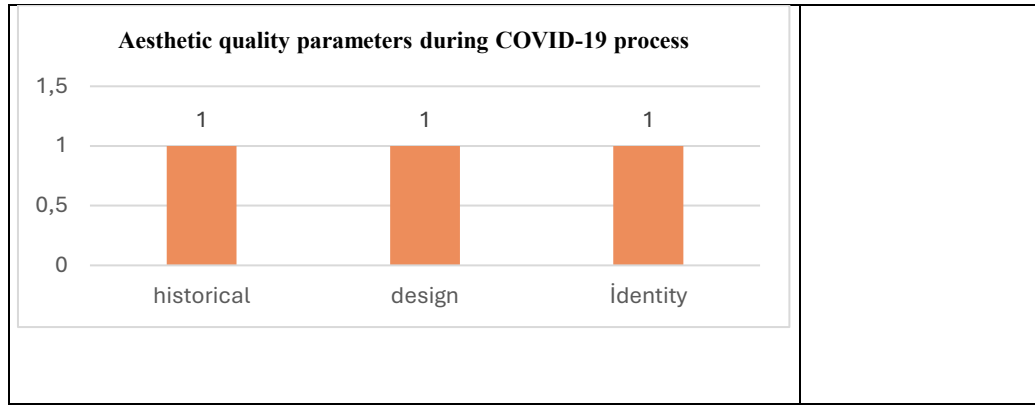
- **Environmental Quality Parameters:** It was determined that the most intensively used environmental quality parameters in studies on public space before COVID-19 were safety and security (7), vitality (4), and landscape (4). In the COVID-19 process, on the other hand, it was determined that parameters related to health and safety such as green area studies (5) and individual and social wellbeing (4) came to the fore (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Comparison of studies on public space quality parameters before and during COVID-19 in terms of environmental quality parameters.

- **Aesthetic Quality Parameters:** It was determined that the most intensively used aesthetic quality parameters in the studies on public space before COVID-19 were the attractiveness of the place (8), the identity of the place (6), order (5), and pleasure (4). During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was understood from the literature research that the same criteria remained unchanged, and no additions were made to these parameters (Table 4).

When all quality parameters were compared, it was found that the greatest number of quality parameters were added under the heading of 'functional quality' during the process of the pandemic.

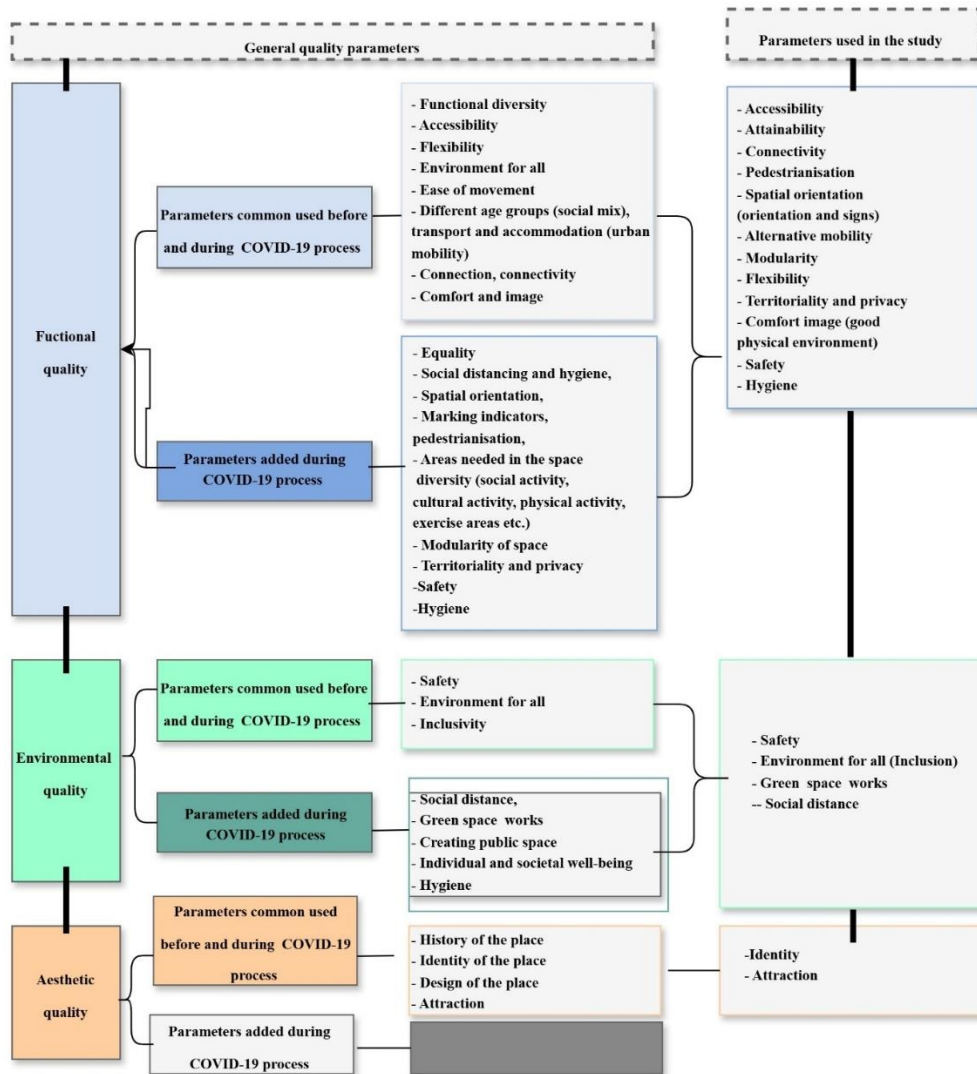
**Table 4.** Comparison of studies on public space quality parameters before and during COVID-19 in terms of aesthetic quality parameters.



