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Momentary Permanence:
Activating Urban Stillness for Everyday Well-Being.

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Abstract

In contemporary urban life, opportunities to pause have become rare. Every day, urban conditions take a toll on the minds and bodies of individuals in metropolitan cities. High density, endless commutes, persistent noise, visual clutter, and an abundance of digital stimuli create environments that are frequently stimulating, leaving little to no room for rest and mental recovery. Streets, transport nodes, and places of employment have been built with an emphasis on facilitating movement and are a constant source of stimulation, often at the expense of personal space. The ensuing fast-paced, congested, and divided-attention lifestyle has eliminated opportunities for stillness and introspection, heightening feelings of restlessness and disconnection from their surroundings and demonstrating how the modern urban environment itself has become a source of mental strain.

The aim of this research begins from the belief that such pauses are essential for well-being in efficiency-driven cities, because they aid in slowing down both the mental and physical pace. It scrutinizes how people living in dense metropolitan contexts like Mumbai, whose days often follow predictable circuits, experience and use moments of pause. Intending to understand how stillness can reduce cognitive overload and ease stress, the research revisits early theories of spatial meaning to explore how identity and emotional connection to place can be restored. Through a blend of literature review, analysis of theorists' work, spatial study, research papers and articles, case studies, and observations, the study tests whether deliberate pauses lessen cognitive overload, relieve stress, and rebuild emotional ties to place in dense urban contexts.

Keywords: urban placelessness, cognitive overload, overstimulation, restlessness, reflection, emotional meaning, well-being.

Literature review:

- A thorough reading of scientific and architectural research papers explaining theories of attention restoration, wakeful rest, and how human psychology is affected by the built environment.
- Reviewing the works of multiple theorists, like Norberg Schulz, Henri Lefebvre, Yi-Fu Tuan, and Juhani Pallasmaa, to understand early spatial theories.
- Examples and case studies all across the world illustrate the present-day issue.

Research Questions:

1. Is there any interrelation between the human brain, psychology, and architecture? How does this relationship impact the built environment?
2. Does this make people's health even more vulnerable?
3. Are metropolitan cities a center for such threats?
4. How has the fast-paced lifestyle in metropolitan areas deteriorated the conditions of both architectural spaces and the users' well-being?

5. Does the act of 'pausing' enable us to improve this relationship and restore the essence of the space?

Objectives

1. Assessing the relationship between human brain function and the built environment.
2. To study the impact caused on this correlation by the constantly changing trends of urbanization.
3. To study the impacts on users' well-being, prioritizing functionality and efficiency.
4. Understanding the role of pause in restoring the spatial quality and user well-being.
5. Achieving a greater goal of laying the bases of making cities more livable, transforming them from a vessel of psychological stresses to an environment that nurtures user well-being.

Research Methodology:

- A thorough literature review of research paper findings to analyze the issues caused by urban stressors
- Reading through articles to get a varied perspective on the impacts caused by metropolitan cities on the well-being of the users.
- Analyzing case studies of different cities to understand the current condition of metropolitan cities globally.
- Reviewing early theories of spatial meaning and identity.
- A public survey to understand what triggers make users stop by and reflect upon the surroundings.
- Using these triggers to lay the bases for designing user-centric spaces.

Hypothesis:

The focus of architecture has shifted from user-centric to throughput-driven spaces in a metropolitan city, taking a toll on both user well-being and spatial quality.

1. An introduction to how the built environment interacts with the human brain.

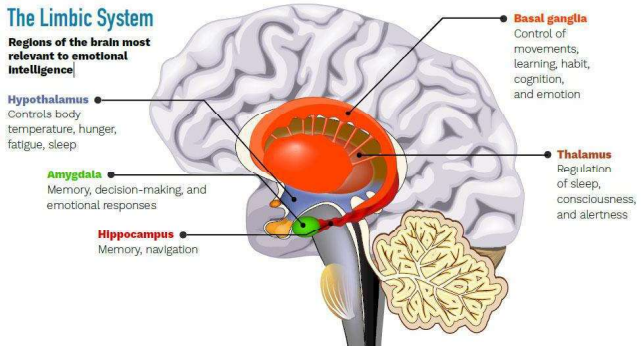
Architecture began as a basic response to survival. Early humans-built shelters to keep themselves safe from the climatic forces and wildlife. Even now, the design is governed by human responses and their needs (Shin Thant Htet, 2023). Present-day urbanization is increasing, causing a surge in population with multiple behavioural patterns coexisting, making it essential to understand how human behaviour impacts the built environment. Understanding how these behaviours shape our surroundings matters more than ever. That's where neuroarchitecture comes in. This area of study is situated where architecture and neuroscience converge. It looks at how buildings and spaces affect our brains, our emotions, and the way we behave (Abbas et al., 2024).

