

## URBAN PARKS AS ADOLESCENTS' FAVOURITE PLACES? ANALYSIS OF PREFERENCES WITH RESPECT TO ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

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### Urban parks as adolescents' favourite places? Analysis of preferences with respect to environmentally responsible behaviour

Research on adolescents' favourite places has received limited attention and only a small number of studies have focused on the preference for greenery among all urban areas, or considered a nature orientation of individuals in this regard. The aim of this paper is to present an analysis of adolescents' 'favourite place' selection in relation to their environmentally responsible behaviour (ERB), gender, and residential location. A total of 272 participants (13 – 16 years of age) completed mapping activities, during which data on favourite places, as well as ERBs were collected. The research was located in the oldest ward of Banská Bystrica (central Slovakia). The measurement of ERB was based on Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour. The results showed that ERB has no effect on the choice of parks as favourite places in the town. It means that individuals with higher ERB scores mark parks as their favourite places to a similar extent compared to other urban areas. Yet, the parks themselves were more popular among adolescents with a higher ERB score. Residents of the studied ward had a greater preference for parks than other public space users. The same was observed for girls compared to boys. A closer look at adolescents' behavioural aspects of favourite place selection and motives for labelling green sites requires more in-depth future research.

**Key words:** theory of planned behaviour, teenagers, gender, urban greenery, pro-environmental behaviour, city of Banská Bystrica

## INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that the natural environment improves the overall mental health of individuals (Mantler and Logan 2015 and Wood et al. 2017). Moreover, greenery in a local neighbourhood is an important predictor of positive mood states as well as contributing to stress reduction (Pazhouhanfar 2018). Research to date has shown that this is also true for children and youths; accessible green spaces have a positive impact on their mental health as well as on their health in general (Flouri et al. 2014 and McCormick 2017). In relation to this, it is important to know where young people prefer to spend their free time. Yet, there has been limited attention to research on the favourite places of teenagers (e. g., Abbott-Chapman and Robertson 2001, Abbott-Chapman and Robertson 2009, Mason and Mennis 2018 and Kim and Lee 2019). However, existing studies have not primarily focused on the preference for greenery and nature areas. Moreover, there is also a lack of papers dealing with the preference of urban parks in relation to environmentally responsible behaviour (ERB). ERB can be defined as the behaviour of an

individual who is aware of the state of the environment (Cheng et al. 2013 and Chiu et al. 2014) and behaves so as to not harm it (Caltabiano and Caltabiano 1995, Iwata 2001, Steg and Vlek 2009, Mobley et al. 2010 and Scannell and Gifford 2010b). Not least, studies pertaining to the association between urban parks/greenery popularity and nature orientations have dealt with adults, while omitting other age categories. In this paper, we try to fill these research gaps. Therefore, the aim of the study is to analyse adolescents' preferences for parks among other urban areas. A special emphasis is given here to favourite place selection in relation to environmentally responsible behaviour (ERB), along with gender and residential location of individuals. The ERB was examined using Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour. Based on the mentioned above, research questions were formulated as follows:

- Do teenagers prefer parks as their favourite places?
- What other types of locations are perceived as favourite places by adolescents?
- Is there a connection between the degree of ERB and whether adolescents labelled urban parks as their favourite places?
- Is there a connection between other personal characteristics (place of residence and gender) and whether adolescents labelled parks as their favourite places?

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Research to date has shown that an individual's choice of a favourite place changes over time, with natural environments being more stable than urban areas (Korpela et al. 2009). In a study by Newell (1997), 61% of adults identified natural areas as their favourite places. Similar results were revealed in adolescents in a work by Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2009), where among outdoor sites, "places in nature" was mentioned most often. As for urban greenery, a prevailing body of literature has been focused on park visitation behaviour and factors influencing it. People value parks especially for their environmental aspects, e.g., as places where they can be in unity with nature, where they can escape from cities, as well as in relation to biodiversity protection (Chiesura 2004, Buchel and Frantzeskaki 2015 and Paul and Nagendra 2017). Brown et al. (2018) confirmed the existence of the four main urban park benefits – psychological, environmental, social, and for physical activity – whose diversity positively correlates with the size of a park. Previous research has also shown that the reasons behind the use of urban greenery were linked to social-related factors (e.g., to carry out joint activities with friends) or sport and physical exercise in general (Buchel and Frantzeskaki 2015 and Liu et al. 2017). In addition, the psychological and health benefits of green areas were identified as important self-reported motives for park visits (Paul and Nagendra 2017, Sreetheran 2017 and Chen et al. 2018). However, most of the studies mentioned above were dealing with preference of places only, so the park visits were examined only on a declarative level.

