



Pride in place in culture-led regeneration: An exploratory case study of Limoges, France

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ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage is frequently mobilised in culture-led regeneration strategies, yet little is known about how such heritage contributes to a positive place image, how residents emotionally relate to it, and how these emotions shape pro-place behaviors. In particular, pride in place—often invoked as a desirable outcome of regeneration—remains rarely examined empirically. This exploratory study examines the relationships between residents' place image, pride in place, and willingness to recommend their city as a tourist destination, using survey data from 510 residents of Limoges, a UNESCO Creative City recognised for its porcelain living tradition. Results show that pride significantly strengthens the effect of most place image components on recommendation intentions, but not the distinctive local *savoir-faire*, likely due to historical associations with industrial decline. This suggests that tourism strategies centred on heritage with which residents feel emotionally disconnected may fail to secure their endorsement. By bridging urban studies, tourism research, and environmental psychology, the study offers empirical insights that may inform policymakers seeking to foster socially sustainable tourism and, more broadly, resident-sensitive approaches to culture-led regeneration.

1. Introduction

Pride in place is a recurring notion in local development debates, both scholarly and policy-oriented. Notably, in urban studies (Morrison, 2016), pride in place is commonly presented as an aspirational emotional outcome of urban renewal and, most particularly, culture-led regeneration (Collins, 2016). In much of this literature, pride tends to be implicitly assumed to follow from improvements in a place's image and reputation, with limited attention given to its possible effects on residents' pro-place behaviors (Bonaiuto et al., 2020).

At the policy level, however, pride in place has recently gained renewed attention - not merely as a regeneration outcome, but as a condition for citizens' engagement in place-based transformation. The UK's *Pride in Place Strategy* (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025) exemplifies a broader shift towards regeneration approaches that seek to restore 'left-behind' places through active participation from the local community, while positioning engagement with local culture as a key emotional lever for enhancing both residents' pride and place-based actions (Le Chevallier, 2024).

Yet, despite sustained attention across both strands of work, pride in place remains underconceptualised and underexamined. It is rarely

defined, measured, or examined as a distinct emotional construct shaping residents' engagement in place-based change. Differently from related notions such as place attachment (Hidalgo, 2013), pride constitutes a specific *evaluative emotion*: it expresses a positive judgement about an object with which individuals identify and feel a sense of emotional stake, and may therefore play a yet unexplored role in shaping how residents relate to and act upon their place. Only a limited number of studies, mainly in environmental psychology, have explicitly concentrated on pride as a standalone construct and shown that it can influence pro-social behaviors (e.g. Bissing-Olson et al., 2016; Harth et al., 2013). As a result, little is known about how pride in place is experienced or how it translates into residents' endorsement for place-based strategies such as tourism development.

This gap is particularly consequential in culture-led regeneration contexts. While culture is a well-established component of place image, heritage - the most visible and symbolically charged expression of culture - is neither neutral nor universally celebrated (Liu et al., 2021). Heritage is socially constructed, historically contingent, and often contested, and certain forms may need to be socially legitimated before they can become drivers of regeneration through the cultivation of collective pride, especially in post-industrial or marginalised places (Sewell &

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Ntounis, 2025). Locally distinctive forms of intangible heritage, such as skills, crafts, and traditions, are especially dynamic: meanings and values evolve alongside broader socio-economic change, and pride associated with such forms of heritage may therefore be uneven, delayed, or selective across groups. Pride in place should therefore not be conceived as an automatic by-product of culture-led regeneration, but as a gradual emotional response that develops as residents reinterpret local heritage and that can enable engagement in place-based transformation. In this sense, a poor grasp of local heritage may not only weaken a place's image (Pendlebury & Porfyriou, 2017) but may also hinder residents' emotional and civic stake (Sewell & Ntounis, 2025).

Against this background, this article examines whether favourable perceptions of place, and particularly of heritage-related components, contribute to residents' pride in place, and whether such pride helps explain which aspects of their city they are ready to promote (Gonçalves e Silva et al., 2024). Empirically, it does so through an exploratory case study examining the relationships between residents' place image, pride in place, and willingness to recommend a visit to the city they live in. Using survey data from 510 residents of Limoges Métropole, a medium-sized French city designated a UNESCO Creative City in 2017 for its porcelain living tradition, the study investigates how different components of place image contribute to pride in place and whether pride mediates the relationship between place perceptions and residents' willingness to recommend the city as a destination, using causal mediation analysis. In addition, the analysis differentiates between residents living in urban and more rural areas. Limoges provides a relevant case of a post-industrial city seeking to reinterpret a specialised heritage as a resource for regeneration and tourism development.

By integrating insights from urban studies, tourism research, and environmental psychology, this exploratory study makes four focused contributions to the literature on place-based development. First, it advances pride in place as a distinct emotional response expressed by residents. Second, it empirically explores the direct and indirect relationships between residents' place image and tourism endorsement, explicitly examining the mediating role of pride in place. Third, it investigates the differentiated contribution of heritage-related place image components to residents' pride and tourism endorsement, highlighting the non-neutral nature of heritage. Finally, it examines whether these emotional and behavioural relationships vary between urban and rural residents, offering insights into potential spatial heterogeneity in responses to heritage-based development strategies.

2. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

In the context of culture-led regeneration - understood as a place change process that mobilises tangible and intangible cultural assets to reshape a place's trajectory in response to economic shifts (Evans & Kaszynska, 2025) - securing residents' endorsement is not simply a desirable communication outcome. It is a crucial indicator of the legitimacy and long-term sustainability of place transformation strategies. Contrary to the optimistic narrative often surrounding cultural initiatives, culture-led regeneration is indeed far from a win-win process (Sacco et al., 2014). When the emphasis lies primarily on enhancing a place's image and appeal to external audiences, they may hinder genuine place transformation or exacerbate the very inequalities they were intended to address. Such an externally oriented approach risks marginalising residents' voices and reducing local ownership of regeneration processes (Sewell & Ntounis, 2025).

In the following pages, we specifically illustrate how we expect place image, tourism endorsement behaviors and pride in place to interact in culture-led regeneration contexts and we develop hypotheses accordingly. We focus in particular on residents' willingness to recommend their city as a behavioural expression of endorsement, and on place image as a key lens through which residents evaluate and emotionally respond to culture-led regeneration efforts.

