

The socio-cultural value of urban green space: a method for assessing the impact of the Edinburgh Living Landscape

Based on the method developed by Katja Schmidt
for a Pentlands based project as part of OPERAs.



OPERAs

Ecosystem Science
for Policy & Practice

Objectives

1. To develop a survey-based valuation method for understanding socio-cultural value;
2. To apply this method to a variety of urban green spaces;
3. To understand the opportunities for the Edinburgh Living Landscape to benefit the residents of Edinburgh.

Methods

- Tablet based structured survey
- 152 interviews with park users
- Interviews conducted in four parks from 31st May to 20th June 2015
- Random sample method

Saughton Park and Gardens

- 2.8 hectares
- Well maintained flowerbeds and community gardens
- A large amount of standard amenity grassland



Harrison Park

- ◉ 7 hectares
- ◉ Large amount of standard amenity grassland
- ◉ Some planted flowerbeds and a small community garden



Craigmillar Castle Park

- ◉ 65 hectares
- ◉ Large areas of low maintenance grassland
- ◉ Some urban forest



Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve

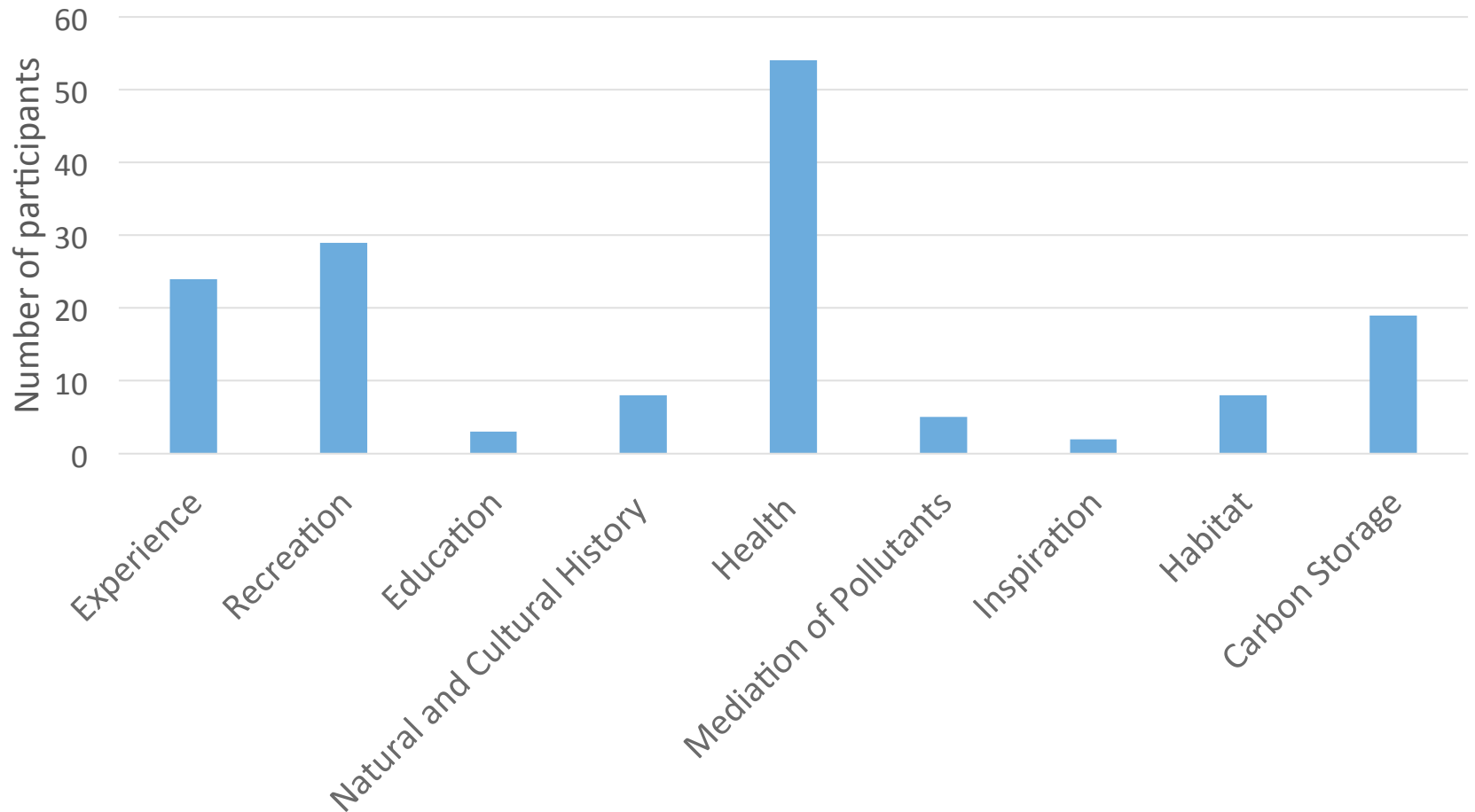
- 56 hectares
- Large areas of low maintenance grassland and urban forest
- Small well maintained walled garden