Nevertheless, several studies pertaining to the visitation behaviour have provided typologies of park users based on their motives and preferences (e.g., Kemperman and Timmermans 2006a and Buchel and Frantzeskaki 2015), while underlining the need for the dehomogenization of indicators and approaches to urban park

research. Shan (2014) revealed that the activities of park users vary according to socio-economic characteristics (gender, marital status and age). For example, it was found that married individuals visited urban green spaces more often than others (Shan 2014), along with families or individuals with children (Kemperman and Timmermans 2006b, Liu et al. 2017 and Mak and Jim 2019). Considering gender, women tended to be underrepresented in urban parks (Hutchinson 1994, Derose et al. 2018 and Basu and Nagendra 2021). The limiting factors for their visits are a lack of time and lower safety perception (Basu and Nagendra 2021). Moreover, their visits were shorter compared to those of men (Derose et al. 2018), with a specific time pattern, and were often associated with childcare (Hutchinson 1994) and less with physical activity (Derose et al. 2018). In contrast to these findings, Ho et al. (2005) found no significant gender differences in the frequency of visits, the types of visits, or the perceived park benefits. Similarly, Chiesura (2004) found no gender differences in motives for visits or emotional experiences there. Looking at age categories, there have not been enough studies examining the relationship between age and visitation frequency. Yet, Kemperman and Timmermans (2006b) revealed that age has a strong influence on park choice behaviour; indeed, the age group of under 25 year-olds used parks least often during summer. In contrast to these findings, Shan (2014) revealed no associations between age and frequency of visits.

Shan (2014), Tu et al. (2020) and Lee et al. (2021), agreed that park proximity is an important predictor of park visits while long distances to urban green areas have a limiting effect on their use. In relation to this, a prevailing body of literature has shown that people prefer to visit parks in their neighbourhood (Kemperman and Timmermans 2006b) and thus most park visitors are locals (Paul and Nagendra 2017 and Mak and Jim 2019). However, although distance is an important determinant of park visits, research has shown that there is another significant one.

### Environmentally responsible behaviour and the preference of urban parks

As revealed by some authors (Lin et al. 2014 and Liu et al. 2017), attitudes and orientations to nature are more important predictors of park visits than opportunity and accessibility. Moreover, according to Lin et al. (2014), individuals that are more strongly nature-orientated are more willing to travel to parks over longer distances and their visits there are longer compared to others. In this regard, research to date has shown a connection between the ERB of individuals and the use of urban greenery. As an example, a study by Luo and Deng (2007, p. 392) revealed that “those who are more supportive of limits to growth and who are more concerned about eco-crisis tend to have a higher desire to be close to nature, to learn about nature, and to escape from routine and issues associated with cities.” Similarly, Lawrence (2012) found that environmental responsibility was positively related to the visitation frequency of university campus natural areas.

Such findings could be explained with a place-self congruity concept, which was defined by Droseltis and Vignoles (2010, p. 24) as “the sense that the image one has of a place is similar to, or consistent with, the image one has of one’s characteristics as an individual.” According to the same authors, typical statements characterising a place-self congruity are: “This place reflects the type of person I am” and “This place reflects my personal values.” The place-self congruity concept is one of the aspects of the place identity, which is the main dimension of the

place attachment concept. Therefore, in the following lines, the relationship and hierarchy between the concepts of place-self congruity, place identity, and place attachment will be explained more closely.

### From place attachment to place-self congruity in relation to the preference for urban parks

Place attachment has been widely understood as an existing bond or connection between an individual and a particular place (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Scannell and Gifford 2010a, Brown et al. 2015, Trąbka 2019 and Bazrafshan et al. 2021). Such an approach combines ideas from humanistic geography (Relph 1976) and holistic psychology (Angyal 1965). There are variations in understanding the dimensionality of the place attachment concept but a common feature in the prevailing body of literature is that place identity has been understood as one of its main dimensions (e. g., Williams and Vaske 2003, Raymond et al. 2010, Sharp et al. 2015, Han et al. 2019 and Plunkett et al. 2019). The concept of place identity was introduced by Relph (1976) and Proshansky (1978). Relph (1976) believes that place plays a massive importance in ordinary human life. He studied place attachment, sense of place and place identity as it is experienced and fashioned by real people in real places identifying three broad basic elements of place identity: the static physical setting of the environment (e.g., buildings and physical objects), the activities (movement pattern) and the meanings, in term of the individual's experience with the physical setting and activities (Relph 1976, p. 47). Proshansky (1978) refers to a strong identification with a particular place, affected by subjective variables such as the personal values of individuals, their emotions, etc. Additionally, the physical environment plays an important role in developing personal identity and can be defined as "a substructure of the self-identity of the person consisting of a broadly conceived, cognition about the physical world in which the individual lives" (Proshansky et al. 1983, p. 59).