2.1. Residents' place image and tourism endorsement

As culture-led regeneration increasingly intersects with tourism, residents' cooperation becomes a key condition for socially sustainable destination development. Although tourism primarily targets external audiences, residents' support is increasingly recognised as a *sine qua non* condition for developing destinations that are both authentic and socially sustainable. Residents who hold favourable perceptions of their city are more likely to endorse its development as a tourist destination by recommending it to visitors (Schroeder, 1996) and engaging in positive word-of-mouth communication (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Positive word-of-mouth tends to circulate more frequently than negative feedback and exerts stronger influence on decision-making compared to traditional media (Ang & Buttle, 2006). Moreover, residents' perceptions of their place can provide valuable *local knowledge* that supports tourism planning and promotion while enhancing residents' quality of life (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011). Locals also act as trusted informants who recommend attractions or facilities to tourists, friends, and relatives based on their familiarity with the area (Shani & Uriely, 2012). This role persists despite the rise of social media, as residents' opinions continue to be perceived as credible and influential sources of information (Crick, 2003; Senyao & Ha, 2022; Villena-Alarcón & Caballero-Galeote, 2021).

Over the past three decades, tourism scholars have increasingly examined the determinants of residents' support for tourism, highlighting the central role of place image - a composite of knowledge, perceptions, emotions, and symbolic associations that residents and other stakeholders attach to their city (Kotler, 1997). Accordingly, place image has been extensively studied both from the tourists' perspective (Assaker & Hallak, 2013; Chen et al., 2013; Chu et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2014; Papadimitriou et al., 2015) and, more and more, from the residents' point of view (Gilboa et al., 2015; Styliadis, 2020; Woosnam et al., 2020). While regular communication between the local council of a destination and its residents may strengthen their attachment to the place and improve the perceived image (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012), failing to gauge the residents' perceptions of place image can have negative implications on the development of sustainable destinations (Lee, 2013; Styliadis et al., 2014).

A few recent studies empirically confirm the relationship between perceived place image and behaviors. Styliadis et al. (2016) found that two place image dimensions—physical appearance and social environment—positively and significantly influence residents' attitudes towards tourism. Similarly, Styliadis (2018) reported that residents with the most favourable images of Eilat, Israel, so called 'appreciators', were the most likely to recommend the city for a visit. Further evidence from Styliadis and Dominguez Quintero (2022) supports the positive effect of place image on residents' word-of-mouth intentions.

Taken together, these studies suggest that place image operates not merely as a perceptual construct but as a psychological mechanism shaping residents' behavioural intentions towards tourism since a favourable image reinforces residents' varying degrees of endorsement of their city as a tourist destination. In the present study, the place image-endorsement relationship is therefore considered as a baseline association, while recognising that this relationship may be indirect and emotionally mediated, as illustrated in the following sections.

H1. Residents' place image is positively associated with their tourism endorsement, such that more favourable perceptions increase residents' willingness to recommend the city as a tourist destination.

2.2. From place image to tourism endorsement through pride in place: an under-examined relation

2.2.1. Pride in place as an emotional response to place image

Over the past fifty years, research in environmental psychology has increasingly examined place-based emotions through constructs such as place attachment (Lewicka, 2011), place identity (Peng et al., 2020),

and sense of place (Raymond et al., 2017). Rather than being diminished by globalisation or the socio-economic crisis brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, people's connections to place have been dynamically reconfigured, intensifying, rather than reducing, the search for meaning and distinctiveness in local environments (Devine-Wright et al., 2020).

Against this backdrop, pride is increasingly invoked in both policy and scholarly debates as a desirable outcome of place-based interventions, whether focused on tourism branding and promotion (Luque-Martínez et al., 2007; Paddison, 1993; Richards & Wilson, 2004; Wang & Xu, 2015) or broader culture-led regeneration approaches (Sewell & Ntounis, 2025; VanHoose et al., 2021). In this sense, pride is often framed as a 'soft' return that complements financial outcomes, expected to derive from improvements in a place's image and reputation (Harvey, 1989; Wood, 2006) and to influence residents' decisions to remain in—or disengage from—a city (Morrison, 2016).

Despite this growing prominence, it is perhaps surprising that this recurring notion remains conceptually under-defined and empirically under-explored within urban studies (e.g. Boland, 2010; Hall, 1997). Wood (2006, p.169), for instance, while referring to pride as the expression of a "shared and cohesive city image", acknowledges that it "does not represent an exclusively well-defined and understood construct". Even the terms used are multiple - local pride, civic pride, urban pride, city pride, community pride, pride of place, pride in place ... - and lack clear distinction. Pride in place, while a cornerstone of recent UK policy programmes, lacks systematic research (Bonaiuto et al., 2020) and mostly remains an 'empty signifier' (Dobson, 2022).

This conceptual vagueness may partly reflect the uneven integration of emotional dimensions in place-related research. It may also stem from a tendency to conflate pride with related constructs such as place identity or place attachment. Yet, pride constitutes a distinct emotional phenomenon. At individual level, it usually refers to a feeling of self-worth or self-respect and the different ways people value or praise their identity or community (Tracy & Robins, 2007). Pride can thus be understood as an evaluative emotion - not reducible to attachment or identity - as it expresses a positive judgement about an object with which individuals identify and feel connected with. When the object is a place, and building on pioneering review of this concept by Bonaiuto et al. (2020), pride reflects residents' positive appraisal of the place they live in and of their perceived emotional stake within it.

This lack of conceptual clarity has likely contributed to persistent empirical gaps, with few papers empirically focusing on pride in relation to places. For instance, Collins (2016) studied how civic pride is mobilised and contested in Nottingham applying discourse analysis to policy level documents. Morrison (2016) examined the relative effect of cities in New Zealand in fostering peoples' urban pride based on city-level data from a national survey. These studies demonstrate the relevance of pride as an object of empirical inquiry in urban contexts. However, they focus primarily on how pride is articulated, mobilised, or distributed rather than on how pride in place relates to residents' perceptions of place, particularly in contexts where place image is being actively reshaped.

In our study, a first open question thus concerns how residents perceive and internalise a place's image, with particular attention to the cultural components of place image that are mobilised in regeneration processes. Although residents' perceptions of place image are widely recognised as central to supporting tourism and regeneration, comparatively little empirical work explicitly examines pride as an outcome of residents' image perceptions. This gap matters because place image is not a purely cognitive construct (Woosnam et al., 2020): it combines knowledge, emotional meanings, and evaluative judgements about the city, and these evaluations may plausibly elicit emotional responses such as pride.

