

How a Lack of Green in the Residential Environment Lowers the Life Satisfaction of City Dwellers and Increases Their Willingness to Relocate

Stefanie Kley & Tetiana Dovbishchuk

This paper investigates whether various forms of green spaces in the residential environment are associated with city dwellers' life satisfaction and their willingness to relocate. Previous research on different forms of green spaces in the residential environment as a direct source of life satisfaction is scarce, and we know little about whether green spaces affect the decision to relocate. We address these topics with a two-equation model that estimates respondents' considerations to relocate while accounting for life satisfaction. With this strategy, we are able to test which aspects of residential greenery (window view, green environment, green yard, own garden, and balcony) are associated with one or both outcomes, controlling for life-course events and demographic characteristics. The data come from a representative primary survey conducted in two large German cities, Cologne and Hamburg, in 2020/21 (N = 1886). The results show that not having green elements in the window view, not having a green yard, and—exclusively for parents—not having a garden increase the likelihood of considering residential relocation. Not having a balcony and not having a garden are directly associated with decreased life satisfaction, and decreased life satisfaction triggers the willingness to relocate.