However, dimensionality of place identity is generally a subject of discussion in scientific papers and there is no agreement concerning the conceptualisation of place identity (Dixon and Durrheim 2000 and Twigger-Ross et al. 2003). As pointed out by Bernardo and Palma Oliveira (2012), at least three different perspectives of place identity can be identified as follows: a) a place can be experienced as part of the self (self-extension); b) a place can be congruent with the values, attitudes, and behavioural dispositions of the self, which refers to the similarity between an individual and a place (place-self congruity concept); and c) an emotional attachment or emotional link to the place. In the last case mentioned, place identity can be seen as equivalent to place attachment. Using factor analysis, Droseltis and Vignoles (2010) identified one more place identity dimension expressing the case in which an individual belongs to a place (environmental fit). In the literature, there is a general agreement that place identity and place attachment are two closely related concepts, (see e. g., Chow and Healey 2008). The dimensionality of place attachment and place-self congruity, as considered in this paper, is shown in Fig. 1. The place-self congruity concept is based on the theory that the greater the agreement between a destination's image and the self-concept, the greater the tendency to visit the destination (Beerli et al. 2007). Therefore, the concept can be found especially in papers dealing with destination choice in tourism (e. g., Kumar 2016, Joo et al. 2020 and Sop 2020).

The phenomenological geographers Relph (1976) and Seamon (1979) are frequently cited in major overviews of the place attachment literature, yet, there has been no systematic quantitative research derived from their hypotheses (Lewicka 2011 and Young et al. 2018). Recently, this concept has become one of the key concepts of environmental psychology (Boley et al. 2021) and the subject of increased attention in environmental studies in relation to e.g., behaviour regarding natural hazards (Chen 2019, Ariccio et al. 2020 and Greer et al. 2020), willingness to live in rural areas (Riethmuller et al. 2021), interaction with urban parks (Lee and Shen 2013, Romolini et al. 2019 and Bazrafshan et al. 2021), prediction of environmentally responsible behaviour (Ramkissoo and Mavondo 2017, Zhao et al. 2018 and Alonso-Vazquez et al. 2019), and other topics.

Based on the above, it would not be surprising to find that individuals with a greater nature orientation visit urban parks more often than other public space users. However, there are only several studies pertaining to the association between urban parks visits and nature orientations but they have dealt with adults omitting other age categories. Moreover, in most cases, the extent to which park visits are preferred by individuals among other types of urban areas have not been examined.

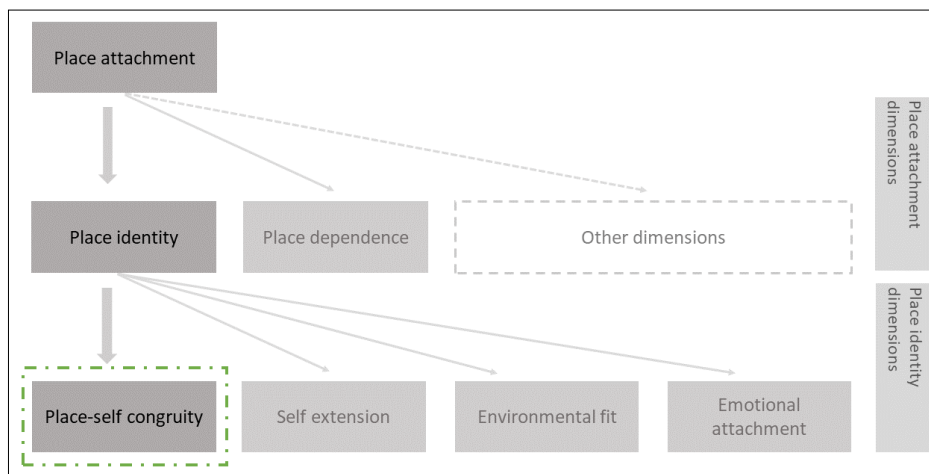


Fig. 1. Place-self congruity and its location in the hierarchy of place-attachment<sup>1</sup>

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Studied area

The research was located in the oldest ward of Banská Bystrica (central Slovakia), which is typical for a mix of different functions, urban forms, and architecture, while reflecting styles from the Middle Ages to the present. The historic core as well as the typical socialist residential districts are densely built up with numerous amenities including urban parks. In contrast to these older locations, new residential neighbourhoods with both single-family and collective housing built at the

<sup>1</sup> Opinions on the number of place attachment dimensions are not consistent. In addition to generally accepted place identity and place dependency, other dimensions including social bonding (Raymond et al. 2010, Plunkett et al. 2019 and Han et al. 2019), nature bonding (Raymond et al. 2010), place affect (Han et al. 2019), and others have been considered in the literature.

end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century on previously uninhabited elevations, often lack facilities, sidewalks, and parks. The ward is also characterised by rangy relief, and a number of steep slopes that need to be overcome during walking. This diversity was the reason why this city and specifically this ward was chosen for research.