This limitation becomes particularly salient when attention turns to cultural heritage as a key component of regeneration strategies. While there is some evidence showing how cultural heritage, a key component of place image, contributes to pride in place (Dorrell et al., 2022), existing research does not necessarily takes into account the potentially

controversial role that local tangible and intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003) - as a socially and continuously evolving concept - may play on people's emotions. This oversight is not irrelevant, as an increasing number of places are recognising heritage as a unique and irreplaceable asset for repositioning their territories (Arcos-Pumarola et al., 2023; Xie et al., 2025). Additionally, while there is a prevalent trend to treat heritage as a consensual platform for territorial promotion and renewal, heritage is not a neutral concept. It can be perceived, experienced, and in certain cases, even resisted, by different groups. This is evident, for example, in discussions on the 'sanitized' valorization of industrial heritage, which may obscure or alter its original significance and impact or even give raise to a mismatching "between institutional and academic initiatives and local communities, which exhibit widespread disinterest in or even rejection of industrial remains" (Del Pozo & González, 2019). Such differentiated reactions suggest that emotions such as pride emerge selectively and are shaped by how residents interpret and internalise dominant representations of place - particularly when the place's distinctive symbolic assets (including heritage) are unevenly valued.

Building on this perspective, we examine whether residents' place image contributes to pride in place and whether heritage-related components play a distinctive role in shaping this emotion. Specifically, our second hypothesis reads as follows:

H2. Residents' place image is positively associated with pride in place in culture-regeneration contexts, such that more favourable perceptions of place attributes, including of distinctive heritage-related components, are associated with higher levels of pride in place.

2.2.2. *Pride in place as a mediating mechanism between place image and tourism endorsement*

Importantly, however, pride is not only relevant as an outcome of place (image) renewal: it may have behavioural implications. In psychology research, pride has tended to be bifurcated in two emotions: a positive one, leading to confidence and positive actions; and one leading to arrogance or even closure or aggression towards communities an individual does not feel to belong to or recognise with (Tracy & Robins, 2007). In its positive meaning, pride can motivate individuals to act in ways that maintain or enhance the valued object, including place-supportive behaviors such as endorsing local development strategies, promoting the city to outsiders, or engaging in civic participation. As posited by Shaw et al. (2022, p.6-9) "Pride matters because enhanced feelings of optimism about and connection to a place can contribute to the conditions in which economic growth is more likely to happen" and "[...] communities which enjoy a strong sense of connection with their place [...] are more likely to generate higher levels of local participation in civil society and have higher rates of volunteering in them". In heritage studies, recent contributions emphasise that pride should not be understood solely as a retrospective attachment to the past or as a reaction to place-based change, but also as an emotional response that can actively shape future trajectories of transformation (Madgin, 2025). In this sense, pride emerges not only as an outcome of place-based processes but also as a potential driver of how such processes are interpreted, supported, and enacted.

Due to the limited empirical evidence on these matters, a second open question thus concerns whether pride in place is associated with residents' behavioural endorsement of place-based strategies, including tourism development. Recent research indeed suggests that pride plays a unique and influential role in shaping individuals' pro-social behaviors, in line with the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). For example, Bissing-Olson et al. (2016) show that self-pride can directly influence pro-environmental behaviors, while Shipley and van Riper (2022) and Jiao et al. (2023) demonstrate that pride affects pro-environmental behaviors, playing a distinct role than place attachment. More specifically, Jiao et al. (2023) shows that manipulating place attachment increases individuals' pride, which in

turn enhances their willingness to engage in socially and environmentally responsible behaviors.

At the same time, caution is needed in assuming a straightforward translation of emotions into action. Positive place-related feelings do not necessarily map neatly onto consistent behaviors, and intentions may diverge from actual behavioural choices over time (Lewicka, 2011). This makes it particularly important to investigate pride empirically as a plausible behavioural driver, without over-claiming determinism. These considerations lead us to our third hypothesis:

H3. Pride in place mediates the relationship between place image, particularly heritage-related components, and residents' tourism endorsement in culture-led regeneration contexts, such that higher residents' place-related pride increases their willingness to recommend the city as a tourist destination.

2.3. Community heterogeneity: urban vs. rural residents

While existing studies generally treat residents as a homogenous group, recent works have begun to differentiate between groups of residents (Stylidis, 2018), showing that urban and rural communities may indeed have different perceptions. The residents category is in fact very heterogeneous due to the distinctive aspects that characterize different social groups, such as age, socioeconomic background and education, but also work experience, values or area of residence. Belanche et al. (2021), for instance found differences in place identity between urban and rural residents in Spain, measured across cognitive (e.g., "I identify with my place of residence"), affective (e.g., "I am emotionally attached to my place of residence"), and evaluative (e.g., "It is worth belonging to my place of residence") dimensions. While cognitive identity was similar, rural residents reported higher affective and evaluative place identity than city dwellers. Zheng et al. (2018) instead showed that rural residents in Yangshuo, China, expressed stronger positive emotions and greater support for Tourism Performing Arts developments than urban residents in Hangzhou. This reflects the higher tourism dependence of Yangshuo, where residents' economic involvement elicited more gratitude and less anger, consistent with previous literature on tourism-dependent communities (Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011; Smith & Krannich, 1998). Similarly, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) also found urban–rural differences: economic gains had a stronger effect on rural residents' positive perceptions of tourism in Lenggong, whereas in the urban context of George Town, the influence of economic benefits was weaker.

While these studies provide valuable insights, they largely focus on general emotions, place identity, or perceived impacts, and pay limited attention to how pride in place is experienced across different spatial communities. In particular, little is known about whether and how urban and rural residents differ in the way they internalise place image and translate it into pride and behavioural endorsement. This omission is significant in culture-led regeneration contexts, where heritage narratives may be interpreted differently depending on residents' proximity to heritage assets, everyday engagement with cultural practices, and degree of identification with dominant representations of place.

From this perspective, urban–rural heterogeneity may not only reflect differences in economic dependence or exposure to tourism, but also differences in the legitimization of heritage and in the emergence of pride as an evaluative emotional response. Pride in place may therefore emerge more strongly—or more gradually—in certain spatial contexts than in others, shaping how residents respond to tourism-oriented regeneration strategies.

Building on this reasoning, the present study explores whether residents' place of residence conditions the relationships between place image, pride in place, and tourism endorsement. Rather than assuming uniform effects across the population, we examine whether these emotional and behavioural dynamics vary between urban and rural residents. Accordingly, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H4. The relationship between a place's image, pride in place, and residents' tourism endorsement is contingent upon residents' place of residence (urban vs. rural), such that the effects of place image and pride in place on residents' willingness to recommend the city as a tourist destination differ between urban and rural residents.