## Phase Two: Square-Orientated Public Space Quality Parameters Development Process

In the studies examined, square-oriented public space quality parameters were found to include long, medium, and short-term recommendations, alongside functional, environmental, and aesthetic quality aspects. For this reason, square-oriented public space quality parameters, along with the short and long-term intervention headings suggested by the United Nations Human Settlements (UN-Habitat, 2020) program, were also adopted. Long-term interventions cover the urban scale and its relationship with public spaces, while short-term interventions address the scale of the square's location. Firstly, the quality parameters commonly used in studies on public space quality before and during COVID-19 that can be utilized as parameters for evaluating the spatial quality of squares were identified. These were then grouped under the headings of functional, environmental, and aesthetic quality (Figure 3). To determine the physical, environmental, and aesthetic quality parameters to be gathered under the above-mentioned headings, the parameters commonly used in studies conducted before COVID-19 were considered. Additionally, the most frequently used parameters added in studies conducted during the COVID-19 process were also taken into account (Table 2, Table 3, Table 4). In the second stage, the parameters that were repeated before and during the COVID-19 process, and had similar meanings were eliminated, and as a result, physical, environmental, and aesthetic parameters were determined (Table 5, Table 6, Figure 4, Figure 5).





**Figure 3.** The formation process of the square-oriented public space quality parameters used in the study.

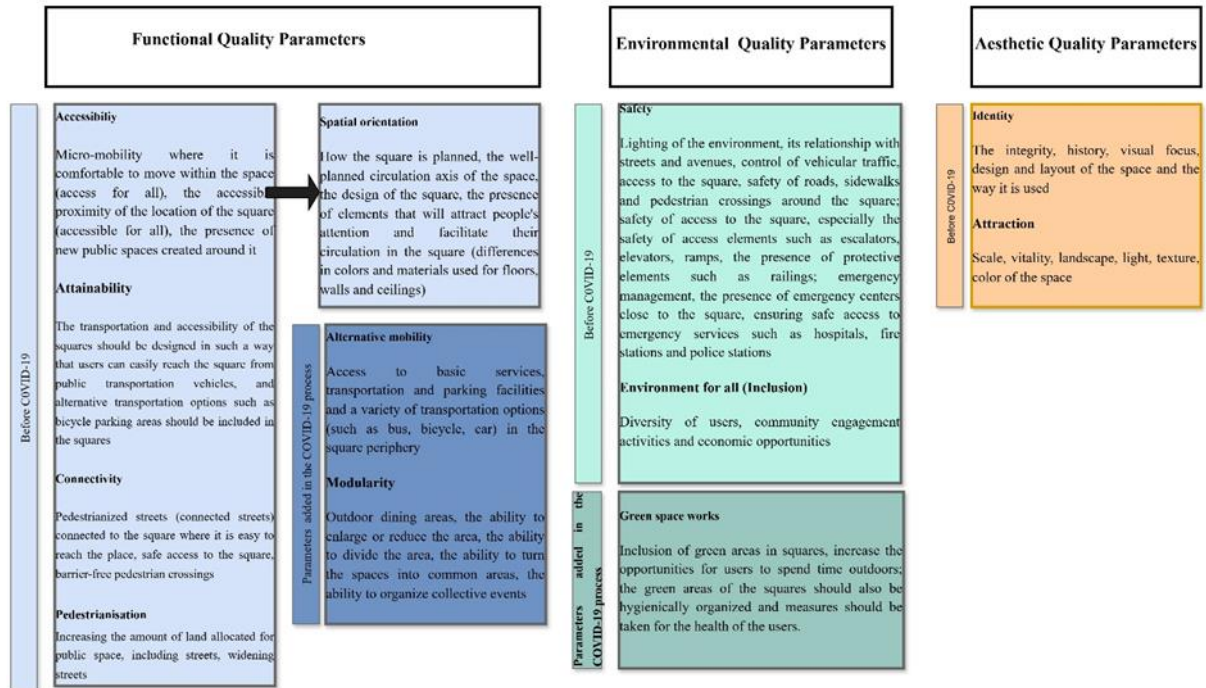
After determining the parameters to be used in the evaluation of the squares, it was decided which of these parameters would be classified as long-term and short-term. The parameters identified in Figure 3, which cover aspects of the urban scale and the relationships between public spaces, are grouped under the heading 'long-term interventions,' while those covering the area in which the square is located are categorized as 'short-term interventions'. 'During the comparison of studies on 'public space quality parameters' before and during COVID-19—focusing on 'functional, environmental, and aesthetic quality parameters' (Table 2, Table 3, Table 4)—it was determined that no parameter for aesthetic quality was added; therefore, the parameter was not used in short-term interventions. The literature sources in Table 5 and Table 6 were used to develop the long- and short-term square-oriented spatial quality parameters for the study. The proposed parameters are shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5.

**Table 5.** Square-oriented public space quality parameters - references used in the creation of long-term quality parameters.