There are two large-scale parks in the ward. The first one, “Urban park” (Mestský park), was proclaimed a national cultural heritage. With an area of more than 8 ha, it is located at the western edge of the historical core (near the western edge of the pedestrian area). The park is square-shaped, with a radially concentric network of pavements, a gazebo in the center, enough places to sit, and a children’s playground. The plant communities are densely represented by trees, shrubs, and herb layers, creating nooks and crannies, and consequently preventing clear views. The second one, “Park under the Slovak National Uprising Museum”, is located at the eastern edge of the historical core. The park consists of two levels. The area of the lower level is larger and there is a circuit for walking and skating around the park, with places to sit and a children’s playground. With prevailing lawn and a lack of shrubs and trees, the place is visually opened, and views are not disturbed. In contrast, the upper level is characteristic for a museum and an outdoor exhibition of military equipment, which, together with trees and shrubs create nooks and crannies.

In addition, there are two linear parks serving mainly the residents of the adjacent settlements (on the northern and eastern parts of the city), as well as several small parks located mainly in the historical core of the city or in its immediate vicinity (Fig. 2).

### Participants and procedure

Data were collected during mapping activities in primary and secondary schools located in the studied area. All the schools located in the ward were invited to the research, six of which agreed to participate. For the activity, maps of the ward divided by a square grid with numerically assigned cells as well as pre-prepared reply forms were used. The cell size was of  $200 \times 200$  metres. Open Street Map was used as a base map. The map was large enough that the street names were legible. Such a visualisation technique made it easier to work with the map and the form, which allows us to involve even the youngest participants to the research, as well as enabling us to quantify the data. The materials used in the mapping activity come from a project, parts of which have already been published elsewhere, along with a detailed map description (Rišová and Sládeková Madajová 2020 and Rišová 2021). In the research, only those forms were used in which all the questions concerning the ERB were answered and the participant’s favourite place was mentioned at the same time. All in all, 272 participants of 13 – 16 years of age (56.6% girls, 35.3% living in the studied area) met the above criteria. For each of them, also the gender and residence were known. The activity in each class involved was planned after the prior consent of the teachers, and was carried out in his/her presence. Before the activity, the researchers declared in writing that the results would be presented in an aggregated form only. Additionally, the participants were not asked to give any identifiers which are subjects to GDPR (The European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation). The basic characteristics of the dataset are described in Tab. 1. The gender distribution of the sample was balanced and representative of the BB population.