Our conceptual model and related hypotheses are depicted in Fig. 1.

3. Methodology

3.1. The study area

Limoges, a city of around 130,000 residents in southern France, has recently embarked on a culture-led urban regeneration path, placing creativity and the arts of fire—particularly its renowned porcelain heritage—at the core of its urban, cultural, and economic development.

As a sign of these efforts, Limoges was designated a UNESCO Creative City in Crafts and Folk Arts in 2017, reflecting its ongoing commitment to revitalising its cultural identity while fostering contemporary creativity. Under former Mayor Lombertie, the city sought to leverage its creative legacy to rebrand itself as a hub capable of maintaining and innovating its long-standing craftsmanship traditions.

As part of its broader strategy to revitalise the city's cultural capital and get the most out of its UNESCO designation, in 2019 Limoges Métropole - the overarching urban agglomeration encompassing Limoges and its surrounding 19 municipalities - launched its inaugural tourism strategy, centred around local porcelain as an expression of both artisanal tradition and industrial expertise and distinctive touristic asset. In 2023, with an accommodation capacity of around 7000 commercial beds, including more than 50 hotels, Limoges Métropole alone accounted for 89% of the Haute-Vienne département's overnight stays, reflecting the city's central role in regional tourism. This strategy aims to consolidate and strengthen Limoges' position as a mid-tier city-break destination which already attracts a significant share of foreign visitors: in 2023, 3.4 million tourists visited the Haute-Vienne département, of which 61% were French (61%) and 39% foreigners (Visit Limousin, 2023).

Despite these efforts, however, Limoges still faces an enduring image deficit, evident in the historical linguistic association of the term 'limoger'¹ with dismissal. Historically overshadowed by Parisian artistic innovation, the city has struggled to instill pride in its porcelain industry. Even the initiatives of enlightened figures such as the entrepreneur and philanthropist David Haviland—who, in the nineteenth century, established an art school in Limoges to train creative talent locally—were insufficient to offset deeper structural challenges. Labour disputes and increasing global competition led to a dramatic decline in production in the mid-twentieth century, which fell from 10,000 to 3400 t between 1930 and 1939, clearly signalling a structural crisis in

¹ This verb seems to come from the fact that Limoges was the town to which General Joseph Joffre, Commander-in-Chief of the French forces from 1914 to 1916, sent senior staff that he considered useless and had relieved from actual command, as sufficiently far away from the World War I front.

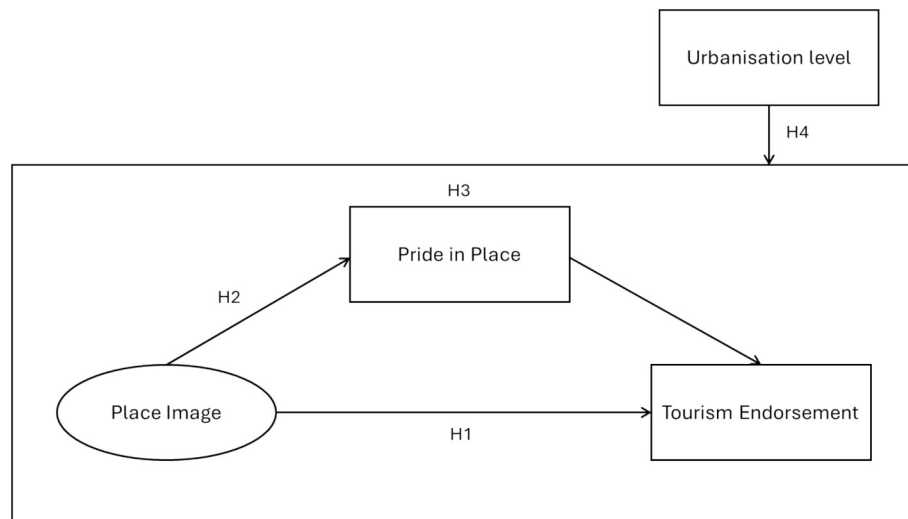


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.
Source: Figure by authors.

the sector (Coudamy, 2013). Following numerous closures after the Second World War, porcelain has remained a highly distinctive yet structurally marginal activity within the local urban economy, as evidenced by firm-level comparisons with French cities of similar demographic size (Fig. 2). While ceramic-related activities—including porcelain—are quantitatively rare across all comparable cities, Limoges stands out clearly relative to its peers. This pattern is especially pronounced in the urban core, as illustrated by the spatial distribution of ceramic-related establishments across Limoges Métropole (Fig. 3), which shows a strong concentration within the city of Limoges and a limited presence in surrounding semi-urban and rural municipalities.²

Contemporary manufacturers today include historically renowned brands such as Haviland, Bernardaud, Raynaud, and Royal Limoges, which continue to operate successfully by leveraging international networks and securing strong positions in selective luxury market segments, particularly in high-end restaurants and hotels. The UNESCO designation and the city's tourism strategy aim to build on this creative legacy in order to restore both Limoges' image and its local economy.

However, the extent to which residents are willing to support and actively endorse the city's promotional and tourism initiatives remains an open question. While Limoges' cultural and porcelain heritage provides a strong foundation for place re-branding and touristic development, it also recalls a history of economic decline and job losses, which may influence pride in place and place image perceptions. Understanding how residents perceive the city's place image, how they relate emotionally to its heritage, and how these perceptions translate into tourism endorsement is therefore critical.

² To classify the municipalities of Limoges Métropole, we refer to the Degree of Urbanisation method endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission to distinguish rural (<300 inhabitants for km²), urban (>1500 inhabitants for km²), and semi-urban areas (at least 300 inhabitants per km²). The City of Limoges results to be the only urban area of Limoges Métropole, while the five municipalities adjacent to the City of Limoges are classified as semi-urban areas, and the remaining municipalities as rural. These three categories largely correspond to INSEE's definition of urban, semi-urban and rural areas. More precisely, according to the INSEE definition, the municipalities of Limoges and Panazol would be classified as 'Urbain dense', the municipalities of Rilhac-Rancon, Couzeix, Condat-sur-Vienne and Isle as 'Urban densité intermédiaire' and the remaining municipalities of Limoges Métropole as 'Rural sous forte influence d'un pôle'.