With the aim of understanding the interrelation between the human brain, psychology and architecture; following areas will be touched upon to decipher the interconnection between the brain and the experienced surroundings, the role of ACC (Anterior Cingulate Cortex), PPA (Para hippocampal Place Area), and Mirror Neurons (which generate empathetic responses to the surroundings), as to how these regions of the brain respond to the surrounding built environment.

1.1 The fundamentals of architecture's perception and response to spaces.

Architecture affects the way one comprehends space, feels comfortable, and navigates their emotions. The limbic system contributes to this modulation; It requires more than just visual perception to explore and experience a place. It involves processing it through specific neural pathways.

Figure 1: The Limbic system

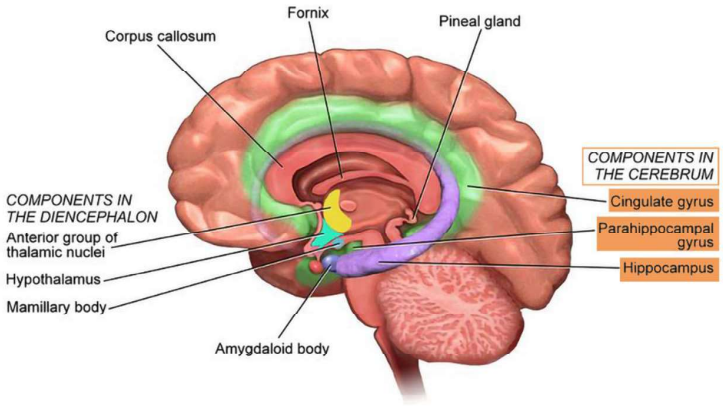


Source: Dana Foundation, 2023

1.1.1 Para hippocampal Place Area

This region in the brain interlinks visual perception with spatial memory, which is adjacent to the hippocampus. Its operational mechanism involves recognizing places, wayfinding, and creating a mental map of the routes. Places with clear landmarks and recognizable shapes make it easier for people to form these strong mental maps.

Figure 2: Components of the Cerebrum



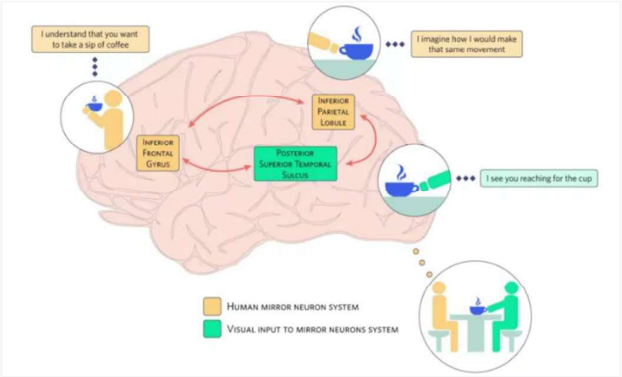
Source: Pinterest

1.1.2 Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC)

Its working mechanism is to create a link between emotion and thought, combining the external sensorial input with the internal emotional responses to it, and also regulates attention. Studies show that the ACC is sensitive to spatial attributes like

shape, transitions, and continuity. The regulatory role is facilitated by coherent and harmonic designs. Fragmented or overstimulating environments, in contrast, increase stress and take more effort.

Figure 3: Working of the mirror neuron system



Source: Knowing neuron, 2016

1.1.3 Mirror neuron system

This system lends a physical reality to how we experience a space. The neuron lights up when an individual responds or sees others respond, and creates a mental representation of the movement. To gaze at a corridor, staircase, or a vaulted ceiling can provoke a physical-emotional response linked with moving through it. This is why some designs encourage movement while others lead to discomfort or a repelling effect. These brain functions demonstrate how the neurological system and architecture are always interacting. It influences safety, comfort, and stress through our perception, memories, and physical being (Patricia Fierro Newton, 2025).

1.2 Wayfinding and spatial orientation in the built environment.

Spatial orientation is not just a convenience; it is an essential cognitive function. The hippocampus plays a central role in this function. It builds cognitive maps with specialized neurons known as "place cells". These cells help keep track of the location in which an individual is present and further help navigate based on memory related to that space. Cognitive maps are easier to generate and utilize by the brain when there is no ambiguity, distinct, easily identifiable landmarks, and pathways. Conversely, mundane, monotonous, or overly complex environments increase mental effort, elevate stress, and cause confusion. This is particularly true for people suffering from cognitive issues such as dementia or autism (Patricia Fierro Newton, 2025).

