

The Importance of Nature to Urban Finns

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Background of the study

- Large majority of Finns live in urban development centres.
- Finnish cities are still relatively green, but the growth centres are faced with major land-use pressures.
- In the Nordic countries, rather wide opportunities to use water and land areas based on common right of access also outside cities.
- what kind of effects the urbanization process has on people's nature relationship and how fast these changes are occurring.

Aims of the study

- to identify different types of uses and relationships towards urban nature in Finland,
- to study the relationship between the use of nature and self-reported health and well-being
- investigate the differences between population groups in the restorative benefits of different kind of green areas

A part of ‘Urban Green Areas and Human Well-Being’ – research project funded by the Academy of Finland (2005-2007).

Data and methods

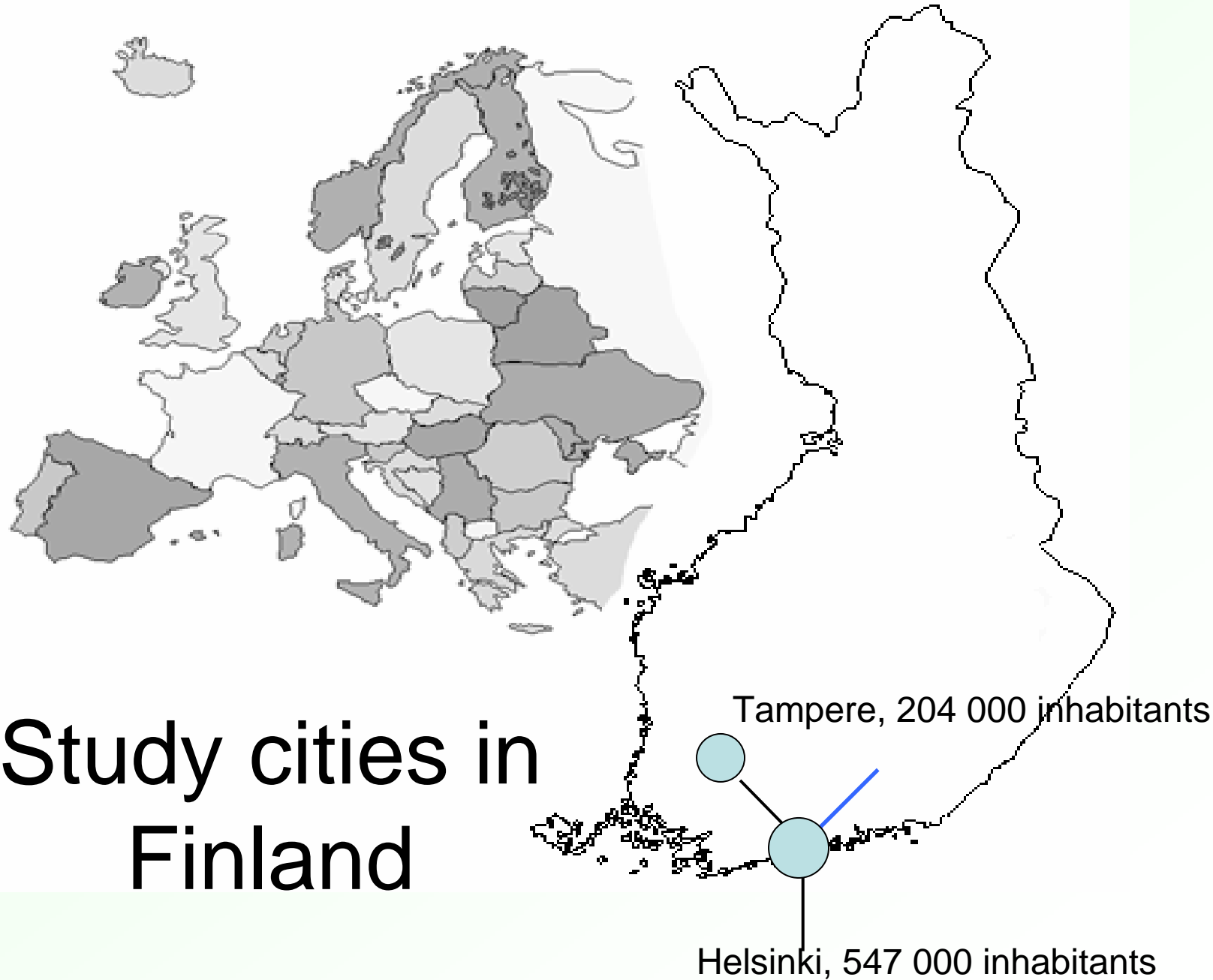
Data:

- a mail survey conducted autumn 2005
- a random sample of 3000 residents in Helsinki and Tampere
- respondents 15-75 years old
- Response rate: 42.6 (1273 responses)