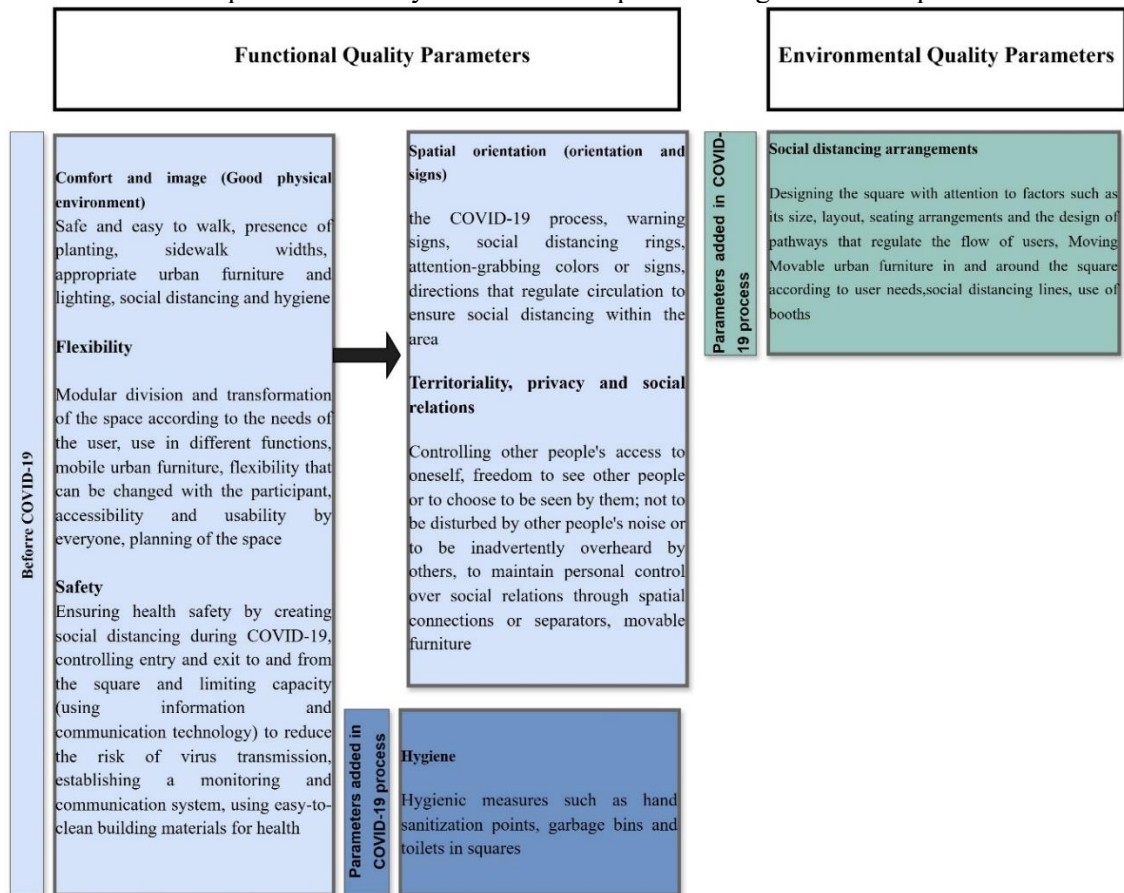
	Parameters	References
Functional Quality	Accessibility	(English Partnerships the National Regeneration Agen & The Housing Cooperation, 2007), (Communities and Local Government, 2007), (The Bartlett School of Planning UCL & Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), (Van der Voort & Van Wegen, 2005), (İnceoğlu, 2007), (PPS, 2009), (HM Government, 2020), (UN-Habitat, 2020), (Sepe, 2021), (Knight Foundation, 2021), (Mouratidis, 2021b) (Florian, 2022), (Cuba, 2021), (Legeby et al., 2022) (Gongadze & Maassen, 2023)
	Attainability	(English Partnerships the National Regeneration Agen & The Housing Cooperation, 2007), (The Bartlett School of Planning UCL & Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), (Van der Voort & Van Wegen, 2005), (İnceoğlu, 2007)
	Connectivity	(English Partnerships the National Regeneration Agen & The Housing Cooperation, 2007), (The Ministry of Local Government and Modernization, 2019), (PPS, 2009), (Yüksel, 2022), (HM Government, 2020), (Florian, 2022), (El Khateeb & Shawket , 2022)
	Pedestrianization	(HM Government, 2020), (UN-Habitat, 2020), (Florian, 2022), (El Khateeb & Shawket , 2022), (Yüksel, 2022)
	Spatial Orientation	(CABE & DETR, 2000), (Van der Voort & Van Wegen, 2005), (HM Government, 2020), (Yüksel, 2022), (Rapoport, 1990), (Bonaiuto et al., 2003)
	Alternative Mobility	(UN-Habitat, 2020), (Florian, 2022), (Cuba, 2021), (Yüksel, 2022), (Gongadze & Maassen, 2023)
	Modularity	(Yüksel, 2022)
Environmental Quality	Safety	(CABE & DETR, 2000), (The Bartlett School of Planning UCL & Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), (Lynch, 1981), (UN-Habitat, 2020), (Yüksel, 2022), (Gongadze & Maassen, 2023)
	Environment for all (Inclusion)	(Lennard et al., 1997 as cited Kahraman, 2014), (Appleyard & Jacobs, 1982), (UN-Habitat, 2020), (El Khateeb & Shawket , 2022), (Yüksel, 2022), (Gongadze & Maassen, 2023)
	Green space works	(Mouratidis, 2021b), (Florian, 2022), (El Khateeb & Shawket , 2022), (Legeby et al., 2022), (Gongadze & Maassen, 2023)
Aesthetic Quality	Identity	(English Partnerships the National Regeneration Agen & The Housing Cooperation, 2007), (The Bartlett School of Planning UCL & Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), (Bonaiuto et al., 2003), (Greene, 1992), (İnceoğlu, 2007), (PPS, 2009), (CABE & DETR, 2000), (Lynch, 1981), (Appleyard & Jacobs, 1982), (Sepe, 2021)
	Attraction	(CABE & DETR, 2000), (English Partnerships the National Regeneration Agen & The Housing Cooperation, 2007), (The Bartlett School of Planning UCL & Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), (Communities and Local Government, 2007), (Greene, 1992), (İnceoğlu, 2007), (PPS, 2009)

**Table 6.** Square-oriented public space quality parameters - short-term interventions references used in the creation of quality parameters.