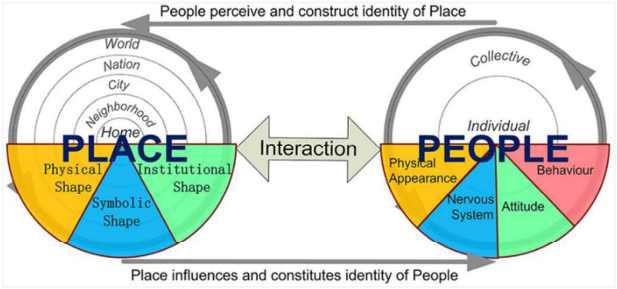
This highlights that there is a strong interrelation between the human brain and the built environment, such that they constantly shape and influence each other; thus, it becomes crucial in understanding how the surrounding spaces have an impact on human psychology and well-being.

2. The influence of the built environment on the emotional well-being of users.

The above discussion yields a direct relation between the built environment and emotions, as architecture is capable of evoking memories, triggering senses, and the flow of creativity,

or even causing anxiety and stress. Thus, understanding how spaces influence the user's mind and emotions is essential for promoting mental well-being. For example, regulating the light (natural as well as artificial sources) is crucial as it directly affects the user's comfort and circadian rhythm, which in turn affects the sleep cycle. However, urban lifestyles often involve excessive and harsh artificial lighting, causing sleep disorders and irritability. Other factors include colour and materiality, as specific, textured finishes promote a sense of comfort, while monotonous and sterile colours are isolating.

Figure 4: Relationships between people, place, and place identity



Source: Frontiers in Psychology, 2020

Nature is also significant as having physical or only visual access to plants can reduce the feeling of stress and fear, and its total inaccessibility, on the contrary, affects the levels of anxiety. The last essential factor of analysis is acoustics, considering that constant echoing noise can increase stress levels, and sound-absorbing surfaces and managed background noise help to soothe the nervous system. Neuroimaging studies have shown that spaces designed for positive well-being and aesthetically pleasing environments activate brain regions associated with positive feelings and reward or emotional control. It means that emotional impact is not optional but predetermined, and architects play a vital role in ensuring optimal positive emotions (Abbas et al., 2024).

2.1 Beyond built space: The psychological dimensions of architectural experience

The existing correlation between architectural space and human behaviour has been weakened as the focus has shifted from user well-being to form and function. Architectural spaces are now being assessed based on their functionality, usability, economic efficiency, and visual aesthetics, but they overlook the aspect of user well-being. According to Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa, the power of architecture does not just involve form and function (and materials), but it has an enormous influence on our inner, mental lives: how we think, what we remember, how we desire, and dream. Maurice Merleau-Ponty called this the "chiastic intertwine" - a pairing between our bodily existence, mental experience, and being-in-the-world that is elemental. This implies an interplay in which the whole influences each part and vice versa (Abbas et al., 2024).

3. Urban Stressors and Everyday Well-Being.

In modern-day, city dwellers are frequently overwhelmed by relentless stimuli. High densities, constant traffic, noise, and visual clutter bombard the senses, triggering chronic stress and cognitive fatigue ("How City Affects the Mental Health of the People," n.d.). The average lifestyle of a citizen residing in a metropolitan city has a predictable work-life

circuit, a 24/7 brain running in the background, endless commute, sensory overload, leaving little to no room for reflection or calm. Cities that do not prioritize the act of stopping or slowing down create spatial conditions that compound physiological and cognitive stress. People often feel hurried, anxious, and unable to "switch off" when every sidewalk, billboard, and subway station screams for attention. People's emotions and behaviours are greatly influenced by the planning and design of urban areas. In contrast, urban environments that prioritize human needs, with safe, walkable streets, adequate public spaces, and access to fundamental public amenities, promote social connections, encourage interaction, and support residents' mental well-being. The modern-day metropolitan city lifestyle is giving rise to many stress-inducing factors, also known as urban stressors, which in turn are affecting users' well-being negatively. Thus, understanding these urban stressors has become crucial.

Figure 5: Urban Stressors

Source: Pinterest, edited by author

3.1 Sensory overstimulation

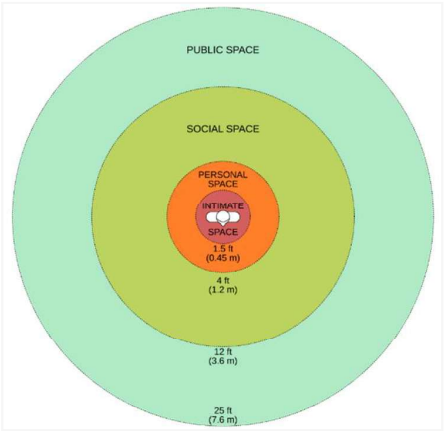
The fast-paced city lifestyle means an individual is constantly exposed to noise, bright light, signboards, and advertisements screaming for attention, all of which are making our brain consume information at all times with negligible breaks, and as a response to it, an individual is always mentally fatigued and overly stimulated. When the mind is overly stimulated, one finds oneself lost, difficult to focus, respond, just frustrated, and desperately needs a moment of respite. Visual senses are the most overworked and strained senses. Why? Because we gaze at screens all the time, from doom scrolling social media in free time to staring at laptop screens at work, then stepping out of work to being bombarded with hoardings and advertisements, there is tons of visual data that we consume regularly, making us feel fatigued at all times. The downside is that everybody is so used to this kind of lifestyle that the subconscious needs to pause for a moment of respite and do nothing.