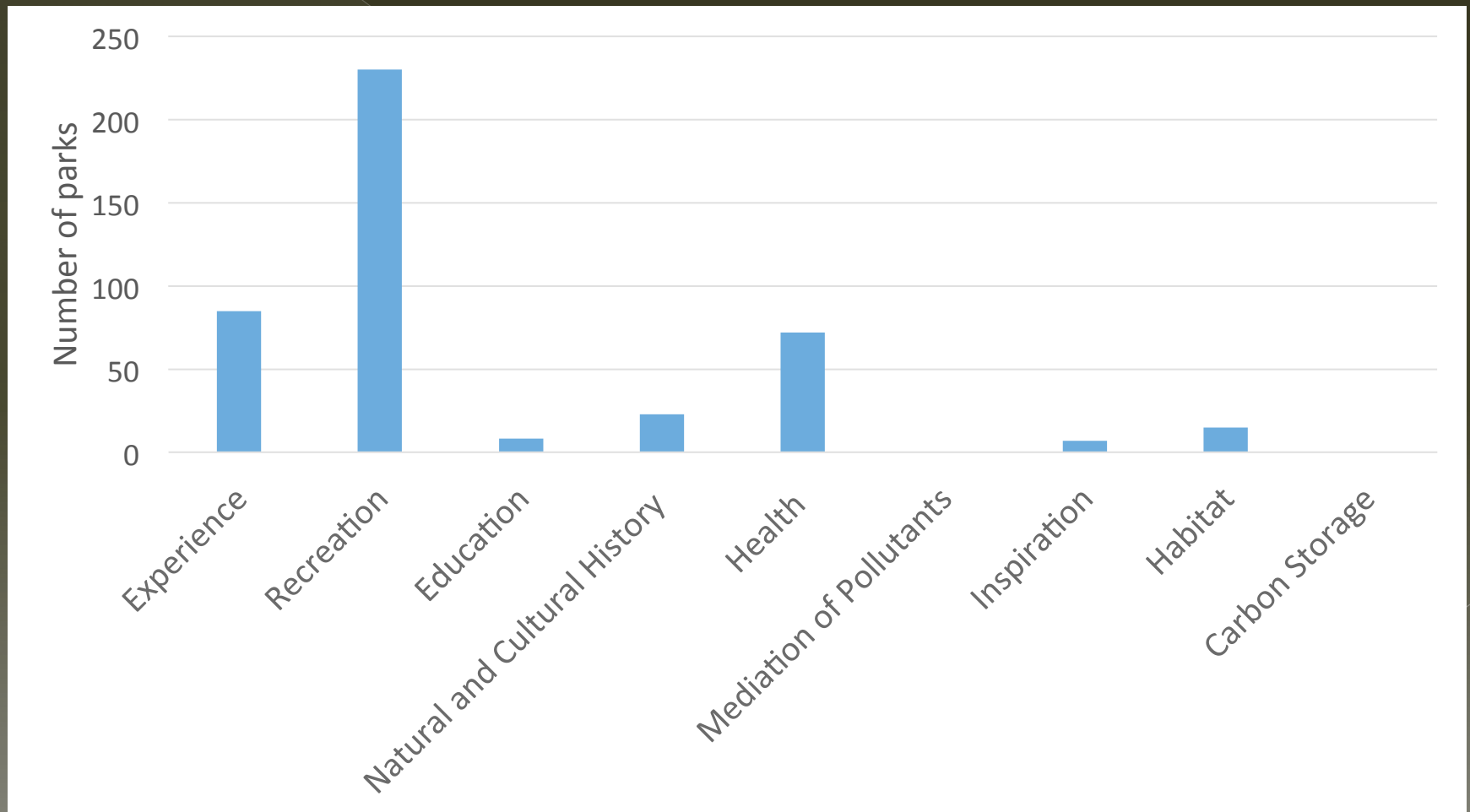
Ecosystem services in urban green spaces

- Cultural ecosystem services valued highly, especially health and recreation.
- The experience of nature and habitat also scored highly
- Little difference between personal and altruistic values
- Locally based services more recognised than global services