	Parameters	References
Functional Quality	Comfort and image (Good physical environment)	(The Bartlett School of Planning UCL & Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), (İnceoğlu, 2007), (Gehl, 2011), (Florian, 2022), (Gongadze & Maassen, 2023)
	Flexibility	(CABE & DETR, 2000), (English Partnerships the National Regeneration Agen & The Housing Cooperation, 2007), (Communities and Local Government, 2007), (Van der Voort & Van Wegen, 2005), (Gehl, 2011)
	Safety	(Sepe, 2021), (Knight Foundation, 2021), (El Khateeb & Shawket , 2022), (Gongadze & Maassen, 2023)
	Spatial orientation, orientation and signs	(CABE & DETR, 2000), (Van der Voort & Van Wegen, 2005), (HM Government, 2020), (Yüksel, 2022)
	Territoriality, privacy and social relations	(Van der Voort & Van Wegen, 2005), (İnceoğlu, 2007)
	Hygiene	(HM Government, 2020), (UN-Habitat, 2020), (El Khateeb & Shawket , 2022)
Environmental Quality	Social distancing arrangements	(Gehl Firm, 2020a), (Gehl Firm, 2020b), (HM Government, 2020), (El Khateeb & Shawket , 2022), (Yüksel, 2022), (Gongadze & Maassen, 2023)



**Figure 4.** Long-term interventions square-oriented public space quality parameters and definitions developed for the analysis of selected squares during COVID-19 process.



**Figure 5.** Short-term interventions square-oriented public space quality parameters and definitions developed for the analysis of selected squares during COVID-19 process.

### **Phase 3: Analysis and Evaluation of Square-Oriented Public Space Quality Parameters on Selected Squares**

The developed quality parameters for long-term (functional, environmental, and aesthetic) and short-term (functional and environmental) interventions were tested and validated on 10 selected squares (Plaza Mayor, Place de la Bastille, Nottingham Old Market, Marienplatz, Alexandriaplatz, Trafalgar, Radhuspladsen, Rynek Glowny, George Square, Skanderbeg). This method used in the evaluation of squares and described below is based on the Urban Design Analysis Tool evaluation method developed by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) (CABE & DETR, 2001). The test evaluation was carried out by the authors and all the studies on the selected squares obtained from the literature were taken as reference.

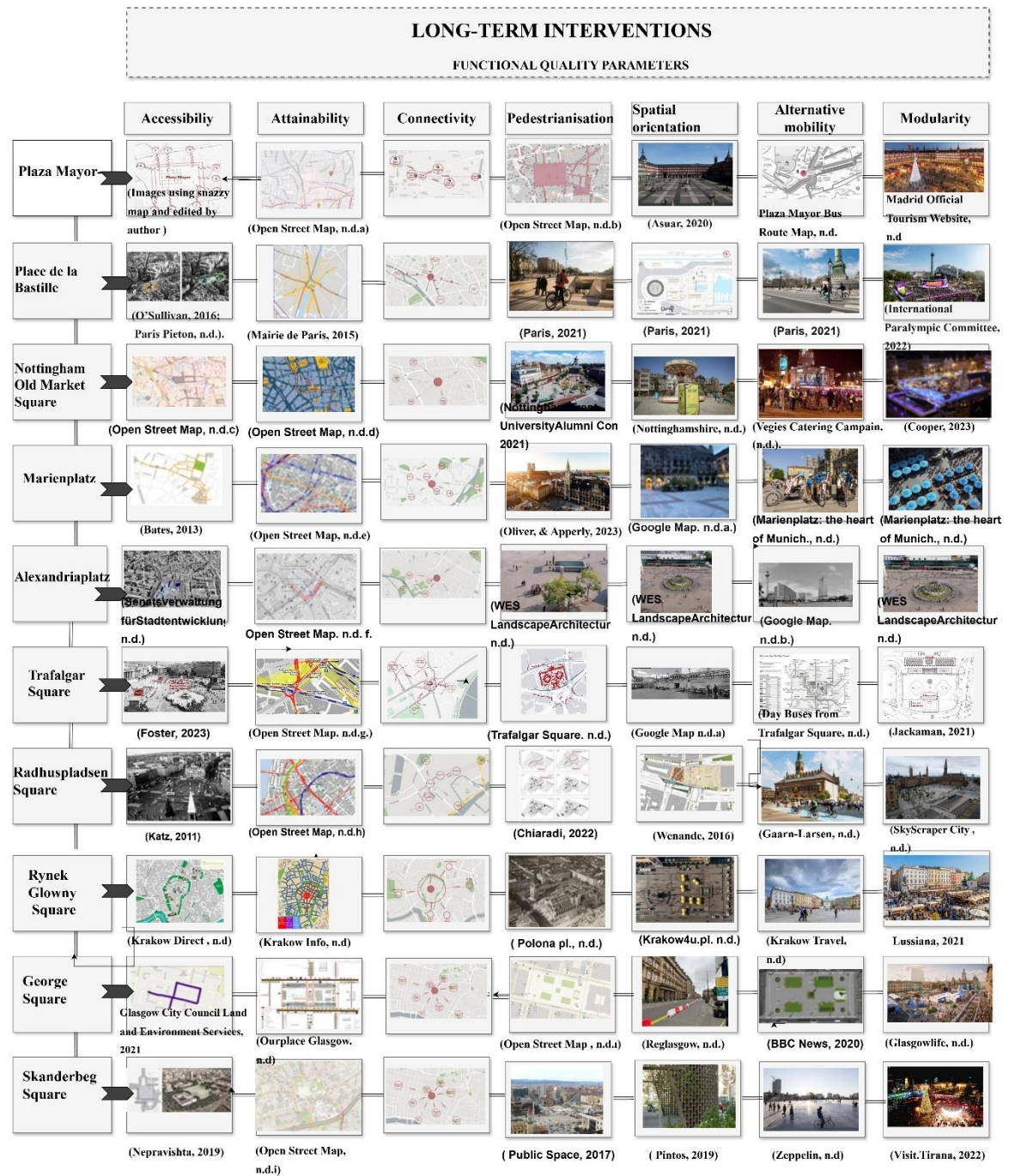
- **Analysis of Square Oriented- Long-Term Interventions- Public Space Quality Parameters**