3.2 Density, Crowding, and Loss of Personal Space

In an urban context, the city is so crowded with people tiptoeing, looking for an opportunity to squeeze into the space, and walk right ahead of the person walking in front, to escape the crowd as quickly as possible. Every place of commute, roads, and walkways are always occupied by people, due to which there is no personal space - the invisible bubble that every individual walks around with, but over-crowding has

ruptured those bubbles of personal space. Densely populated spaces are not simply just overcrowded spaces, but they have a serious effect on the loss of personal space of an individual, making them uncomfortable, irritated because they feel helpless due to loss of personal space, making an individual more anxious, and at times, social withdrawal, where people avoid social interaction due to overly crowded places (Psychology town, 2024).

Figure 6: Illustration of personal space



Source: Wikimedia Commons, 2009

3.3 Commute Fatigue

Study shows that prolonged commuting correlates strongly with anxiety, reduced mood, and attentional depletion, turning mobility itself into a daily cognitive stressor. Long traffic jams and train travel can increase frustration and stress because you are stuck in them for hours, wasting time; most of the commute experience is not pleasant at all, making it a more dreadful task to commute to and from home and the workplace. An individual becomes more irritable as the travel distance increases, which in turn affects productivity at work and at home because commuting makes one feel constantly exhausted. Thus, improving the commute experience is essential as a significant amount of an individual's time is consumed in travelling to and from their place of work (Francesca Baker, 2023).

3.4 Effects of decreasing green spaces

The stress hormone cortisol is the main sign that the body is under stress. This hormone is released when it senses perceived stress, particularly when a person is in overstimulating environments with little to no exposure to green areas. There was research conducted in Japan to study the soothing effects of nature, which revealed how spending time in nature decreased cortisol levels, blood pressure, and heart rate effectively. These effects were observed not just by taking walks in nature but also by simply gazing at nature or greenery. A study in Australia suggests that spending just 30 minutes in outdoor green spaces once a week can reduce symptoms of depression. In a society where symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression are common, nature plays a crucial role in lowering these symptoms and enhancing users' mental and physical health. (Hoge & Wulf, 2023).

Based on the above discussion, urban stressors in the metropolitan city and their effects on the well-being of the users highlight the necessity to identify these stressors and their effects to counteract them with simple design decisions and changes. This change and restoration of good well-being will not be immediate, but small steps towards it can reduce and improve the quality of life an individual spends in a metropolitan city.

4. Case studies highlighting the detrimental effects of urban pressures on residents (national and international examples)

To have a better understanding of these prevailing issues faced by the people living in metropolitan cities, cases of global cities will be examined, and then, furthermore, a comparative analysis of metropolitan Indian cities will be conducted to have a deeper understanding and relatability.

Figure 7: Mapping the case study locations around the globe

Source: Author

4.1 Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh's capital city has faced several detrimental effects due to rapid and uncontrolled urbanization. Key urban stressors: Rapid urbanization, overcrowding, air pollution, vehicular traffic, and high population density.

In Dhaka's case, rapid growth and development have depleted housing, infrastructure, and resources, resulting in problems like poverty, unequal opportunities for a healthy life, and a higher standard of living that affect people's health and well-being (Rahaman et al., 2023).

Figure 8: Vehicular traffic in Dhaka

Source: Surva Kranti Das

4.2 Metro Manila, Philippines

Metro Manila is the national capital region (NCR) of the Philippines, and is facing citizens' well-being-oriented challenges because of transit-oriented shortcomings.

Key urban stressors: traffic congestion, prolonged and unreliable journey, and inadequate transit infrastructure.

In the case of Metro Manila, the well-being of the citizens is being affected because of the poor commute infrastructure and lengthy travel time (Morales et al., 2024).

Figure 9: Vehicular traffic in Metro Manila

Source: Lawrence Sumulong, 2016

4.3 Shenzhen, China

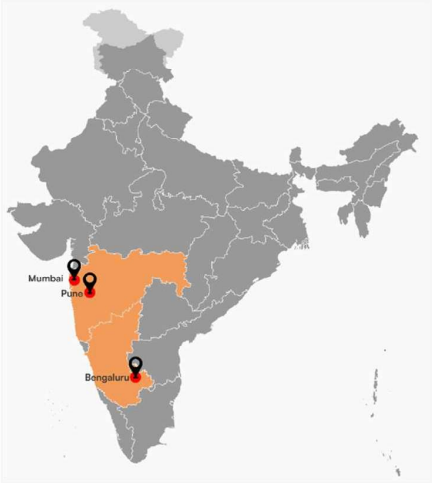
Among the world's youngest global metropolises, Shenzhen has grown from a fishing village to a city of more than 17 million in just four decades. This extremely fast-paced urbanism suggests a compelling case for studying stress generated by acceleration as opposed to density-generated stress.