3.2. Survey design and data collection

A cross-sectional survey design is used to investigate the relations tested in this study. The survey instrument was primarily grounded in the literature, complemented by context-specific qualitative insights to ensure its relevance to the local setting.

Specifically, with respect to place image, we operationalised residents' perceptions of Limoges through a set of 21 city-relevant image items that were drawn from the broader place and destination image literature (as detailed in Table A1 in Appendix), including the seminal and still influential (Wang et al., 2023) framework proposed by Echtner and Ritchie (1993). In the present study, their conceptual place image logic across a functional-psychological continuum was used as a point of departure. Functional components refer to directly observable attributes or holistic features, such as local infrastructure and services, transport networks, or cost of living. Psychological components capture less tangible characteristics that are more difficult to observe or measure, including both attribute-based perceptions, such as cleanliness, and holistic impressions, such as the overall (creative) atmosphere.

This seminal framework was then enriched through insights from more recent empirical studies. Notably, and consistent with the resident-centred perspective adopted in this research, the operationalisation of place image also benefited from adaptations derived from tourism studies focusing explicitly on residents' perceptions. These studies guided the inclusion of items closely related to residents' everyday experiences, such as perceptions of safety, mobility, access to services, and of other aspects of community life such as shopping and sports facilities or green spaces (Chen & Chen, 2015; Ghasempour Ganji et al., 2021; Shen et al., 2019; Styliadis et al., 2016, 2017).

Particular attention was devoted to cultural components, which are central to the culture-led regeneration context examined in this study. Culture is understood here as a multifaceted concept (Williams, 1976), encompassing both tangible and intangible elements, including built heritage and skills and traditions. In the place image literature, cultural components are often operationalised through measurable features such as cultural attractions, historic sites, museums, or distinctive architectural characteristics (Ghasempour Ganji et al., 2021; Henkel et al., 2006; Styliadis et al., 2014; Styliadis & Dominguez Quintero, 2022). This literature informed the inclusion of culture-related image items in the survey, while allowing for the integration of context-specific cultural attributes emerging from the qualitative interviews - notably Limoges' savoir-faire in the field of porcelain.

To ensure the contextual relevance of the measurement framework,

the survey design was indeed also informed by findings from a prior qualitative research phase conducted as part of a broader doctoral project examining culture-led regeneration processes across several European cities, including Limoges. In Limoges, this phase involved 29 semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders (i.e. public officials, cultural institutions' representatives, creative professionals, and tourism-related practitioners). This qualitative investigation was not designed to examine the specific constructs or hypothesised relationships addressed in the present paper. Nevertheless, these collected insights were used to identify place attributes that appear especially salient in the local context and that might not have emerged from the literature alone - such as porcelain-related know-how but also culinary traditions, and elements of the natural environment (i.e. Limoges is surrounded by rural scenery). These were then incorporated into the survey instrument alongside theoretically grounded items.

Regarding the other main notions shaping the analysis, both pride in place and tourism endorsement were operationalised using single-item measures. As noted by Shaw et al. (2022) and Bonaiuto et al. (2020), no psychometrically validated multidimensional scale for pride in place indeed currently exists. Since the purpose of this study is not scale development but rather an exploratory analysis of pride in relation to place image and behavioural endorsement, the use of a concise evaluative, self-referential item was considered appropriate as well as consistent with recent research (e.g. Le Chevallier, 2024; Morrison, 2016).³ Importantly, and in contrast to studies that directly ask respondents what elements of a place they are proud of (Gladden & Funk, 2002), we deliberately avoided item formulations that might prime or bias respondents' evaluations. Instead, residents' perceived place image was measured independently and prior to the pride item, allowing us to examine empirically how different image components—rather than pre-specified sources of pride—relate to residents' overall sense of pride in place. With regard to tourism endorsement—while encompassing a range of possible behavioural intentions—respondents' willingness to recommend the city as a place to visit was used as a proxy. This measure was deemed appropriate given the exploratory focus of the study and its emphasis on residents' general support for tourism-oriented place promotion in a culture-led regeneration context.

The final questionnaire (see Appendix A) includes three sections: Section 1 asks for the city of residence and year of birth to make sure that the respondent comes from the targeted population (i.e. people living in one of the 20 municipalities of Limoges Métropole - based on their declared postal code of residence - being at least 16 years old); Section 2 explores perceptions of residents about how remarkable the 21 retained attributes are, using a seven-point Likert scale with the endpoints 'Strongly disagree' (1) and 'Strongly agree' (7) and asks residents whether they are proud of being 'Limogeauds' and willing to recommend a visit to the city, using the same Likert scale; Section 3 collects socio-economic data on the respondents.

Three categories of people were invited for a pilot test, namely: public officials in the international relations and tourism departments, cultural practitioners (identified through the help of the municipality) and students (contacted through local universities and randomly invited). Ten people agreed to fill in the questionnaire and commented on the appropriateness and clarity of the questions. We collected a few, minor, remarks and adapted the final questionnaire accordingly.

We run the survey in the first half of July 2020, targeting people

³ Morrison (2016), analysing urban pride in New Zealand, uses responses from a nationwide survey based on a single-item measure asking respondents to indicate their agreement with the statement: "I feel a sense of pride in the way [my city] looks and feels." Similarly, the UK poll carried out in 2021 by Public First and commented by Le Chevallier (2024) in his analysis of emerging notion of pride in place in UK policy asks "How proud, or not, are you to be from the town, city or village you live in?" to gauge residents' sense of pride in their place of residence.

living in the municipalities of Limoges Métropole who were 16 years old or older at the time of data collection, assuming that people of this age could be well suited to assess the city opposed to younger people. Although July 2020 was not an ideal time for data collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey's design and dissemination strategy helped mitigate several related limitations. The survey was distributed primarily through Facebook's targeted advertising tools, which enabled a broad and diverse digital reach while avoiding in-person contact—an essential consideration during the pandemic. Targeting parameters were regularly adjusted to ensure that the age distribution of respondents closely matched that of the actual population (see Appendix A, Fig. A1). This approach was complemented by personal email invitations sent to individuals we had been in contact with during the survey design phase. The confidentiality of participants' responses was assured. Participants were explicitly informed that the data collected would be used exclusively for academic purposes.

Importantly, the survey did not focus on current tourism activities—which were heavily disrupted at the time—but rather on residents' perceptions and evaluations of the city. As such, the data collected remain relevant and meaningful, largely unaffected by the temporary impacts of the pandemic on travel and tourism behavior.