Firstly, the selected squares were analysed under the functional headings (accessibility, attainability, connectivity, pedestrianisation, spatial orientation, alternative mobility, modularity), environmental (safety, environment for all-inclusiveness, green space works), and aesthetic quality parameters (identity, attraction) (Figure 6, Figure 7)

- **Analysis of Square Oriented- Short-Term Interventions- Public Space Quality Parameters**

The selected squares were analyzed under the heading of short-term interventions under the parameters of functional (comfort and image - good physical environment, flexibility, safety, spatial orientation - orientation and signage, territoriality - privacy and social relations, hygiene) and environmental quality (social distance) (Figure 8).




























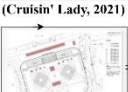





















**Figure 6.** Square-oriented - analysis in terms of long-term interventions- functional quality parameters<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> All connectivity images use the Snazzy Map and have been edited by the author.



**Figure 7.** Square-oriented - analysis in terms of long-term interventions- environmental and aesthetic quality parameter



SHORT-TERM INTERVENTIONS PARAMETERS							
	FUNCTIONAL QUALITY						ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
	Confort and Image (Good physical environment)	Flexibility	Safety	Spatial orientation (Orientation and signs)	Territoriality, privacy and social relations	Hygiene	Spatial distancing arrangements
Plaza Mayor	 (Juan & Minaya, 2018)	 (Butler, 2022)	There is no information on security during short-term Interventions	No information on spatial orientation precautions in short-term interventions was found	 (Asuar, 2020)	No information on hygiene precautions in short-term interventions was found	 ("Ilusión con precauciones", 2020)
Place de la Bastille	 (Paris, 2021)	 (Atelier Cap Paysage Urbanisme, 2017)	There is no information on security during short-term Interventions	No information on spatial orientation precautions in short-term interventions was found	 (Atelier Cap Paysage Urbanisme, 2017)	 (Paris, n.d)	 (Paris, 2021)
Nottingham Old Market Square	 (Gustafson Porter+Bowman, 2007)	 (Dijital Medya, 2022)	 (Nottinghamshire, n.d.)	 (Nottinghamshire, n.d.)	 (Nottingham's Old Market Square, 2020)	The square was cleaned appropriately during the pandemic, and hand sanitiser stations were placed there "Nottingham City Centre 'Pop-Up'", 2020	 (Nottingham's Old Market Square, 2020)
Maricnplatz	 (Google Map, n.d.g.)	 (Google Map, n.d.h)	 (Edmonds, 2021)	No information on spatial orientation precautions in short-term interventions was found	 (Google Map, n.d.i)	No information on hygiene precautions in short-term interventions was found	 (Google Map, n.d.j)
Alexandriaplatz	 (Pietsch, 2022)	 (Cruisin' Lady, 2021)	There is no information on security during short-term Interventions	No information on spatial orientation precautions in short-term interventions was found	The square is deficient in terms of green space and urban furniture. This has the effect of preventing individuals from establishing areas in which they can engage in social relations and privacy.	No information on hygiene precautions in short-term interventions was found	No arrangements were made regarding the use of the square during the pandemic.
Trafalgar Square	 (Based on Plan Jackaman, 2021, edited by the author)	 (Based on Plan Jackaman, 2021, edited by the author)	 (Jackaman, 2021)	 (Jackaman, 2021)	 (Google Earth)	 (Based on Plan Jackaman, 2021, edited by the author)	 (Based on Plan Jackaman, 2021, edited by the author)
Radhuspladsen Square	 (Norgaard, 2018)	 (SkyScraper City , n.d)	There is no information on security during short-term Interventions	No information on spatial orientation precautions in short-term interventions was found	 (Kelding, n.d.)	No information on hygiene precautions in short-term interventions was found	No arrangements were made regarding the use of the square during the pandemic.
Rynek Glowny	 (Krakow Travel, n.d.a.)	 (In Your Pocket Karakow, n.d.)	There is no information on security during short-term Interventions	No information on spatial orientation precautions in short-term interventions was found	 (In Your Pocket Karakow, n.d.)	No information on hygiene precautions in short-term interventions was found	No arrangements were made regarding the use of the square during the pandemic.
George Square	 George Square Tours, n.d	 George Square Tours, n.d	 (Reglasgow, n.d.)	 (reGsgasgow-x, 2021)	 (Glasgow, n.d)	No information on hygiene precautions in short-term interventions was found	 (reGsgasgow-x, 2021)
Skanderbeg Square	 (Pintos, 2019)	 (Skanderbeg Square Tirana, n.d.)	There is no information on security during short-term Interventions	No information on spatial orientation precautions in short-term interventions was found	 (Public Space, 2017)	No information on hygiene precautions in short-term interventions was found	 (Shehu, 2018)