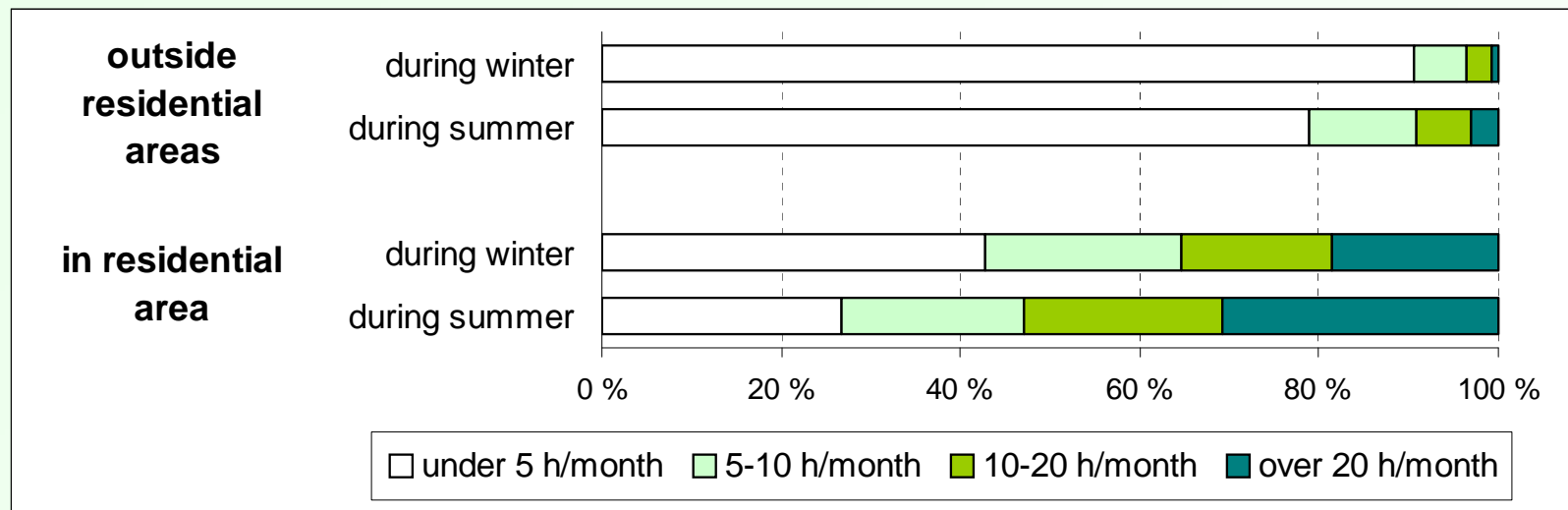
Main themes of the questionnaire:

- wishes and expectations concerning urban green areas
- use of urban green areas and other nature areas
- Self-reported health and well-being
- background information of respondents (age, gender etc.)