510 complete responses were collected for the variables of interest. Given that the population of Limoges Métropole stood at 207,053 in 2020 (INSEE)—the year during which our survey was conducted—the achieved sample size ensures a 95% confidence level with a 4.36% margin of error. The sample broadly reflects the gender and age-group distribution of the actual population, as reported by the French statistical institute (INSEE), with younger and middle-aged adults being slightly overrepresented compared to older residents (see Appendix A, Fig. A1).

The sample includes a higher proportion of females (57%) than males (40%). Respondents are generally well educated, with 89% holding a tertiary degree. The largest age group comprises individuals aged 45–59 years (27%), followed by those aged 15–29 (26%), 30–44 (22%), and 60–74 (20%). Only 2% are over 75 years old. As for their occupational status, most of them are employees (35%), students (17%) or retired (15%). Most respondents live in the city of Limoges (70%), followed by residents in rural (23%) and semi-urban (7%) areas (See Appendix A, Table A2).

4. Data analysis

4.1. First stage: factor analysis

As a first step, we apply factor analysis on the 21 retained place image items. Specifically, a principal component factor (PCF) analysis with orthogonal varimax rotation is performed to extract a set of uncorrelated factors representing the main components of place image. PCF is appropriate when the objective is to uncover latent perceptual dimensions underlying observed indicators, as it extracts factors based on shared variance and excludes item-specific and error variance. This approach is consistent with the conceptualisation of place image as a multidimensional construct reflecting common evaluative patterns rather than a purely data-reductive structure.

Since *Artscraft*, the item related to the self-evaluation of porcelain, reached low factor loadings in all the components extracted, it was not retained in the final factor solution. As factor loadings represent the strength of association between an observed item and a latent dimension, low loadings indicate that an item does not meaningfully contribute to the interpretation of any common factor and may reflect idiosyncratic perceptions rather than shared image components. Removing items with low loadings thus improves factor interpretability, internal coherence, and construct validity. In the case of *Artscraft*, this result is plausible, as the porcelain tradition constitutes a highly specific and distinctive cultural asset of Limoges and is thus not readily assimilated into broader latent dimensions. This result is further supported by

the fact that *Artscraft* is the place image attribute with the highest average score (mean = 6.14) in response to the questionnaire's statement "*Limoges has undeniable assets, such as a living savoir-faire in the field of fire arts.*" This indicates a strong consensus among residents regarding the remarkable character of this living heritage, which is further corroborated by firm-level data provided above (see Fig. 2).

The PCF on the 20 remaining items suggests a three-factor solution with eigenvalues greater than 1 and explaining 66% of the total variance (see Appendix B, Table B1). According to the rotated factor loadings in Table 1, the first factor strongly relates to Limoges' cultural items such as museums, events, gastronomy and architecture, the second links to items that contribute to animating the urban life like nightlife, shopping and sport facilities, and transports, and the third reflects items pertaining to the natural and social environment such as the criminality rate, and the availability of green areas. Therefore, hereinafter we will refer to the three factors as to *CulturalOffer*, *UrbanVitality* and *NaturalSocialEnv*, respectively.

To validate these results, we perform a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on these three latent constructs. As shown in Table 2, standardised coefficients of the CFA are in most cases well over the proposed minimum level of 0.5 and statistically significant ($p < .001$), satisfying the strong and weak convergence criteria identified by Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993). Further support for the model's reliability and convergent validity is provided by Cronbach's alpha values, all well above the conventional threshold of 0.7, and by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which is consistently above 0.5. In addition, composite reliability (CR) values also exceed the recommended benchmark of 0.7, reinforcing the internal consistency of the constructs.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT; Henseler et al., 2015), as shown in Table 3. Only the HTMT value between Factor 1 and Factor 3 was slightly above the threshold (0.87). Considering the CFA results and other validity indicators (AVE, CR), this pattern suggests that discriminant validity among the constructs is generally adequate. The slight overlap is theoretically reasonable, as cultural offer can be considered a meaningful component of socially relevant assets and community life.

Finally, the fit indices suggest that the measurement model is overall acceptable: $\chi^2_{(162)} = 869.28$, $p < .001$; CFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.94; RMSEA =

Table 1
PCF: rotated factor loadings, unique variances, and validity measures.

Items	CulturalOffer	UrbanVitality	NaturalSocialEnv
Historical sites and museums	0.79	0.17	0.17
Cultural venues	0.63	0.51	0.13
Cultural events	0.67	0.50	0.10
Gastronomy	0.57	0.28	0.35
Architecture	0.69	0.29	0.30
Landscape	0.50	0.16	0.61
Green spaces	0.44	0.34	0.54
Climate	0.35	0.34	0.55
Nightlife	0.38	0.68	0.20
Shops	0.35	0.75	0.24
Sports infrastructure	0.38	0.66	0.34
Transports (ext)	0.08	0.87	0.12
Transports (inter)	0.19	0.79	0.25
Criminality	0.05	0.21	0.75
Cost of life	0.12	0.28	0.74
Art city	0.75	0.10	0.31
Creative city	0.70	0.32	0.20
Liveable city	0.49	0.17	0.69
Friendly city	0.53	0.23	0.54
Touristic city	0.69	0.34	0.21
Validity Measures			
Cronbach's Alpha	0.89	0.87	0.86
AVE	0.52	0.58	0.46
CR	0.83	0.87	0.77

Source: Table by authors.

Note: Bold values indicate the factor on which each item loads more strongly.

Table 2
CFA: construct reliability, validity and internal consistency.

Construct	Indicator	Std. Loading	Cronbach's α	AVE	CR				
CulturalOffer	Historical sites and museums	0.75	0.91	0.59	0.92				
	Cultural venues	0.79							
	Cultural events	0.78							
	Gastronomy	0.72							
	Architecture	0.78							
	Art city	0.75							
	Creative city	0.78							
	Touristic city	0.80							
	UrbanVitality	Nightlife				0.80	0.89	0.60	0.88
		Shops				0.86			
Sports infrastructure		0.86							
Transports (ext)		0.64							
Transports (inter)		0.72							
NaturalSocialEnv	Landscape	0.74	0.89	0.52	0.88				
	Green spaces	0.78							
	Climate	0.73							
	Criminality	0.54							
	Cost of life	0.63							
	Liveable city	0.80							
	Friendly city	0.78							

Source: Table by authors.

Table 3
Discriminant validity (HTMT ratios).