**Figure 8.** Square-oriented - analysis in terms of short-term interventions- functional environmental and environmental parameters.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the literature review conducted with the keywords public space quality parameters, it was found that during the COVID-19 process (Phase 1), parameters were developed to evaluate public open spaces in general (Mouratidis, 2021b; Gehl Firm, 2020a; Gehl Firm, 2020b; HM Government, 2020; UN-Habitat, 2020; Xie et al., 2020; Sepe, 2021) (Knight Foundation, 2021; Harrouk, 2020; Florian, 2022; Gongadze & Maassen, 2023; Cuba, 2021; El Khateeb & Shawket, 2022; Legeby et al., 2022). In this sense, the square-oriented public space quality parameters study, which was developed with the addition of new parameters considering pandemic situations and includes the current situation, will fill the gap in this field.

Based on the questions asked at the beginning of the study, “square-oriented public space quality parameters” for short and long-term interventions were developed in the first and second phases of the study. In addition, in the third phase of the study, the validity of these parameters was tested by analyzing on 10 selected squares.

- What kind of public space quality parameters have been developed in studies before and during COVID-19? Which quality parameters stand out in the COVID-19 process:

As a result of the literature research and analysis of public space quality parameters, it was determined that functional and environmental quality parameters were predominantly addressed in the studies during COVID-19 process, while aesthetic quality parameters were not added. As a result of the literature research and analysis of public space quality parameters, it was determined that functional and environmental quality parameters were predominantly addressed in the studies during COVID-19 process. In the research, it was determined that the parameters related to the “identity, history, and design” of the place under the heading of aesthetic quality were not added due to pandemic priorities. For this reason, the parameters of “identity and attraction” under the heading of aesthetic quality in short-term interventions were not included in the study.

- Functional quality parameters highlighted in the COVID-19 process: Equality, equal distribution across the city, flexibility, environment for all, continuous use areas, appeal to different age groups, social distancing and circulation signs, regulation of traffic, movement within the city, connectivity with public spaces, pedestrianization, alternative mobility (pedestrian and bicycle), micro-mobility, confidence, accessibility, secure access, creation of economic opportunities.

- Environmental parameters that stand out during COVID-19 process: Green areas works, individual and societal well-being, creating public space, environment for all (inclusiveness)

- Aesthetic quality parameters that stand out during COVID-19 process: No new parameters were added under the aesthetic quality heading.

- In light of the data obtained, which quality parameters can be recommended for squares? What are the changes observed in the squares where the proposed parameters are used?

The short and long-term interventions developed, and the changes observed in the selected squares based on the “square-oriented public space quality parameters” are summarized below:

### - Long-Term Interventions

#### A. Functional Quality

1. Accessibility: Open spaces were preferred more during the COVID-19 pandemic. The selected squares are “accessible for everyone with entrances from different regions”. The squares must be “accessible” for different pandemic or disaster situations.

2. Attainability: Nine of the squares (Plaza Mayor, Place De La Bastille, Marienplatz Square, Alexanderplatz Square, Trafalgar Square, Radhuspladsen Square, Rynek Glowny Square, Skanderbeg Square, Skanderbeg Square) were accessible by public transportation (metro, tram) before the COVID-19 pandemic. This ensured the usability of the squares. Squares should be “attainable”.
3. Connectivity: Eight of the squares (Plaza Mayor, Place De La Bastille, Nottingham Old Market Square, Marienplatz Square, Alexanderplatz Square, Trafalgar Square, Radhuspladsen Square, Rynek Glowny Square) were connected to the public spaces around them before the COVID-19 pandemic. Connectivity brings safe accessibility to public space.
4. Pedestrianization: All the selected squares were pedestrianized before COVID-19. This has strengthened the pedestrian connection of the square with the surrounding areas
5. Spatial Orientation: In most of the squares (seven squares: Plaza Mayor, Place De La Bastille, Marienplatz Square, Alexanderplatz Square, Radhuspladsen Square, Rynek Glowny Square, Skanderbeg Square) no spatial orientation was required during pandemic process due to seating arrangements and pedestrianization before the COVID-19 pandemic; in three squares (Nottingham Old Market Square, Trafalgar Square, George Square) spatial orientation during pandemic process was provided with warning signs, security areas, additional seating areas, planting, water barriers. This helped maintain social distancing.
6. Alternative Mobility: All the selected squares can be reached by different means of transportation (bus, tram, bicycle). This situation brings safe accessibility to space.
7. Modularity: The squares are wide open and modular in design. This has helped maintain social distancing during COVID-19 pandemic process (Table 7).

#### B. Environmental Quality

8. Safety: Although there is sufficient lighting in the selected squares, different interventions have been made during COVID-19 pandemic (such as installing barriers, and water barriers, expanding bicycle space boundaries, and reducing vehicle traffic).
9. Environment for all (Inclusion): The pedestrianization of squares before the COVID-19 pandemic made these spaces accessible to everyone and increased the diversity of users. During the COVID-19 pandemic, only one square (Place De La Bastille) has been designed for barrier-free design.
10. Green space works: During COVID-19 pandemic process, landscaping works were carried out in very few squares (five squares: Place De La Bastille, Nottingham Old Market Square, Marienplatz Square, Radhuspladsen Square, George Square) (Table 8).