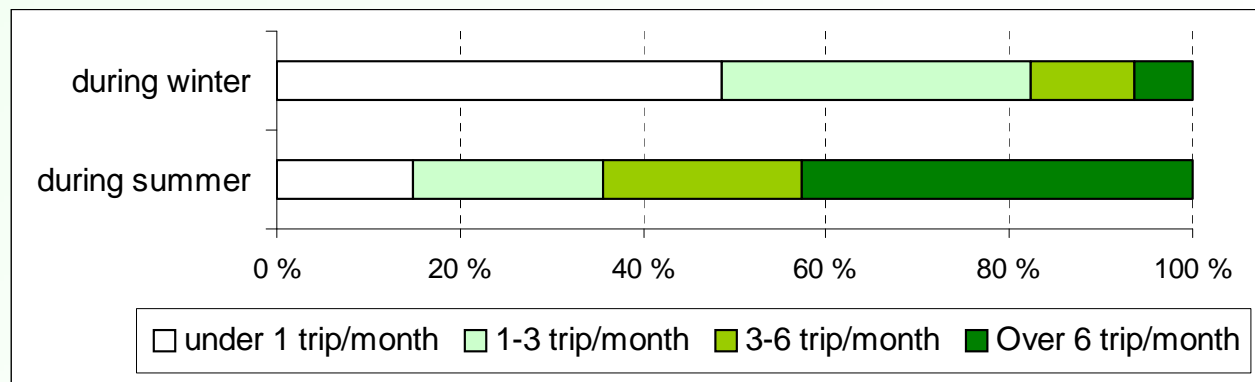
Study cities in Finland



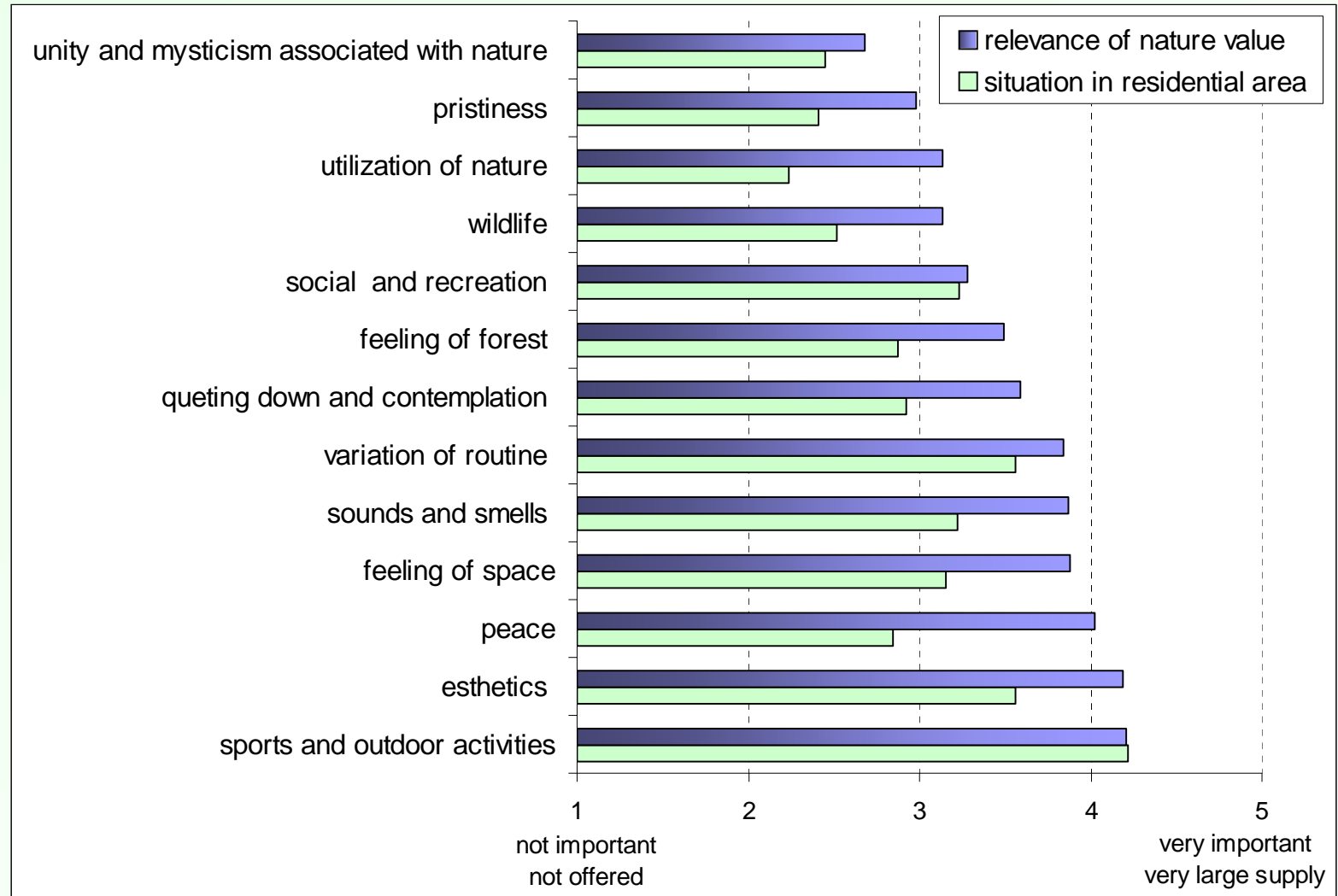
Utilization of urban green areas



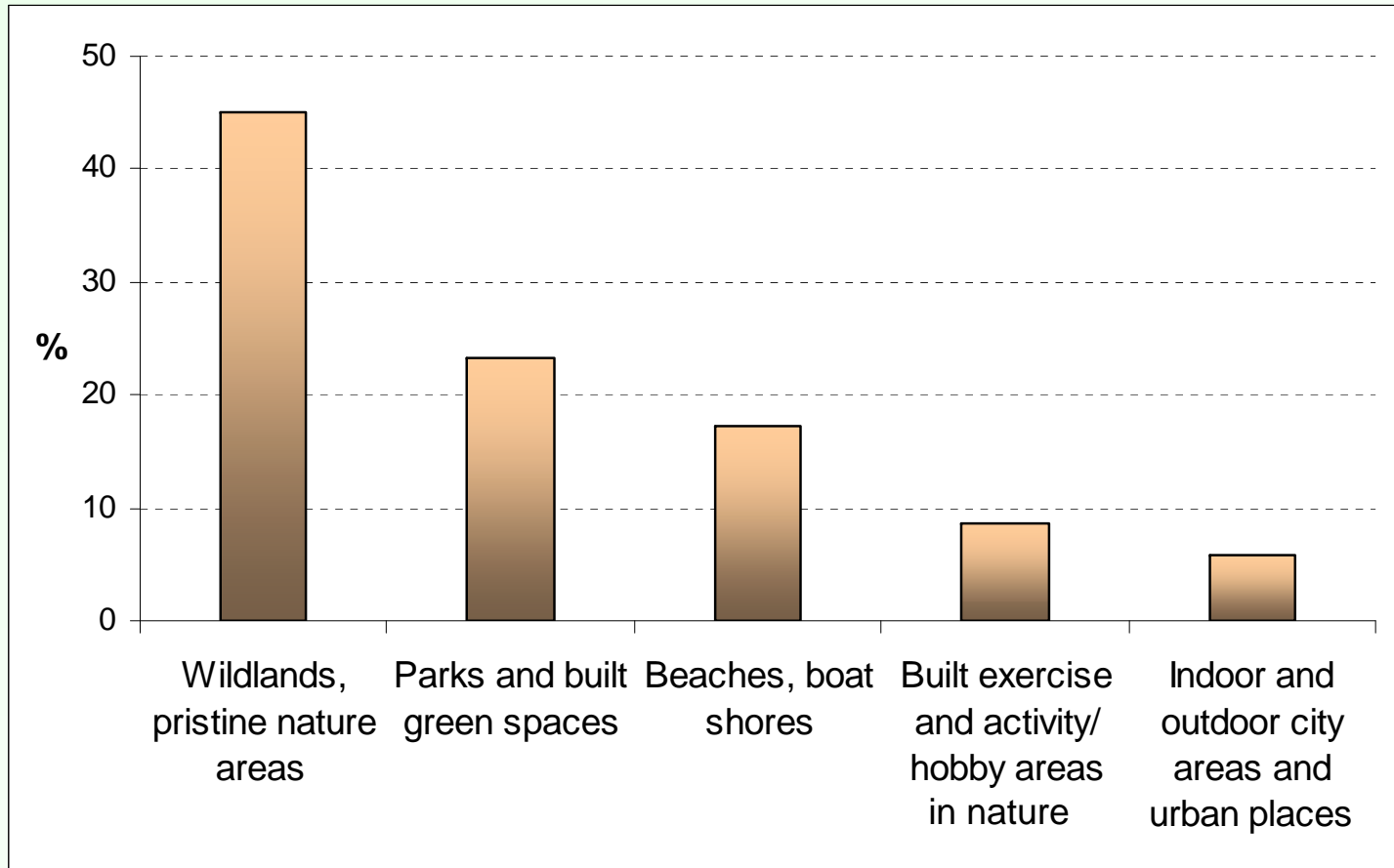
Exposure to green areas outside city limits (summer cottages, nature tourism)