Key urban stressors: Long hours of work (from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week), the overwhelming amount of digital content, and the continuous screen connectivity. Chronic stress and burnout, sleep loss, and cognitive exhaustion are some of the consequences created by these urban stressors. In cities like Shenzhen, due to the long working hours that exist, people do not have the opportunity to take care of themselves, so their mental health has deteriorated.

Figure 10: Long working hours

Source: CGTN, 2020

Figure 11: Mapping the case study locations in India



Source: Author

4.4. Mumbai - the financial capital city of India.

Lifestyle: Rapidly growing service economy, extensive commute, extreme crowding (rail in particular).

Major contributors to stress: High-density conditions and stress due to excessive time spent commuting, loss of individual personal space, and limited access to sufficient public open space per capita.

Figure 12: Crowded platform at CSMT station
Source: Mid-day, 2025

4.5. Bengaluru is sometimes referred to as India's Silicon Valley.

Lifestyle: Rapidly evolving technology, increased commute time, and an increase in suburbanization away from the city center.

Major contributors to stress: poor road conditions & maintenance, decreased travel speed due to high volume of traffic congestion.

Figure 13: Traffic Congestion

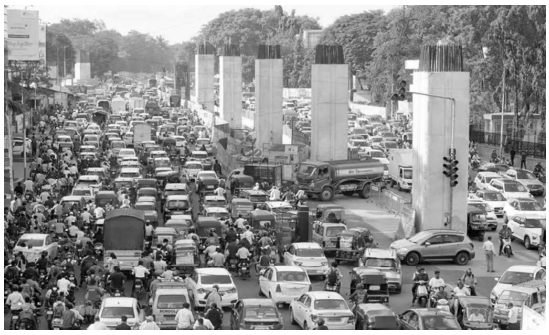
Source: Mid-day, 2025

4.6 Pune - IT and education hub

Pune is a relatively fast-growing city with a rapidly expanding IT/education sector and many commuters every day. The pace of development is similar to that of Mumbai, but Pune has a much stronger infrastructure and government.

Major contributors to stress: Travel time and congestion are rising substantially as a result of more people owning cars and increased construction.

Figure 14: Traffic congestion



Source: Google

It is clear from the case studies that have been examined that the effects of urbanization vary in intensity. Although the issues are fairly similar, different cities have different overlapping stressors. For example, developing cities (e.g., Dhaka) are primarily impacted by environmental and exposure-based factors, while developed cities (e.g., Manila) are faced with issues around unreliable mobility and difficulties with commuting. The fast-paced work cultures of cities (e.g., Shenzhen) also reveal cognitive impacts from the pace of work. When combined, these urban stressors cause the body's physiological systems to become chronically activated (i.e., sleep deprivation, attentional fatigue, and diminished social well-being), with the elderly, shift workers, those with chronic illnesses, and those with low incomes bearing the brunt of this burden. Thus, while pace is a common factor in establishing the nature of urbanization across cities, the way in which a city is designed and governed ultimately determines whether a city becomes an engine of stress or remains a place that has recovery as a primary focus.

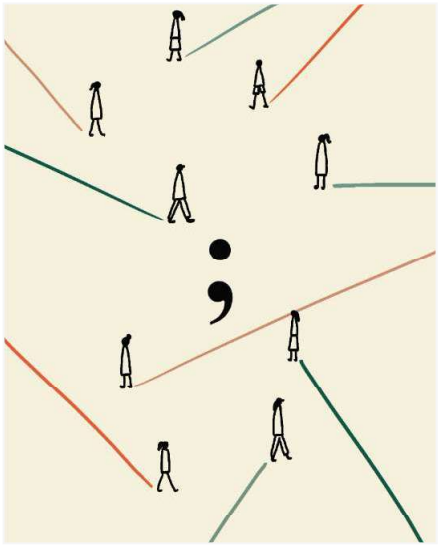
The above discussion brings to light that the intensive lifestyle and continual bombardment of urban stressors make one frustrated, restless, and fatigued, as there is no time for respite and mental recovery. Thus, providing opportunities for people to pause, rest, and reflect has become crucial, given the current urban scenario.

5. Momentary Permanence: the subconscious need for a Pause.

Momentary permanence is an architectural phenomenon that generates memorably experienced moments that interrupt how we would ordinarily navigate through and experience space by providing alterations in sensory experiences (cues), interruption of time, and/or social engagement. In simple terms, momentary permanence is a brief interruption or a pause that has a lasting impression on the mind. Fast-paced cities have well-defined networks that are the basis for daily life and can be identified with a monotonous routine of commute, work, errands, and return. These habitual networks make one view the city as a series of tasks or events rather than moments of lived experiences.