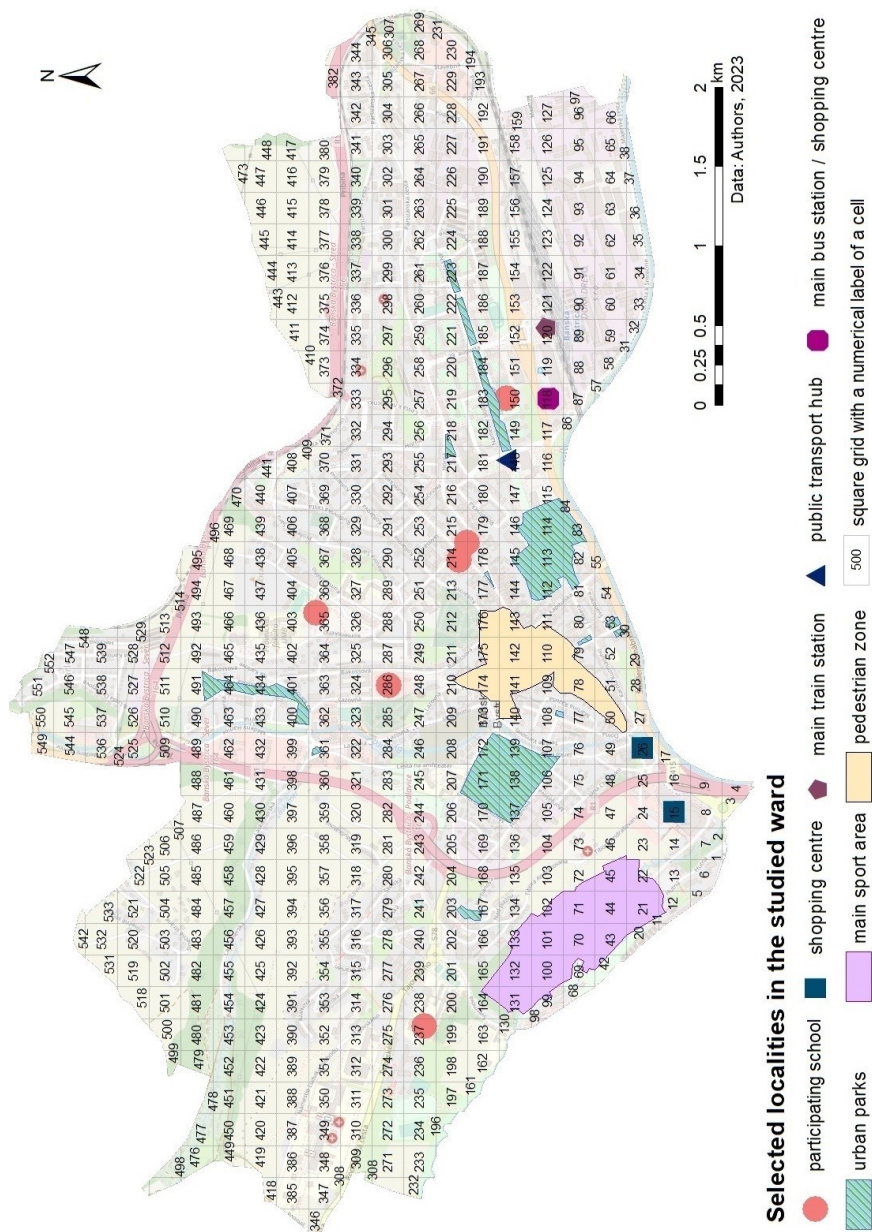


Fig. 2. Locations of schools, parks, main public transport hubs, and areas important for the participants

**Tab. 1. Basic characteristics of the dataset**

ERB score	Frequency	%
to 2	14	5.1
2 – 3	33	12.1
3 – 4	127	46.7
4 – 5	98	36.1
Gender		
Boys	118	43.4
Girls	154	56.6
Residence		
Local	96	35.3
Another ward	78	28.7
Another municipality	91	33.4
Not specified	7	2.6

### Data

During the mapping activity, participants were asked to identify their favourite place in the city and answer a question in the form as follows: “My favorite place is located in this cell”. To obtain information regarding motivations for their choice, the students were asked to give a reason for their statement. The value 1 was assigned only to those places which are known to the population as parks, while other green areas (for example, temporarily undeveloped plots overgrown with grass) were considered to belong to the other category. Participants were allowed to label only one cell, to ensure that only those cells that are the most important were included in the calculations. To measure the ERB of individuals, three statements based on the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991) were formulated. Although the most commonly used measure of ERB involves the New Environmental Paradigm (Dunlap and Van Liere 1978), in this study, Ajzen’s theory was considered more appropriate. Statements of the New environmental paradigm are more difficult to understand and therefore less suitable for the age category examined. In addition, whereas the statements of the New Environmental Paradigm reflect the general environmental attitudes of individuals, it is more suitable for the detection of general ERBs (Sidiropoulos et al. 2013 and Asilsoy et al. 2016), low-carbon behaviours (Mei et al. 2017), or for testing some theories of environmental psychology (Putrawan 2015, Putrawan, 2017 and Liu et al. 2018).

The theory of planned behaviour states that every intention is based on three main predictors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Therefore, the statements were formulated as follows:

- 1) “For me, it is easy to behave responsibly towards the environment.”
- 2) “People around me would approve of my efforts to be more environmentally responsible.”
- 3) “My attitude towards environmentally responsible behaviour is positive.”

These were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The ERB score was then calculated for each individual separately (ranging from 1 to 5).



### Calculations

When researchers processed the forms, those marked cells where a park was located were rated 1 and others were rated 0. The analysis of differences in park preferences with respect to the above-mentioned characteristics of respondents was performed through inferential statistics. An association between the popularity of the parks and the individual characteristics was examined both in the whole dataset ( $n = 272$ ) and separate among those who marked the park as their favourite place ( $n = 53$ ) only. A one-sample chi-square test and a chi-square test of independence as part of the Crosstabs procedure were used. Due to the small sample of respondents who marked parks as favorite places, the analyzes was supplemented by the exact Monte Carlo tests to make the conclusions statistically reliable.