#### C. Aesthetic Quality

11. Identity: No additional buildings or monuments were identified in the selected squares in the COVID-19 pandemic process. Only two squares (Place De La Bastille, Skanderbeg Square) have had ground designs that would affect identity during the COVID-19 process.
12. Attraction: Squares are centers of attraction due to their convenient openness, the historical buildings and monuments around them, and their central location. During the COVID-19 pandemic, no additions were made under the attraction heading in the selected squares (Table 8).

### - Short Term Interventions

#### A. Functional Quality

1. Comfort and image (Good physical environment): The selected squares have comfort and image features such as safety, pedestrianization, wide openness, and the presence of food and

beverage venues around them. This parameter was tried to be maintained for users with the measures taken during the COVID-19 pandemic (social distancing, warning signs).

2. Flexibility: The selected squares are modular and wide open, allowing for different activities. In the COVID-19 pandemic process, it has been learned by experience that the flexibility of the space is important.
3. Safety: Short-term security interventions were found in very few of the squares (Four squares: Nottingham Old Market Square, Marienplatz Square, Trafalgar Square, George Square): Warning signs, barriers and plantings, action plans, control of entry and exit and capacity adjustment for events, social distancing through planting and arrangement of seating areas, pedestrianization.
4. Spatial orientation, orientation and signs: In very few squares (three squares: Nottingham Old Market Square, Trafalgar Square, George Square) an action plan for major events has been identified, with orientation with plants and barriers.
5. Territoriality, privacy and social relations: Landscaping and the use of movable public space furniture helped to maintain privacy and social distancing for users. Of the selected squares, only three (Nottingham's Old Market Square, Munich's Marienplatz Square and Glasgow's George Square) were found to have mobile urban furniture and temporary planting during the process of the pandemic.
6. Hygiene: During COVID-19 pandemic process, measures related to the hygiene parameter such as the establishment of hand sanitizer stations, regular cleaning of the café area and its surroundings, and the establishment of temporary toilets at events were found. No other measures have been identified. Information on the hygiene parameter was found in only two of the selected squares (Nottingham Old Market Square and Trafalgar Square) during the process of the pandemic (Table 9).

#### B. Environmental Quality

7. Social distancing arrangement: Capacity limitations at entrances to squares, the use of movable public space furniture, restrictions on the number of parking lots, and adjustments to the width of pedestrian and bicycle paths are some of the adjustments made for social distancing (Plaza Mayor, Place De La Bastille, Nottingham Old Market Square, Marienplatz Square, Trafalgar Square, George Square) (Table 10).

It was found that green space studies (Mouratidis, 2021b; El Khateeb & Shawket, 2022; Legeby et al., 2022; Gongadze & Maassen, 2023; Florian, 2022), which were emphasized in the literature review conducted during the creation of Square-oriented public space quality parameters, remained in the background in the analyzes conducted on the squares selected in this study. It is thought that landscaping works and more green space proposals in squares should be taken into consideration, as they have an impact on the physical and mental health of individuals. The square-oriented public space quality parameters developed in the study can be used both in the evaluation of existing squares and in the design of new squares. Thus, it is thought that squares can be made more resilient for different epidemics or disaster situations. In addition, the proposed parameters can be taken as a basis for different open public spaces (William & Green, 2001; Craig & Brett, 2001) and can be differentiated by adding new parameters. It is important to evaluate the proposed square-oriented public space quality parameters<sup>6</sup> by a wider group of experts (e.g. the Delphi method) for the development of these parameters. In addition, the squares where the developed parameters will be tested could not be visited between 2020 and 2023 due to restrictions and travel difficulties resulting from the pandemic. In this context, it is recommended that the square-oriented quality parameters, as re-established by the expert group evaluation, be tested again through on-site observations of selected squares. This study can be utilized by urban planners and architects who conduct academic studies on public open spaces or work within the municipality. The study is considered to be important for the analysis and planning of public open spaces.

<sup>6</sup> The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in the UK (CABE & DETR, 2001)



**Table 7.** Long term interventions- functional quality parameters result of selected squares.

	<b>Long Term Interventions</b>						
	<b>Functional Quality Parameters</b>						
<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>	<b>Attainability</b>	<b>Connectivity</b>	<b>Pedestrianization</b>	<b>Spatial Orientation</b>	<b>Alternative Mobility</b>	<b>Modularity</b>
<b>Squares</b>							
<b>Plaza Mayor, Madrid, Spain</b>	Before COVID-19 underground car park	Before COVID-19 + Metro	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 Pedestrian movement only	Before COVID-19
<b>Place De La Bastille, Paris, France</b>	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 +Metro	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19+ During COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 disability access	Before COVID-19
<b>Nottingham Old Market Square, Nottingham, United Kingdom</b>	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 Partly	<b>During COVID-19</b>	Before COVID-19 disability access	Before COVID-19
<b>Marienplatz Square, Munich, Germany</b>	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 +Metro +Tramway	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 Partly	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
<b>Alexanderplatz Square, Berlin, Germany</b>	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 +Metro +Tramway	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
<b>Trafalgar Square, London, United Kingdom</b>	Before COVID-19 Platform asansör	Before COVID-19 +Metro	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	<b>During COVID-19</b>	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
<b>Radhuspladsen Square, Copenhagen, Denmark</b>	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
<b>Rynek Glowny Square, Krakow, Poland</b>	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 Metro	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
<b>George Square, Glasgow, United Kingdom</b>	Before COVID-19	<b>During COVID-19</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b>	<b>During COVID-19 Partly</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b>	Before COVID-19
<b>Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, Albania</b>	Before COVID-19 underground car park	Before COVID-19	Poor connectivity with public spaces	Before COVID-19	-----	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19