That automaticity is stopped, and perception is reoriented by a brief interruption, such as a small courtyard, a vendor crowd, a widened landing, or a shaded ledge. During that pause, the moving body transforms into an attending body: place starts to accumulate narrative, sound, light, smell, and tactile sensations become more acute, and a fleeting event becomes a remembered event. This effect has both theoretical and empirical support. Social and spatial theorists understand pause as a tool for interrupting routine.

Figure 15: Where movement meets pause



Source: Pinterest, edited by author

The significance of this disruption is clarified by psychological research. Prolonged attention causes mental fatigue and distraction, according to Attention Restoration Theory (ART). Research has shown that people's working memory improves when they have the chance to go for a short stroll in the outdoors or in a setting that limits their direct attention.

In short, a moment of rest restores cognitive capacity and increases receptiveness to place (Prof. Garside, 2016). Architectural and phenomenological writers locate the pause within the sensory and material grammar of architecture.
All of these results, along with the analysis of the case study, suggest that there is a subconscious need because the user requires a brief break to breathe and think, which increases their awareness of both themselves and their environment.

5.1 Restoring spatial significance by using theoretical frameworks for interpreting a space.

Earlier, architects, geographers, and philosophers have defined and described what a space is. They have examined this subject through many perspectives (e.g., atmospheric qualities, movement within a space, memory, dwelling, etc.) by considering prominent thinkers in the discipline, including Norberg-Schulz, Yi-Fu Tuan, Lefebvre, Pallasmaa, and Zumthor. Each of these individuals has provided valuable insights into how pausing can transform an "ordinary" space into a place that carries significance or is memorable. Understanding these early theories creates a foundation for understanding the idea of momentary permanence, the moment of stillness. The importance of understanding this

lineage is critical in developing methods to counteract placelessness and recreate the "soul" of space through purposeful design.

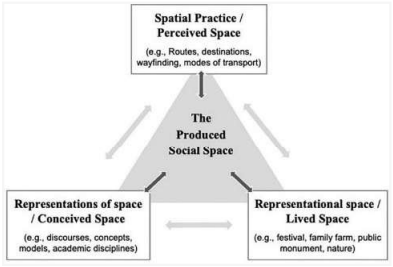
5.1.1 Yi-Fu Tuan's theory of space and place

According to Yi-Fu Tuan, the distinction between space and place arises from the different ways that human beings conceive of their surroundings. Space is associated with movement, opportunity, and potentiality, while place is characterized by constancy, the comfort of familiarity, and a sense of emotional attachment. Tuan believes that through continued experience, the built space turns into a place. Within a given space, slowing down the speed of transition allows people to experience the sensory details of that space distinctly, and over time, movement is converted into memory and association with that place (Tuan, 2011).

5.1.2 Henri Lefebvre's theory of spatial triad

Henri Lefebvre has established a political-procedural map called the spatial triad. The perceived space is the tangible experiences within our daily routine where pause occurs, conceived space is the space understanding of space from the perspective of designers, architects, and planners. Here is how the design influences the ability to take breaks. Lastly, the lived space (symbolism) demonstrates the narratives, emotions, and memories of pause spaces (Schmid, n.d.).

Figure 16: Spatial triad



Source: HERD – Health Environments Research & Design Journal, 2024

5.1.3 Norberg Schulz's theory of phenomenology and dwelling

Norberg Schulz's phenomenology of dwelling has two major themes: "Orientation" and "Existential Space." Orientation allows one to find a way through a space and feel "at home" in that space. The concept of phenomenology illustrates how a person transforms space into meaning by using their senses to perceive and subsequently to remember their experiences within the space. The spatial attributes, like the size, materials, thermal comfort, and acoustics of the space, influenced the emotions and the way one experiences the space (Norberg-Schulz, 1980).

Figure 17: Phenomenology and its aspects

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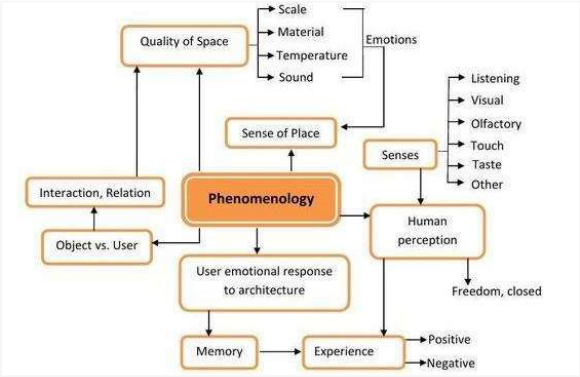
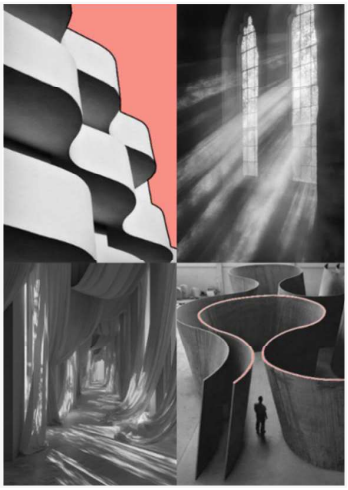