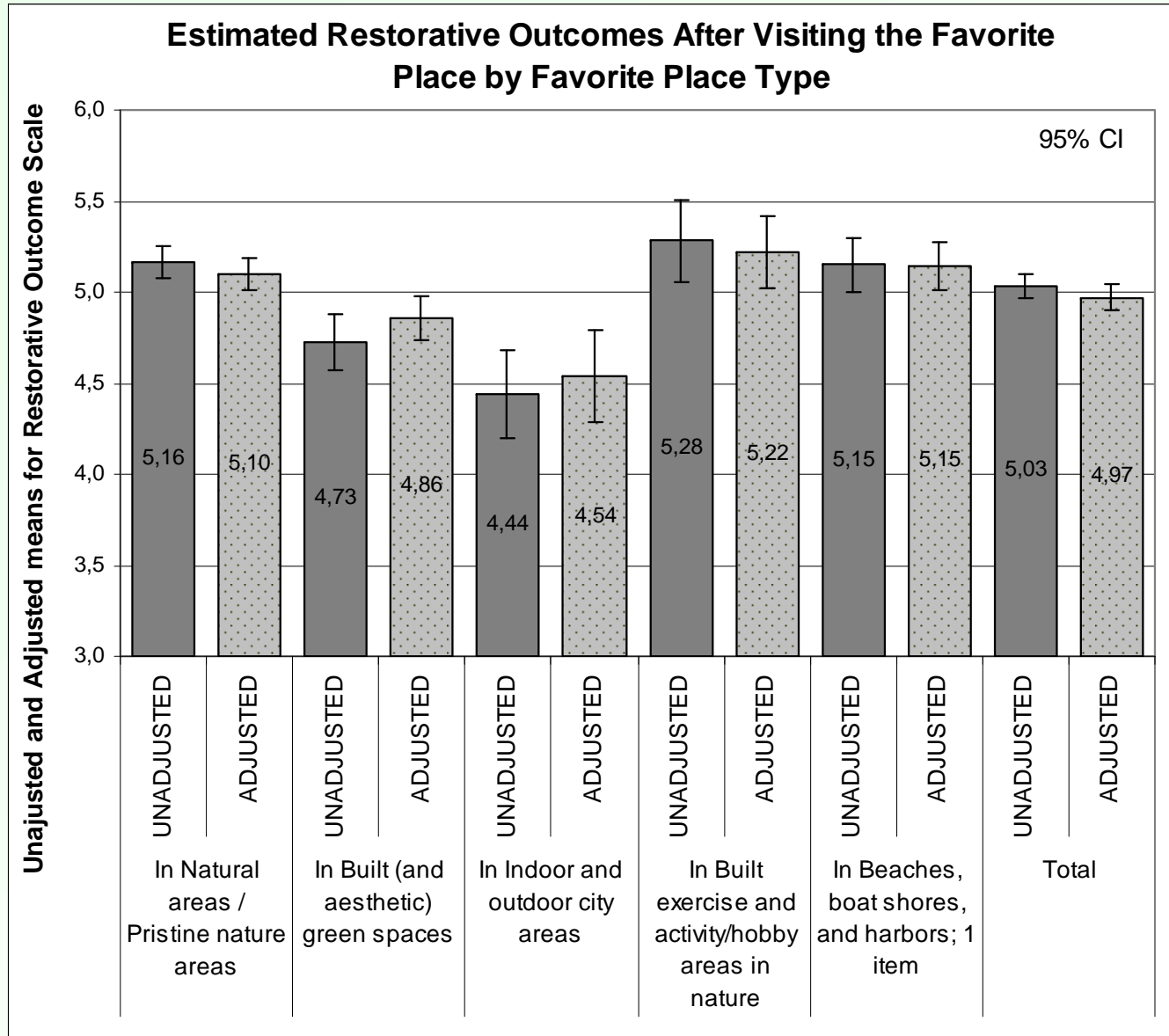


The relevance of nature values to residents and their supply in the residential areas