**Table 8.** Long term interventions- environmental and aesthetic quality parameters results of selected squares.

	Long Term Interventions				
	Environmental Quality			Aesthetic Quality	
Parameters	Safety	Environment for all (Inclusion)	Green space works	Identity	Attraction
Squares					
Plaza Mayor, Madrid, Spain	During COVID-19 Pedestrian safety	Unsafe floor space	Insufficient green space	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
Place De La Bastille, Paris, France	During COVID-19	During COVID-19 Barrier-free design	Before COVID-19 Landscaping works	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
	Before COVID-19+ Disabled movement safety		During COVID-19 Landscaping works	During COVID-19 Ground design	
Nottingham Old Market Square, Nottingham, United Kingdom	Before COVID-19 Disabled movement safety	Before COVID-19	During COVID-19 Temporary green space work	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
Marienplatz Square, Munich, Germany	Before COVID-19 Disabled movement safety	Before COVID-19	During COVID-19 Temporary green space work	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
Alexanderplatz Square, Berlin, Germany	Before COVID-19 Disabled movement safety	Before COVID-19	Insufficient green space	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
Trafalgar Square, London, United Kingdom	During COVID-19 Pedestrian safety	During COVID-19 Lack of a lift for disabled access	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
	Before COVID-19 Disabled movement safety				
Radhuspladsen Square, Copenhagen, Denmark	During COVID-19 Pedestrian access	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 Landscaping works	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
	Before COVID-19+ Disabled movement safety		During COVID-19 Landscaping works		
Rynek Glowny Square, Krakow, Poland	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
George Square, Glasgow, United Kingdom	Before COVID-19 Disabled movement safety	Before COVID-19	During COVID-19	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
	During COVID-19 Pedestrian safety	During COVID-19 Change of ground	Temporary Landscaping works		
Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, Albania	During COVID-19 Pedestrian access	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19 Landscaping works	Before COVID-19	Before COVID-19
	Before COVID-19 Disabled movement safety		During COVID-19 Green space work	During COVID-19 Ground design	



**Table 9.** Short term interventions- functional quality parameters result of selected squares.

Parameters	Short Term Interventions					
	Functional Quality					
Squares	Confort and Image (Good Physical Environment)	Flexibility	Safety	Spacial Orientation (Orientation and Signs)	Teritoriality, privacy and social relations	Hygiene
<b>Plaza Mayor, Madrid, Spain</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Inadquate landscaping, urban furniture, Unsuitable ground for disabled people Café and restaurant spaces	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>Place De La Bastille, Paris, France</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Cleaning of the environment Afforestation, urban furniture	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	-----	-----	Before COVID-19	-----
<b>Nottingham Old Market Square, Nottingham, United Kingdom</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Café and restaurant spaces Social distancing measures and warning signs	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	<b>During COVID-19</b> Security measure	<b>During COVID-19</b> Spatial orientation using plants and barriers	<b>During COVID-19</b> Movable urban furniture Temporary planting	<b>During COVID-19</b> Station for cleaning and hand sanitising
<b>Marienplatz Square, Munich, Germany</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Café and restaurant spaces	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	<b>During COVID-19</b> security measure	-----	During COVID-19 Movable urban furniture Temporary planting	-----
<b>Alexanderplatz Square, Berlin, Germany</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Inadquate landscaping, urban furniture, Café and restaurant spaces	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	-----	-----	Before COVID-19	-----
<b>Trafalgar Square, London, United Kingdom</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Unsuitable ground for disabled people, Social distancing measures and warning signs	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	<b>During COVID-19</b> security measure	<b>During COVID-19</b> Action plan for major events	Before COVID-19	<b>During COVID-19</b> Regularly clean the toilets. Establishment of temporary toilets
<b>Radhuspladsen Square, Copenhagen, Denmark</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Afforestation, urban furniture	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	-----	-----	Before COVID-19	-----
<b>Rynek Glowny Square, Krakow, Poland</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Cleaning of the environment Café and restaurant spaces	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	-----	-----	Before COVID-19	-----
<b>George Square, Glasgow, United Kingdom</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Landscaping Social distancing measures and warning signs	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	<b>During COVID-19</b> security measure	<b>During COVID-19</b> Spatial orientation using plants and barriers	<b>During COVID-19</b> Movable urban furniture Temporary planting	
<b>Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, Albania</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b> Afforestation, urban furniture	Before COVID-19 Suitable size and layout for flexible design	-----	-----	-----	-----

**Table 10.** Short term interventions- environmental quality parameters result of selected squares.

	Short Term Interventions
	Environmental Quality
Parameters	Social distancing arrangement
Squares	
Plaza Mayor, Madrid, Spain	During COVID-19 Capacity limit
Place De La Bastille, Paris, France	During COVID-19 Movable urban furniture
Nottingham Old Market Square Nottingham, United Kingdom	During COVID-19 Movable urban furniture
Marienplatz Square, Munich, Germany	During COVID-19 Reduction of seating areas
Alexanderplatz Square, Berlin, Germany	-----
Trafalgar Square, London, United Kingdom	During COVID-19 capacity limit
Radhuspladsen Square, Copenhagen, Denmark	-----
Rynek Główny Square, Krakow, Poland	-----
George Square, Glasgow, United Kingdom	During COVID-19 Movable urban furniture Decreasing the number of parking lots
Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, Albania	-----

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