Constructs	CulturalOffer	UrbanVitality	NaturalSocialEnv
CulturalOffer	–	0.78	0.87
UrbanVitality		–	0.76
NaturalSocialEnv			–

Source: Table by authors.

0.09; SRMR = 0.06. Only RMSEA slightly exceeds the recommended cutoff (CFI \geq 0.93, TLI \geq 0.92, RMSEA \leq 0.07; SRMR \leq 0.07). However, values in this range can still be considered indicative of mediocre yet tolerable fit in applied settings (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; MacCallum et al., 1996).

Some descriptive statistics on the 20 items retained for the factor analysis, on the three factors extracted and on the remaining items of interest for the analysis (*Artscraft*, *Proud*, *Recommend*) are shown in Table 4 both considering the overall sample and differentiating across the three different urbanised areas of Limoges.

4.2. Second stage: regression analysis

To test whether place image can be considered a significant predictor of both willingness to recommend (H1) and pride in place (H2), we run an OLS regression of the three identified place image components (*CulturalOffer*, *UrbanVitality*, *NaturalSocialEnv*) as well as of *Artscrafts* on *Recommend* and *Pride*, including several socio-demographic variables as controls. Notably, we include the dummy variable *Gender* that equals 1 for males, *lnAge*, that is the age of the respondent in log-form, *HighEdu* that identifies individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher education level, and the *Student*, *Retired* and *Unemployed* categories to control for vulnerable occupational groups. The decision to include *Artscraft* as a stand-alone analytical variable reflects its conceptual distinctiveness and city-specific relevance. Unlike other place image attributes, it does not load onto a shared latent dimension, as shown above, yet it represents a core asset within Limoges' culture-led renewal strategies and is therefore central to the analysis.

Before estimating the model, we tested for multicollinearity among the independent variables. Appendix C shows the correlation matrix and the Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) for all predictors included in the

Table 4
Descriptive statistics.

Items	Overall		Urban		Semi-urban		Rural	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Historical sites and museums	5.93	1.16	5.93	1.17	6.08	1.12	5.87	1.16
Cultural venues	5.74	1.32	5.72	1.32	5.92	1.38	5.76	1.31
Cultural events	5.30	1.52	5.30	1.50	5.58	1.64	5.23	1.56
Gastronomy	5.82	1.25	5.80	1.26	6.13	1.12	5.76	1.29
Architecture	5.45	1.41	5.43	1.44	5.82	1.35	5.42	1.32
Landscape	6.04	1.20	6.01	1.24	6.37	0.91	6.03	1.15
Green spaces	5.91	1.25	5.87	1.30	6.24	0.97	5.92	1.18
Climate	5.46	1.46	5.42	1.51	5.76	1.32	5.50	1.33
Nightlife	4.91	1.53	4.90	1.61	4.97	1.55	4.92	1.30
Shops	5.33	1.46	5.33	1.51	5.29	1.59	5.34	1.29
Sports infrastructure	5.51	1.37	5.50	1.39	5.79	1.23	5.46	1.33
Transports (ext)	4.24	1.93	4.24	2.00	4.24	1.97	4.25	1.72
Transports (inter)	4.92	1.75	4.87	1.83	5.26	1.83	4.97	1.47
Cost of life	6.02	1.24	6.06	1.27	5.89	1.29	5.92	1.14
Criminality rate	5.11	1.58	5.05	1.64	5.45	1.41	5.18	1.46
Art City	6.02	1.16	5.99	1.19	6.26	0.89	6.02	1.13
Creative City	4.77	1.66	4.75	1.71	4.92	1.53	4.77	1.57
Liveable City	6.05	1.20	5.99	1.24	6.34	0.99	6.16	1.14
Friendly City	5.28	1.59	5.24	1.64	5.66	1.32	5.28	1.52
Touristic City	4.43	1.69	4.40	1.72	4.87	1.58	4.38	1.61
Arts craft	6.14	1.37	6.12	1.40	6.39	0.97	6.13	1.38
Proud	3.00	1.84	3.08	1.84	2.29	1.37	2.97	1.95
Recommend	2.96	1.78	3.07	1.79	2.26	1.39	2.84	1.82
Factors								
CulturalOffer	4.46	1.33	4.44	1.38	4.60	1.23	4.43	1.19
UrbanVitality	3.40	1.70	3.40	1.81	3.14	1.55	3.56	1.34
NaturalSocialEnv	5.31	1.34	5.27	1.39	5.46	1.19	5.36	1.27

Source: Table by authors.

model. The results in Table C1 and C2 indicate that the independent variables are mostly characterised by weak correlation and the VIF values are below the commonly accepted threshold of 5, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern in our model.

The regression results, shown in Fig. 4, indicate that the three latent place image constructs are positively and significantly associated with both tourism endorsement and pride in place, with stronger associations observed for the culture-related image construct. In contrast, *Artscraft* exhibits a different pattern: its association with residents' willingness to recommend the city is weaker in magnitude compared to *CulturalOffer*, and it is not significantly associated with pride in place.

When differentiating among urban areas (results available upon request), the findings indicate that associations with both pride in place and residents' willingness to recommend the city are consistently significant in urban contexts. By contrast, notable variations in the strength and significance of these associations emerge across the remaining levels of urbanisation. *CulturalOffer* remains significantly associated with residents' willingness to recommend the city across all areas, while its association with pride in place is not significant in semi-urban contexts. *UrbanVitality* is more strongly associated with both pride and residents' willingness to recommend the city in urban and semi-urban areas, while these associations are weaker in rural contexts. In contrast, the *NaturalSocialEnv* construct is positively associated with pride across all areas but is linked to tourism endorsement only in more urbanised settings. *Artscraft* displays again a distinct pattern, being associated with residents' willingness to recommend the city exclusively in rural areas.

4.3. Third stage: mediation analysis

As a next step, in order to simultaneously analyse how perceived place image influences Limoges residents' willingness to recommend the city for a visit, both directly and indirectly through pride in place (H3), we test the theoretical model presented in Fig. 1 using causal mediation analysis. We identify *Recommend* as the outcome variable, *Pride* as mediating variable and *CulturalOffer*, *UrbanVitality*, *NatSocEnv* and *Artscraft* alternatively as treatment variables. For more details on the

model specification, underlying assumptions and effects decomposition see Baron and Kenny (1986) and Nguyen et al. (2021, 2022). Since the treatments variable are continuous, we standardise them so that each factor has zero mean and standard deviation equal to one. Then, we specify one standard deviation below the mean as the control value and one standard deviation above the mean as treatment value. To consider possible confounders in this intertwined relationship and to satisfy the underlying modelling assumptions, we include in the model the same controls used for the OLS regressions as well as the remaining factors (i. e. when considering the effect of *CulturalOffer* we include the other place image components as control and vice versa). In addition, to differentiate the analysis by urbanisation degree based on H4, we also estimate the model over the different sub-samples defined by people living in the differently urbanised areas of Limoges Métropole.