Source: WordPress, 2017

5.1.4 Pallasmaa & Zumthor: multisensory atmosphere

They both have stressed upon looking beyond the built form to experience the environment via elements - light, texture, sound, and temperature that trigger the senses. A pause designed around multisensory cues may be more retrievable and emotionally resonant. The outcome of such a space will enhance the spatial meaning and emotional connection to it by making users more aware of their surroundings and what they are experiencing whilst in that space.

Figure 18: Multisensory atmosphere



Source: Pinterest, edited by author

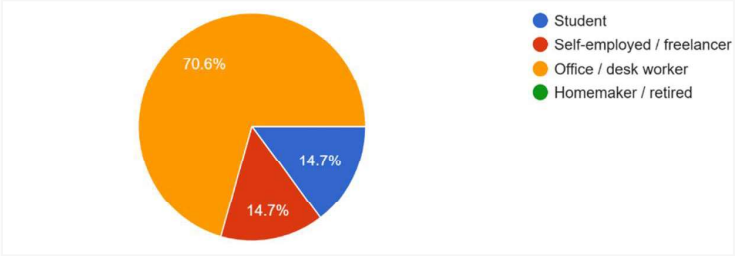
The discussed theories provide a lens through which the aspect of pausing can be creatively explored; even if it becomes habitual over time, it does not lose its essence, which adds an edge to a monotonous routine.

6. A survey of public experience on the act of pausing

A comprehensive survey of 35 people was conducted as part of this research to understand the views of people from a non-architectural background. The primary aim of this survey was to identify the factors that made them stop by, think, and engage with their surroundings. Unlike architects and designers, these people do not have formal training in this field, which makes their perspective distinct and may overlook details often caught by the trained eye of a designer.

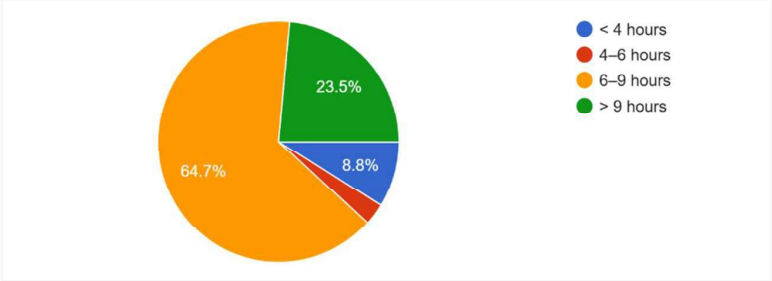
The following are some quantitative data from the survey highlighting various reasons and aspects to pause.

Figure 19: The image is a response to the question: Occupation.



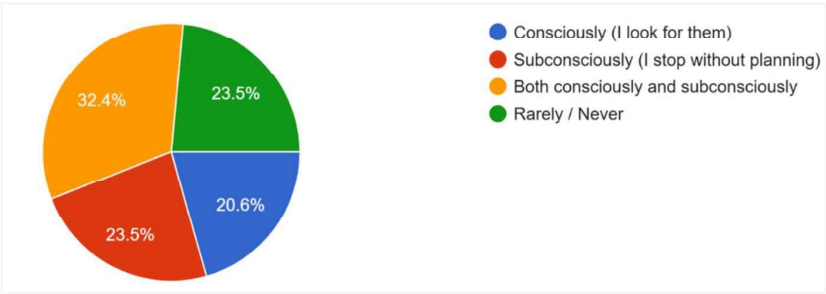
Source: Author

Figure 20: The image is a response to the question: Typical work/study hours per day.



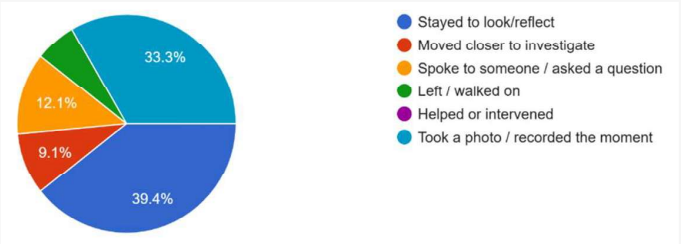
Source: Author

Figure 21: The image is a response to the question: Do you consciously or subconsciously seek short pauses or ways to stop by during your day?