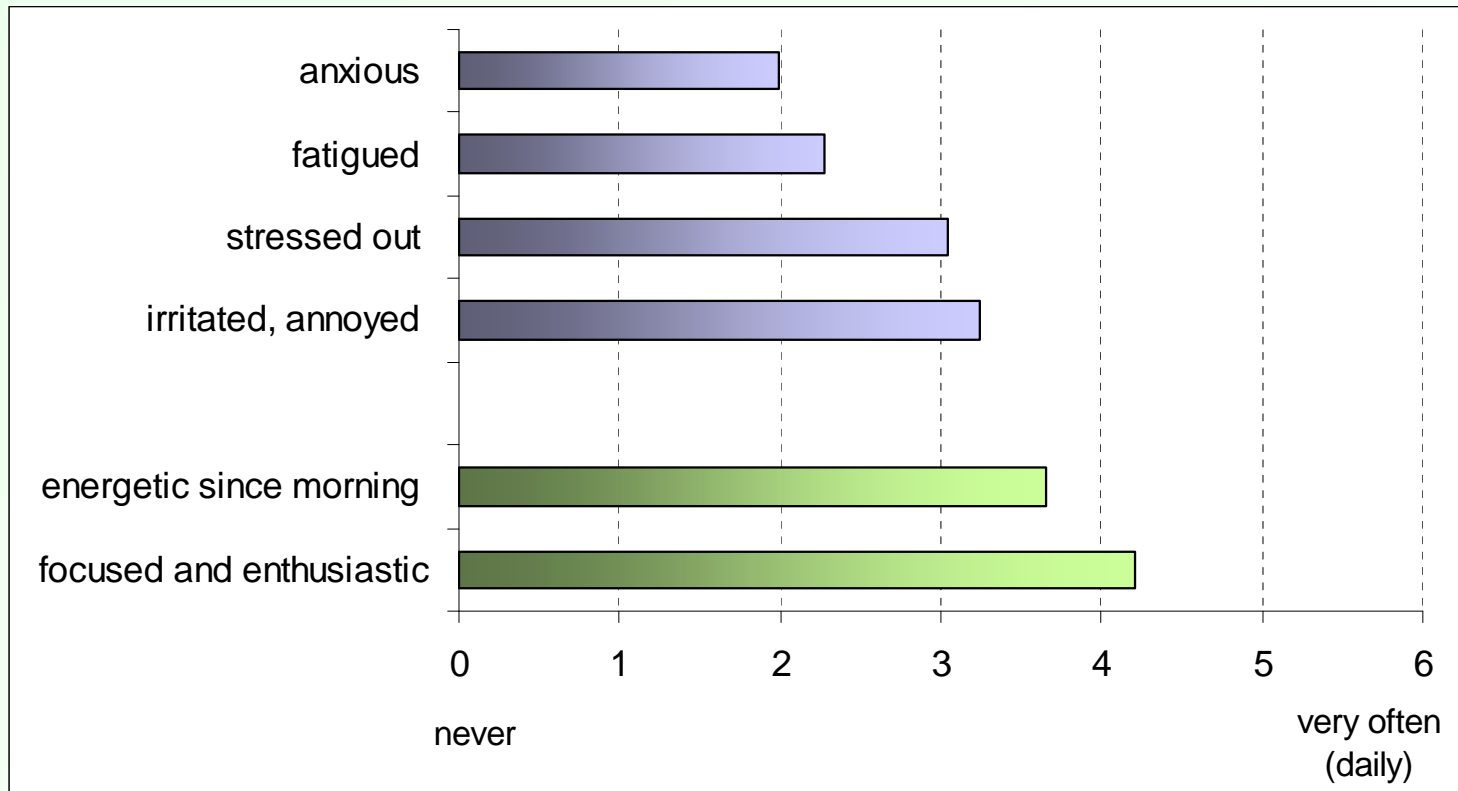


Favourite places





Reported emotions



Connection between pastime green area exposure and emotions

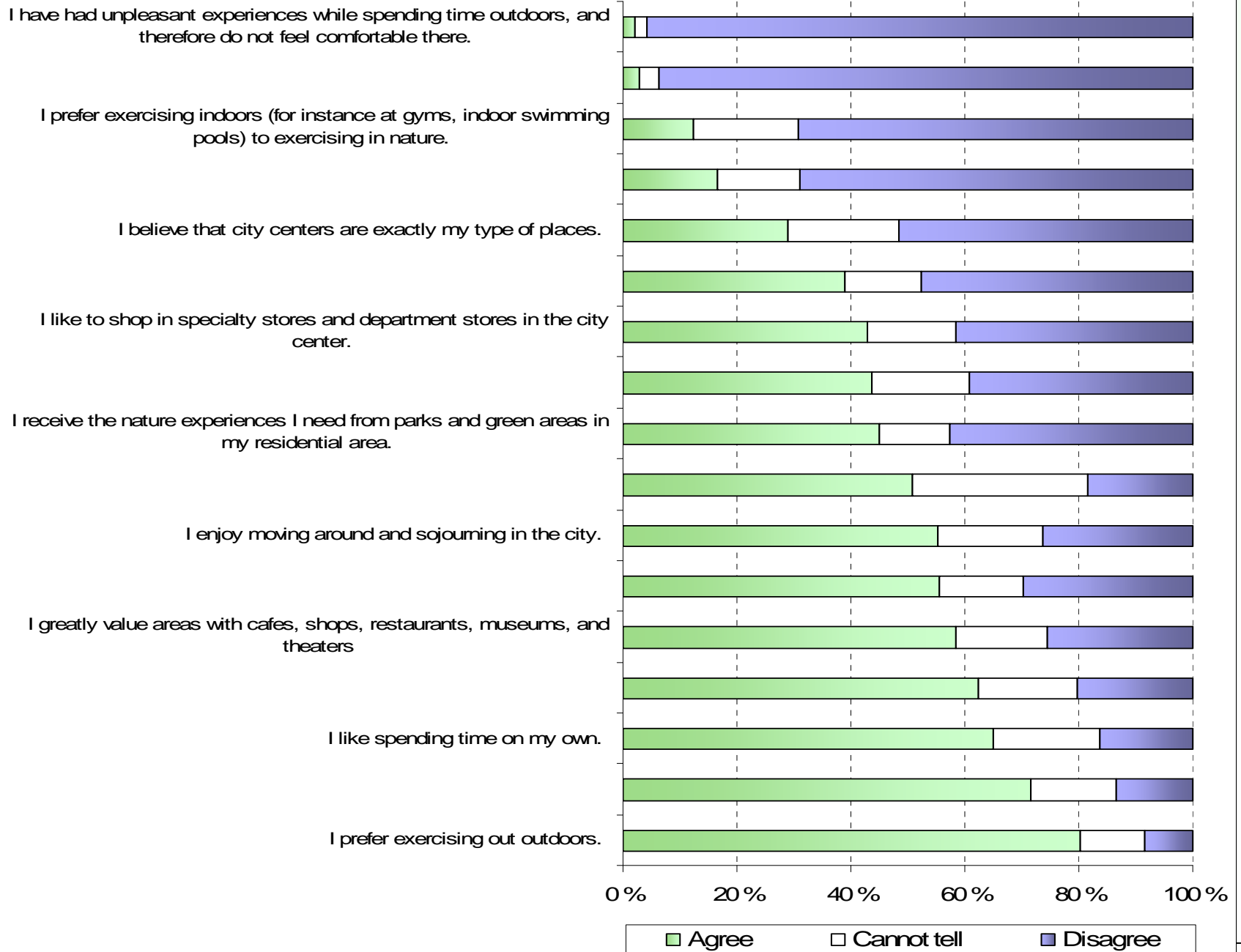
	Usage of urban green areas: (h /month)				Significance
	under 5	5–10	10–20	over 20	
Positive emotions	3,73 N = 319	3,90 N = 239	4,00 N = 312	4,09 N = 346	F = 6,81 p = 0,000

	Green area exposure from outside city limits: (trip/month)				Significance
	under 1	1-3	3-6	over 6	
Negative emotions	2,72 N = 268	2,76 N = 363	2,71 N = 310	2,36 N = 290	F = 6,65 p = 0,000
Positive emotions	3,67 N = 269	4,03 N = 368	3,95 N = 310	4,02 N = 294	F = 7,16 p = 0,000

