

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21070) - FAVOURITE PLACES IN WESTERN CITIES: WHY ARE THEY VALUED, AND WHAT RESTORATIVE BENEFITS DO PEOPLE GAIN FROM THEM?

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Background and objectives

Research on restorative environments tends to focus on natural settings, while the restorative potential of urban spaces is understudied. Recent reviews on this topic indicate that, within cities, areas of desirable architecture, cultural value, leisure affordance, and place attachment can also be restorative. We have previously shown that favourite indoor and outdoor urban places are associated with subjective restoration, but reasons for these evaluations are poorly understood. In this study we use a qualitative approach to understand why such settings are preferred and how this relates to positive psychological outcomes such as restoration.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

We analyse qualitative survey data from N = 945 participants, recruited online from Finland, Spain, the Netherlands, UK and Australia, regarding favourite indoor and outdoor urban places. We examine reasons why certain urban places are considered favourite, and motivations for and subjective outcomes experienced in those places, such as place attachment and/or restoration. We will use structural topic modelling, a computer-aided text analysis method, to identify common themes in these responses, and to examine any overlap between reasons for the places being favourite and the motivations for/outcomes of visiting. We will compare results between key types of place (indoor versus outdoor; homes; bars/café/restaurants; libraries; museums/cultural centres; and urban squares/streets/terraces), and between countries to examine cross-cultural differences and similarities.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Data will be analysed in Spring 2022 and results will be presented at the conference.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

Findings from this study will enhance understanding of why people value certain places in cities and indoor environments, and how these places can lead to positive psychological outcomes such as happiness, relaxation, and/or restoration. This work is important in order to better represent the types of everyday environments that could support wellbeing in an urbanised society, and to move study of restorative environments beyond the 'natural versus urban' dichotomy.

Palavras-chave : favourite places, place attachment, restorative environments, cities