The frequency of each benefit being selected as the most important to society



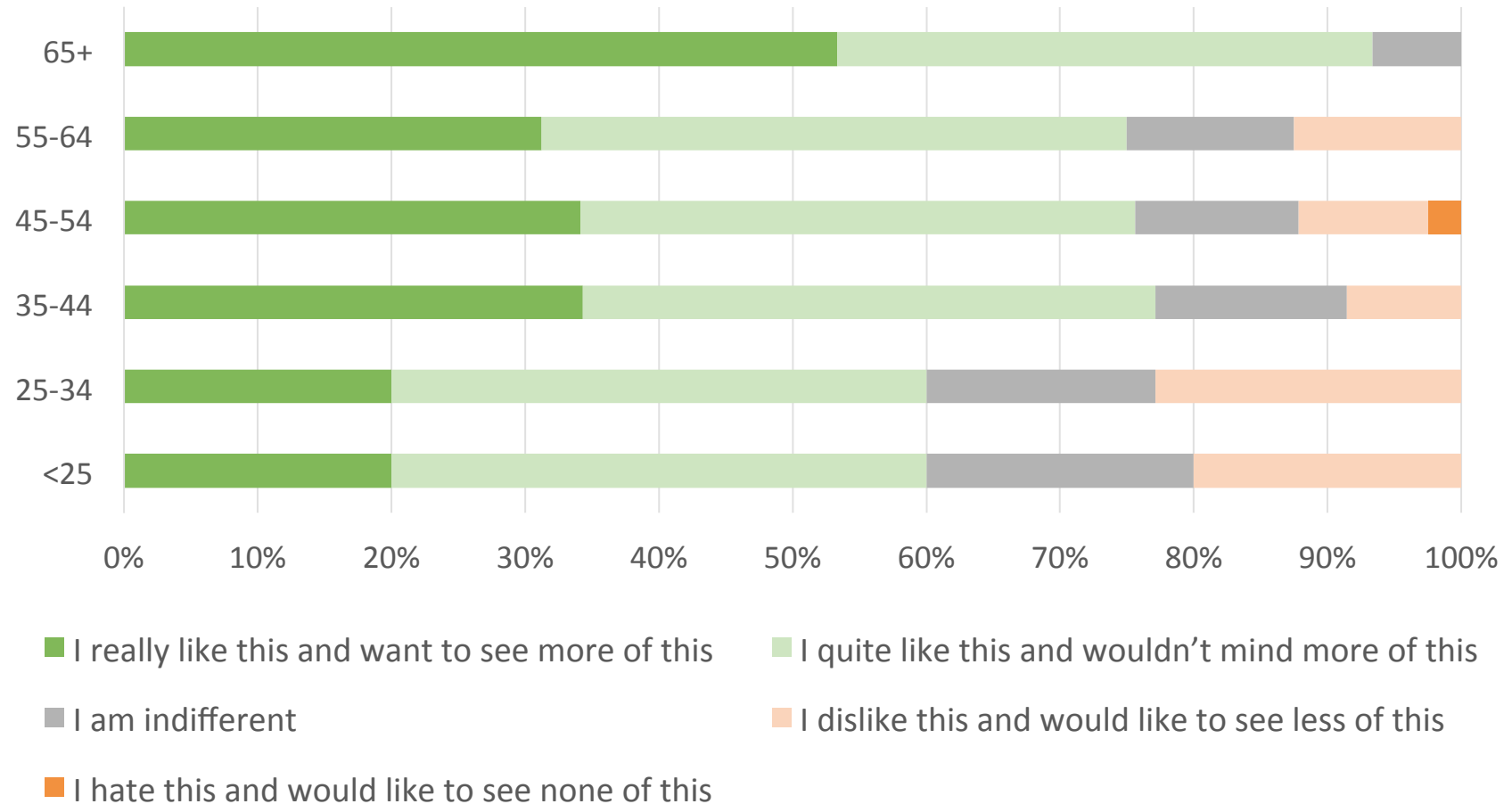
The frequency of each benefit being assigned to a popular park