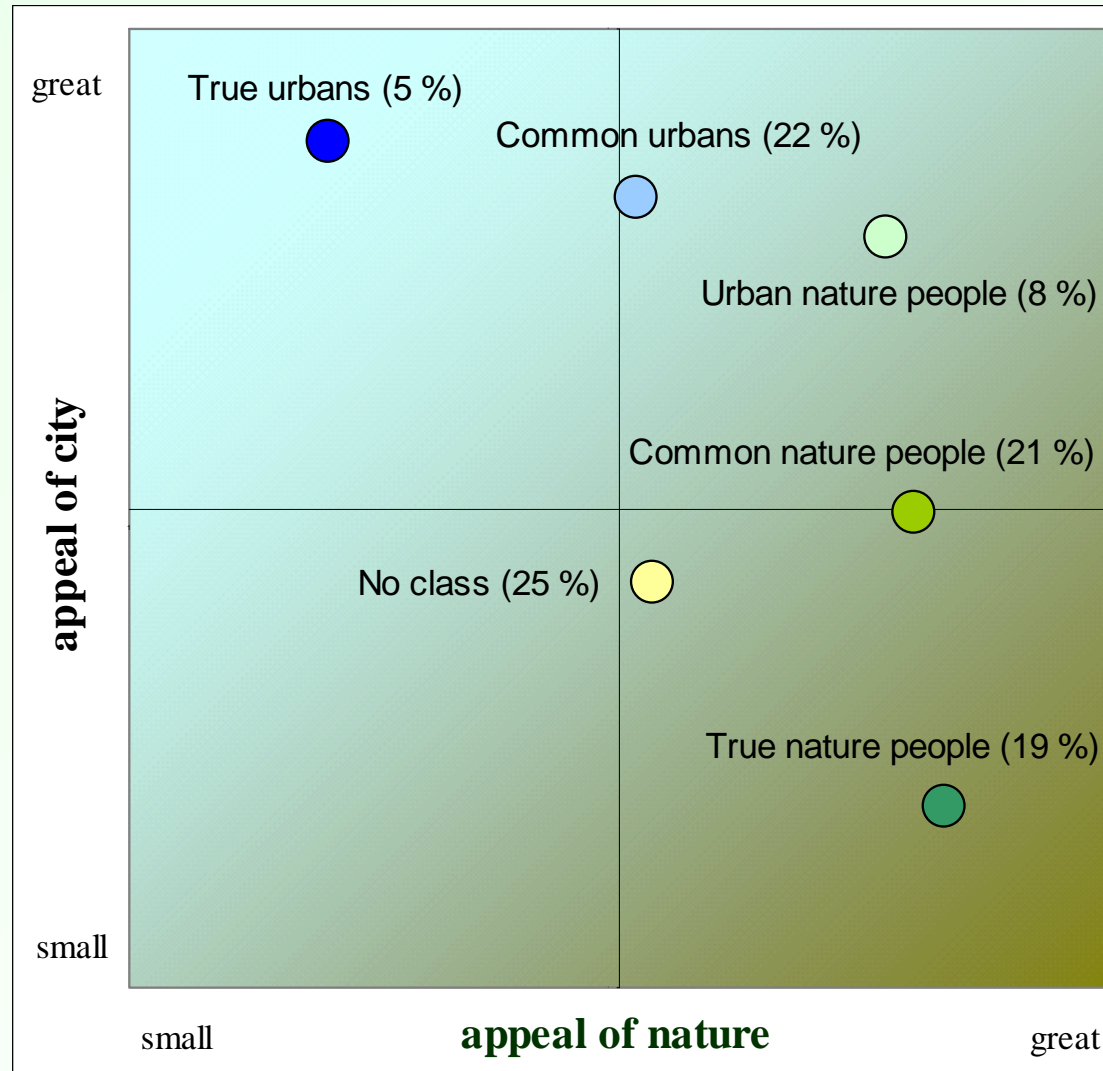
Forming the sum variables for describing the appeal of nature and city

Variables:	Factors:	
	F1 appeal of city	F2 appeal of nature
I enjoy moving about/spending time in the city	,909	,113
I appreciate areas with cafes, shops, restaurants, museums, and theatres	,725	,024
I like to shop in specialty shops and department stores downtown	,717	,121
I think that city centres are "just my places"	,689	-,204
I occasionally feel a compulsive urge to spend time in nature	,078	,719
Urban green areas are not enough for satisfy my need to spend time in nature	,121	,655
I prefer working out outdoors	-,042	,513
I receive the nature experiences i need from the parks and green areas in my neighbourhood or city	-,061	-,378
I prefer green areas or parks to built-up areas	-,232	,372
I often feel anxiety in the rush and crowds of cities	-,342	,345
I prefer working out indoors (the gym, indoor swimming pools) rather than outdoors in nature	,127	-,342
Rotation	3,08	2,52
Cumulative % of Variance	30,97	39,98