Several hypotheses were tested to determine if the parks are favorite places of teenagers and if there were statistically significant differences in park preferences among students with respect to the score of pro-environmental behaviour, residence, and gender. The test was performed at two levels. Firstly, within the set of all 272 respondents, differences were examined between those who identified parks as their favourite place and those who did not. Second, the analysis was carried out only among the group of participants having chosen parks as their favourite place. The purpose was to answer the following questions:

- Are parks one of the most popular places for teenagers?
- Does the popularity of parks depend on the level of ERB?
- Do those residing in local neighbourhoods prefer parks more than other participants?
- Are there gender differences in choosing parks as favorite places?

The numerical variables (age and ERB score) were grouped into several categories to ensure the Chi-square test condition (at least 80% of the cells to have an expected count greater than 5).

### RESULTS

The favourite places of participants are shown in Fig. 3, with those most frequently mentioned (decile 1 to decile 7) numerically labelled. The most often chosen places were located in the southern part of the ward, which is typical for its medieval historical core (cells no. 110, 141 and 143), two largest parks of the city (cells no. 113, 114 and 138), sport-related area (cells no. 21 and 45), and shopping centres (cells no. 15 and 18). In cell no. 260, a dormitory is located.

Looking at types of favourite places, those devoted for shopping activities were the most popular, followed by parks, and other types without a park respectively (Tab. 2). The Chi-square test proved that an observed distribution is not due to chance ( $p < 0,001$ ) so the differences between the individual favourite places are statistically significant. Together, 53 participants labelled a park as their favourite place. Of these, 43 participants gave 48 reasons for their statement (some of them mentioning two reasons for one cell), while 10 adolescents did not comment on their choice at all. The reasons for choosing a park as a favourite place were linked with 1) general feelings descriptions, liking, and aesthetics (e.g. “it’s nice there”, “I like it there”, 29.2% among all the reasons mentioned), 2) rest (e.g. “calm”, “peace”, “rest”, 16.7%), 3) home locations (e.g. “I live here”, “home”, “my resi-

dence” etc., 14.6%), 4) association with family, friends and loved ones (e.g. “my grandmother lives there”, “I used to go there with my friends”, “my boyfriend lives there”, 12.5%), 5) explicit mentions of greenery and nature (e.g. “most greenery”, “beautiful nature”, 10.4%), 6) memories (4.2%), and other (12.5%).

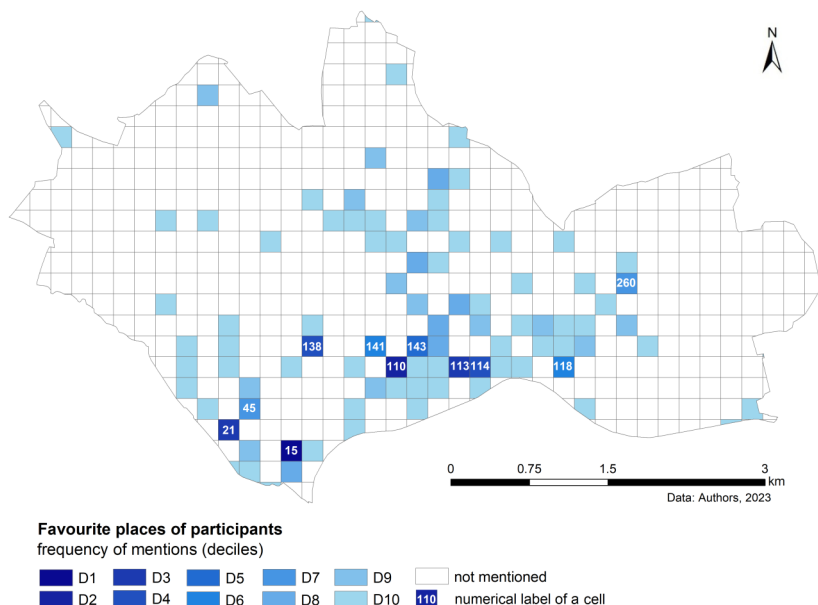


Fig. 3. Location of favourite places of participants. The most frequently mentioned cells (decile 1 to decile 7) are numerically labelled

Tab. 2. The most frequently mentioned types of favourite places

Type of a favourite place	Number of mentions
Shopping center (including bus station with a shopping center)	77
Park (any type of urban area with a park)	53
Historical core, pedestrian zone (without a park)	44
Prevailing housing area (without a park)	37
Sport-associated (without a park)	27
Schools' locations (without a park)	10
Historical core, unpedestrianized (without a park)	10
Edge of the city, built-up area with mixed functions (without a park)	5
Edge of the city, unbuilt area (without a park)	4
Other (without a park)	5