Source: Author

Figure 22: The image is a response to the question: After you paused, what did you do next?



Source: Author

Table 1: Triggers of pause from survey

Triggers for pause	Description	Examples from the survey
Nature	Stopped by because of a natural entity that soothed the mind	Trees, sunset, breeze, light, shade
Unexpected observations	Something, even if small, comes up while commuting and catches the eye	Street vendors, a sight of interest - garden or food stall, graffiti, etc.
Architectural design detail	The spatial quality or attention to detail	Interesting facade, interiors, and intricate design.
Personal routine and breaks	Every day pitstops	Coffee breaks, post-lunch walks,
Intentional pause points	Spaces that are meant for people to stop by.	Parks, lakes, cafes, monuments

Source: Author

This table sums up the primary triggers that make them stop by or dedicate a few moments of their routine life, which adds a silver lining to a mundane day. This also indicates that people unknowingly engage with architectural pauses at the same time while creating their own. But these days, people are so swamped with their work, lifestyle, and frustrated with the urban conditions that they tend to overlook such pause points or do not quite value their presence until it is absent or being replaced. This highlights the need to develop opportunities to pause and reflect, whether it is intentional or incidental. These short interruptions help restore spatial meaning and emotional connection to a place by making the user stop, think, reflect, and appreciate its surroundings. The urban spaces of commute and journey are not just spaces of mere existence and flow, but could become places of remembrance and the willingness to be in that space. This will provide an opportunity to enhance the experience of the space by encouraging 'momentary permanence' - the willingness to stay longer as a result of these short interruptions in routine that have a lasting impression on the mind.

Research findings:

This research demonstrates that there is a direct relationship between the urban conditions, human psychology, and the spatial quality of the built environment. Urban stressors in a city often act simultaneously, amplifying their negative impact. Sensory overload, high density, overcrowding, and loss of personal space led to mental fatigue and restlessness on constant exposure to these stressors. This explains why the state of metropolitan areas is deplorable since these stressors are always present and have an impact on people's daily lives. It is demonstrated by a review of scientific research and spatial theories that the brain is extremely sensitive to its built environment. Surroundings that are overstimulated, fragmented, crowded, function oriented are spaces with low spatial quality and emotional

identity, which makes it clear that architecture is not a mere backdrop but an active element that influences the everyday life of people.

With the thorough review of spatial theories and survey it is evident that in such urban conditions, there is a need for pause for mental recovery in overstimulated environments. This is where the concept of momentary permanence emerges, which highlights the significance that short interruptions in daily routine can have lasting impressions that provide mild respites and moments of stillness from the surroundings. However, the overall findings underline that the shift of focus from user well-being to function and efficiency-driven spaces has weakened the emotional connection and identity of the user with the built environment. However, it is not too late, and this relationship can be restored by providing spaces for rejuvenation and pause that offer the user a break from a rushed lifestyle without disrupting the pace of everyday life.

Conclusion:

In a modern-day scenario, there are countless stressors that affect the well-being of an individual, but this research aimed at finding ways of reducing the damage done by the urban stressors in the built environment, since most people spend the majority of their time in them. These stressors have a greater impact when they act simultaneously and when metropolitan cities prioritize function, movement, speed, and efficiency, compromising on the user's psychological needs for pause and reflection. There is a direct interrelation between the human brain and architecture because it constantly deciphers the spatial attributes, and when a space is constantly stimulated, it lacks opportunities to slow down, which makes the mind restless and hyper-focused at all times, leading to mental fatigue. This not only deteriorates mental health but also weakens the user's willingness to be in that space and leads to a loss of emotional connection to it.

The act of pausing can help mitigate the psychological stress caused by varied urban factors in metropolitan cities by enhancing the spatial qualities and making the users more aware of their surroundings. Thus, on an urban level, when a city starts adopting user-centric design, ultimately, it enhances people's quality of life, making the city a better place to live.

Recommendation:

The study has brought to light how momentary permanence (pause) is an essential tool that helps slow down but does not disrupt the momentum of life. On this basis, future research studies should study the real-time impact of pause on the well-being of the users, as to how they interact with the space when given an opportunity to stop and do nothing. Furthermore, this study aims to analyze how these pause spaces differ according to the city, lifestyle, users, and urban stressors.

In order to ensure user-centric design, pause should be considered an important design tool in the early stages of urban planning, design, and policy-making of transit-oriented development. The interventions could vary from small urban plugins, taking into account the behavioral mapping of users, to interventions that connect to their way of commuting and provide them opportunities to wait, rest, and do nothing at the same time, not hindering the pace of other functions. Pause could act as a powerful design tool when it is thought of in the planning stage itself, and not a mere addition to the project. This could be an initiative to make cities less daunting and more livable.

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