Urban Green Areas

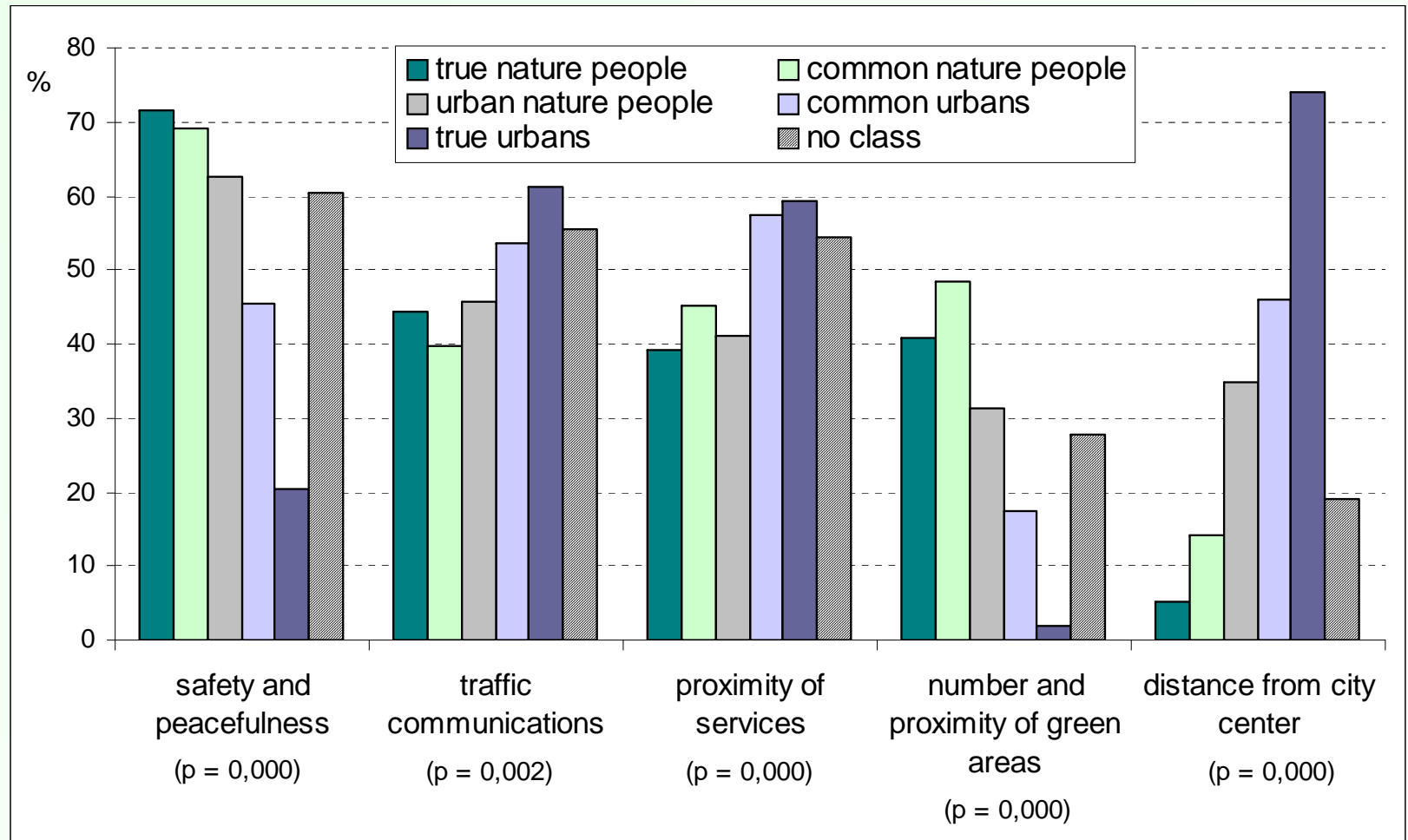


Classification of inhabitants

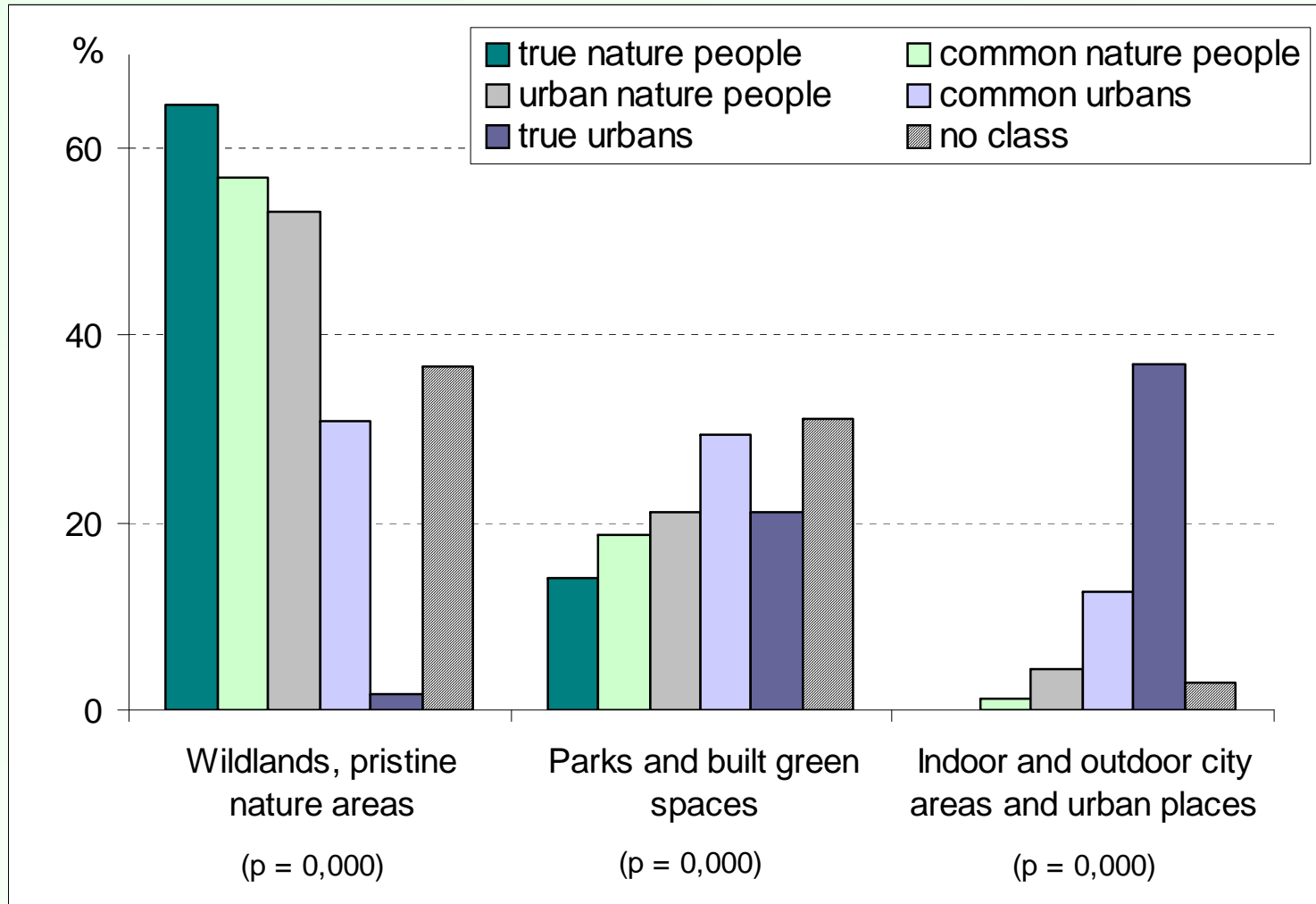


Differences between inhabitant classes

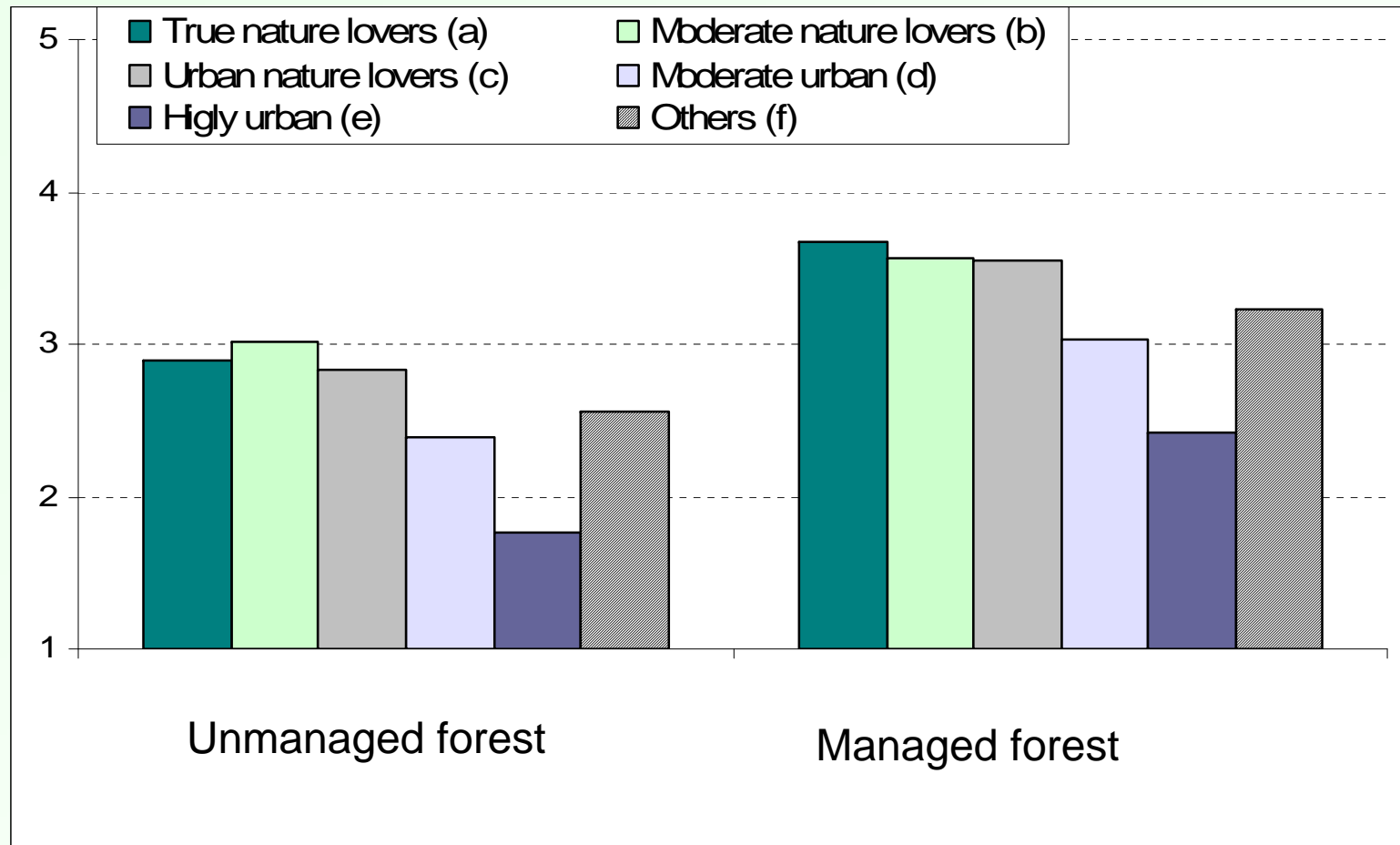
Reasons influencing choice of residence



Favourite place



Preferences regarding management of forest areas



scale from 1 = not at all, ... 5 = very much.

Summary

- On average nature has high still high importance to Finns even in urban environment (5 % true urbans and 19 % true nature people).
- Favourite places of residents are more often in nature areas than in built-up environments.
- Study shows that urban people have have diverse urban-nature relationships.
- Compact city policies in in conflict with preferences of large part of urban residents in Finland.
- Restorative effect of favourite places in extensively managed nature areas is higher than in urban parks and built-up areas.
- The loss of highly restorative places due to increasing urbanization should be taken more seriously as a psychological public health and urban planning concern.

- True nature lovers are:
 - older than average,
 - strong ties to the countryside.
 - education level is less than average,
 - live farther away from the city centre in small housing areas.
 - a pet which requires a daily outing.

- A true urban resident is typically
 - a young, highly educated male, who has spent his childhood in the city.
 - less often has a hobby associated with nature, but tends to play sport indoors
 - a high-density block of flat complex in or very close to the city centre.



Thank you!