The analysis showed that there was no significant association between the adolescents' characteristics examined and marking parks as favourite places. The ERB had no effect on the choice of parks as favourite places in the town. It means that individuals with higher ERB scores mark parks as their favourite places to a si-

milar extent compared to other urban areas. However, when focusing only on those participants who marked parks as their favourite places, interesting findings emerged. Firstly, parks were most preferred by those who showed the second largest ERB scores (scores in range of 3 to 4, total 41.5%) following by those with the highest ERB scores (score values from 4 to 5, 37.7%). However, the frequencies of these two categories are similar. At the same time, their frequencies are significantly higher than the remaining categories with low ERB scores (5.7:15.1: 41.5:37.7%). Secondly, parks were most preferred by those who lived in the ward where the park was located (39.6%) and by girls to a greater extent compared to boys (66.0:34.0%). The relationship between the characteristics of the parks and their popularity was not investigated due to the small number of the sample.

**Tab. 3. The results of the Chi-Square Test in a group of respondents whose parks were a favourite place**

Test Statistics					
			Gender	Residence	ERB scores
Chi-Square			5,453 <sup>a</sup>	13,038 <sup>c</sup>	13,189 <sup>c</sup>
df			1	3	3
Asymp. Sig.			0,02	0,005	0,004
Monte Carlo Sig.	Sig.		,028 <sup>b</sup>	,005 <sup>b</sup>	,005 <sup>b</sup>
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	0,024	0,003	0,003
		Upper Bound	0,032	0,006	0,006

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the relationship between adolescents' characteristics and preference of parks among all urban areas was examined, with a special emphasis on the ERB of individuals. As mentioned earlier, research by other authors suggests that nature orientation, proximity and accessibility to parks are key predictors of both park preferences and visits. In this study, however, some interesting findings emerged.

First, the results suggest that parks being more popular among individuals with stronger nature orientations is not only valid for adults in relation to their visitation frequency as revealed by Lawrence (2012), Lin et al. (2014), and Liu et al. (2017), but also for adolescents' preferences of parks among other urban areas. However, the question concerns whether adolescents are consciously aware of this connection or not. A closer look at adolescents' behavioural aspects of favorite place selection and motives for labelling green sites would require more in-depth research in the future. Yet, based on the results, it is not possible to state whether the nature orientation of individuals is a stronger predictor of parks' popularity.

Secondly, parks were more preferred by residents of the studied ward than by other public space users. Even looking at the frequency of other categories for variables residence, we found that there is a clear positive effect of residence on the park's popularity; parks were marked most as favourite places by those students who lived in the ward studied (39.6%), followed by those who came from another ward (30.2%), and least by those who did not come from the town (24.5%). This is in line with the findings showing proximity to be an important predictor of park

popularity (Lee et al. 2021) with long distances to urban green areas having a limiting effect on their use (Shan 2014 and Tu et al. 2020). In relation to this, literature has shown that people prefer to visit parks in their neighbourhoods (Kemperman and Timmermans 2006b) and thus most of the park visitors are locals (Paul and Nagendra 2017 and Mak and Jim 2019). What is more, Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2009) showed that rural teenagers preferred places in nature more than their urban peers.

Last but not least parks were labelled as a favourite place by girls more often than boys. This is in contrast with studies that found no significant effect of gender on favourite place selection (Newell 1997), as well as on the frequency of park visits (Ho et al. 2005). Our findings are also in contradiction with studies pertaining to adults showing men visiting parks more often than women (Hutchison 1994, Derosé et al. 2018 and Basu and Nagendra 2021). The difference in results may be due to the fact that adolescent girls are not yet limited by the space-time constraints resulting from the gender roles of wife and mother. However, unlike the studies mentioned above, this paper did not address real park visits, but only spatial preferences.

Undoubtedly, the popularity of urban greenery among individuals is affected also by other factors, such as the geographical, historical, and cultural context (Chawla 2002, Bahr and Pendergast 2007 and Abbott-Chapman and Robertson 2009) and park characteristics (size, quality and aesthetics). The first mentioned, however, was not beyond the aims of this article. The park characteristics, on the other hand, were not investigated here due to the small number of participants.

Other limitations of the research concern the simplified way of measuring ERB based on Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour. However, this theory has its advantages in that it is easier to understand by a younger group of participants. Similarly, square grids were chosen for easier orientation on the map, but the locations of favourite places were identified with less spatial accuracy. Additionally, as pointed by Castonguay and Jutras (2009), the same places can be the subject of both positive and negative perceptions at the same time.

In practice, the different preferences of different groups of public space users pose a challenge for both urban planners and city management. The design of parks as well as other public spaces should be planned to encourage all individuals to use them; for example, they should be designed to suit members of both genders. The means of motivating all individuals to use and appreciate urban greenery will also need to be identified. The results additionally show that when planning new public spaces, parks should be located within walking distance so that each district has its own local park. This way, more spatial justice will be brought into public spaces. In the future, it would be beneficial to perform the research in other urban environments, as well as to explain respondents' preferences with regard to the quality of parks, and to examine more closely how parks are perceived by individuals with different life values.