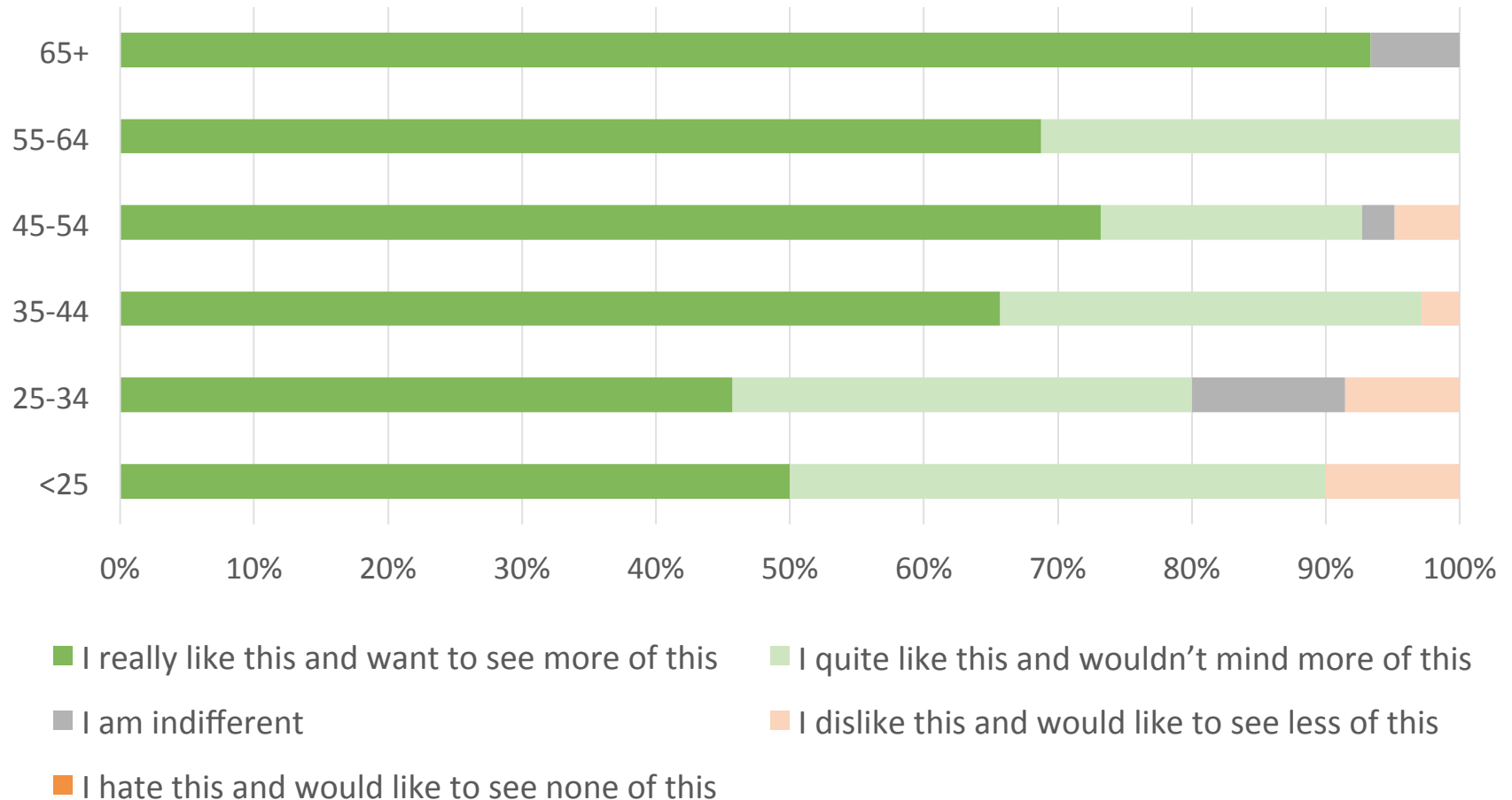
Influences on socio-cultural values

- Little differences between areas of differing socio-economic profiles
- Appreciation of park management styles was affected by park
- Age had the most marked impact on values and preferences

Preferences for low maintenance grass compared between age groups



Preferences for wildflower meadows compared between age groups



Implications for the Edinburgh Living Landscape

Increasing Biodiversity

- Biodiversity not explicitly recognised as important
- High value of scenery and experience of nature
- High appreciation of low maintenance grass and wild flower meadows

Implications for the Edinburgh Living Landscape

Re-naturalisation of parks

- Low maintenance, natural park management styles preferred to the highly tended alternatives
- Appreciation was dependent on the style of the park being used



Implications for the Edinburgh Living Landscape

Engagement in caring for green space

- Under 10% had a high interest in park management
- 20% had no interest in park management



Implications for the Edinburgh Living Landscape

The bio-cultural needs of residents

- Recreational opportunities must be preserved
- Increased biodiversity and aesthetics will have positive impact on health
- Especially important in areas of high deprivation

Socio-cultural valuation method

- Structured format was easy to analyse and conduct, but limiting in depth of information collected
- Limitations from sampling method as a true representation
- Different measures of ecosystem services gave additional depth to analysis
- Appropriate method of valuation of urban green spaces due to prevalence of cultural ecosystem services

Isobel Jones

I.H.R.Jones@sms.ed.ac.uk

Thank you to Katja Schmidt, Prof. Ariane Walz, and Marc Metzger for their help in the project, to Maggie Keegan, Alan Bell, Helen Stockham and John McTague for their assistance, and to all the interviewees for their responses and time.