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## **MESTSKÉ PARKY AKO OBLÚBENÉ MIESTA ADOLESCENTOV? ANALÝZA PREFERENCIÍ SO ZRETEĽOM NA ENVIRONMENTÁLNE ZODPOVEDNÉ SPRÁVANIE**

Areály zelene majú pozitívny vplyv na mentálne, ako aj celkové zdravie adolescentov (Flouri et al. 2014 a McCormick 2017). Je preto dôležité poznať, či tento typ lokalít mladí ľudia preferujú pri výbere miesta na trávenie voľného času. Napriek existencii niekoľkých prác zaoberajúcich sa obľúbenými miestami adolescentov (napr. Abbott-Chapman a Robertson 2001, Abbott-Chapman a Robertson 2009, Mason a Mennis 2018 a Kim a Lee 2019) sa tieto nevenovali preferencii zelene spomedzi ostatných typov urbánnych areálov.

Cieľom príspevku bolo poskytnúť analýzu obľúbených miest adolescentov, a to s osobitným zreteľom na preferenciu mestských parkov. Dôraz bol kladený na sledovanie vzťahu medzi voľbou parkov ako obľúbených miest a charakteristikami jednotlivcov, ako sú vek, rod, miesto bydliska a správanie zodpovedné k životnému prostrediu (ďalej len ERB, z angl. environmentally responsible behaviour). ERB možno definovať ako správanie jednotlivca, ktorý si je vedomý stavu životného prostredia (Cheng et al. 2013 a Chiu et al. 2014), a súčasne sa správa tak, aby mu neublížoval (Caltabiano a Caltabiano 1995, Iwata 2001, Steg a Vlek 2009, Mobley et al. 2010 a Scannell a Gifford 2010b).

Výskum sa realizoval na vzorke 272 adolescentov vo veku 13 až 16 rokov v najstaršej mestskej časti mesta Banská Bystrica. Dáta boli získané prostredníctvom mapovacej aktivity uskutočnenej na základných a stredných školách sídliačich v skúmanej oblasti. Získané boli dáta týkajúce sa identifikácie obľúbených miest (a dôvodu ich výberu), rodu, bydliska a ERB. Meranie ERB vychádzalo z Ajzenovej teórie plánovaného správania (Ajzen 1991). Rozdiely v preferencii parkov medzi jednotlivými skupinami adolescentov na základe ERB, miesta bydliska a rodu boli analyzované metódami štatistickej inferencie.

Najčastejšie označené lokality sa nachádzali na juhu skúmaného územia a boli to miesta v historickom stredovekom jadre, v dvoch najväčších mestských parkoch, v najväčšom športovom areáli a v dvoch nákupných centrách. Z hľadiska typov obľúbených miest dominovali nákupné centrá, za ktorými nasledovali parky a ostatné typy areálov. Medzi dôvodmi pre výber parku ako obľúbeného miesta prevládali: všeobecné vyjadrenia pocitov a estetika (napr. "páči sa mi tam", "príjemné" a pod.); oddych ("kľud", "pokoj", "oddych" a pod.) a asociácia s domovom ("bývam tam", "domov" a pod.). Ostatné odpovede (asociácia s rodinou, priateľmi a inými blízkymi osobami; príroda a zeleň; spomienky; iné) mali menšiu početnosť. V súvislosti s environmentálne zodpovedným správaním sa zistilo, že ERB nemá vplyv na preferenciu parkov ako obľúbených miest adolescentov. Znamená to, že jednotlivci s vysokým ERB skóre neoznačovali parky do významne vyššej miery ako iné urbánne areály. Napriek tomu, na vzorke tých, ktorí označili parky ako svoje obľúbené miesta, sa potvrdilo, že parky sú populárnejšie medzi jednotlivcami so silnejšou orientáciou na prírodu. Parky viac preferovali obyvatelia skúmaného územia v porovnaní s ostatnými užívateľmi verejného priestoru. Rovnaká závislosť bola pozorovaná aj u dievčat, u ktorých bola preferencia parkov vyššia ako u chlapcov. V praxi predstavujú rozdielne preferencie výzvu pre urbanistov aj vedenie miest. Dizajn parkov, ako aj iných verejných priestranstiev by mal byť navrhnutý tak, aby povzbudil na ich využívanie rôzne skupiny užívateľov, a to aj tých, ktorí k tomu v súčasnosti neinklinujú.



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