The results shown in Table 5 indicate that only *CulturalOffer* and *Artscraft* exert a significant direct effect on *Recommend*. Said differently, Limoges' residents recognise both general and unique cultural items as undeniable assets for which the city is worth a visit. This is mostly true for urban residents, in line with the greatest concentration of ceramic-related companies and, very likely, cultural assets is more urbanised areas.

When it comes to the indirect effects, however, results are considerably different. All three latent place image components now exert a positive and statistically significant effect on *Recommend*. By contrast, the effect of *Artscraft* becomes non-significant. Pride in place is thus found to have a fundamental role in recommending a visit with reference to the place image components *UrbanVitality* and *NatSocEnv*. In addition, comparing the magnitude of the two effects, the indirect effect of *CulturalOffer* (0.83) considerably exceeds the direct one (0.34) indicating that pride in place acts as a key enhancing factor of recommendation intentions.

Differentiating the analysis across urban areas, we find consistent results with the overall case for urban inhabitants while the effects tend to decrease in magnitude and significance for rural residents. However, the loss of significance (especially for the semi-urban category) may depend on the very low sample numerosity in the semiurban and rural

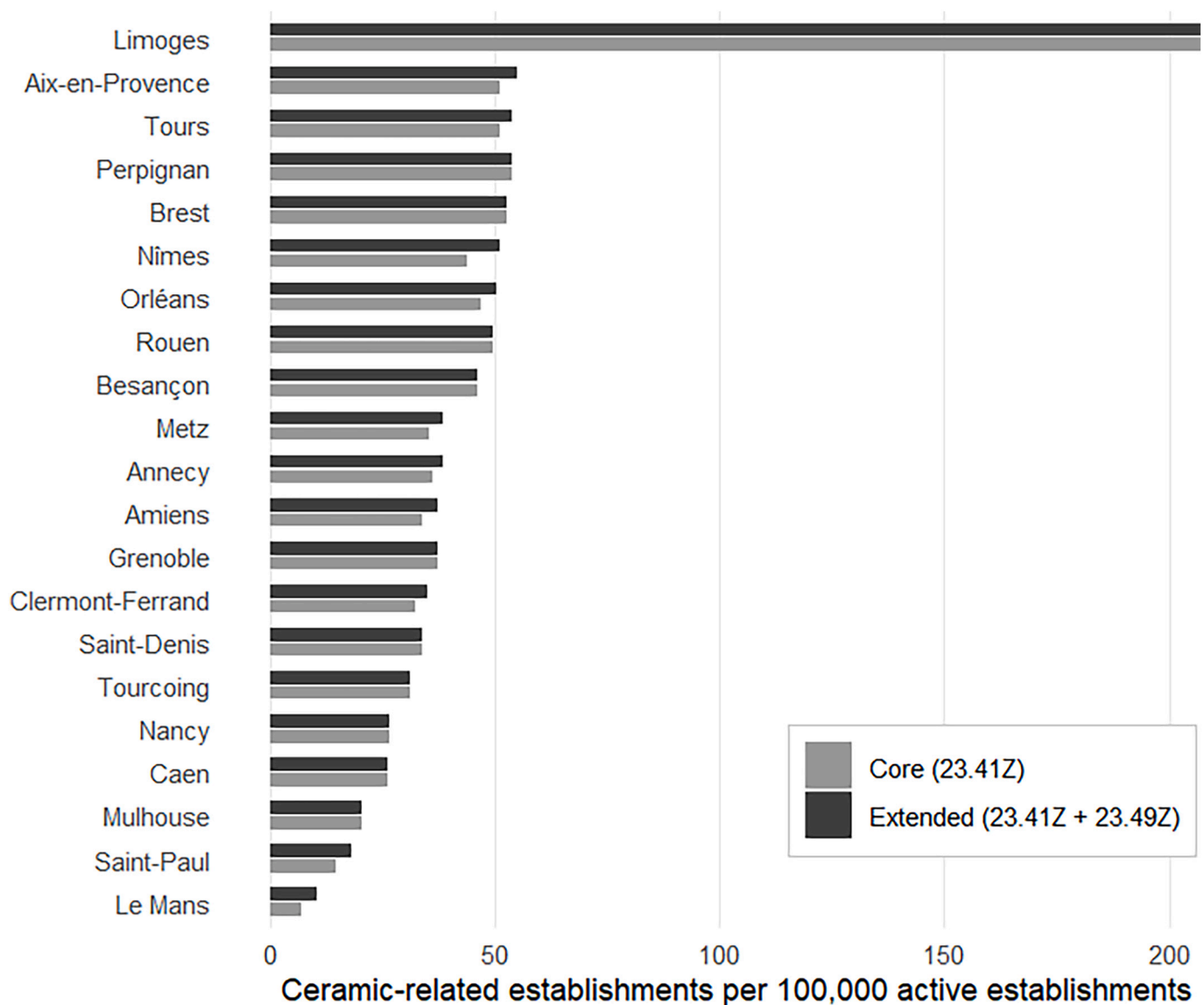


Fig. 2. Ceramic-related establishments per 100,000 active establishments across selected French cities. Source: Figure by authors based on data from INSEE (Population 2023), SIRENE (Stock établissements 2026). Active establishments at the commune level. Comparison cities are non-capital cities with populations approximately between 100,000 and 160,000 inhabitants. Ceramic activities defined using NAF 23.41Z (core) and 23.41Z + 23.49Z (extended).

categories.

As a robustness check, we verify whether including *Artscraft* in the factor analysis, rather than treating it as a stand-alone variable, affects our results. Based on the rotated factor loadings, *Artscraft* is primarily absorbed by the cultural factor, while at the same time exhibiting a weak and isolated negative loading on another factor, thereby introducing noise into the factor solution. The estimates from the causal mediation analysis indicate that the direct and indirect effects associated with the three factors remain overall robust. Specifically, the magnitude of the indirect effect associated with the culture-related factor is reduced relative to our main results (0.59 vs. 0.83), likely because the inclusion of the *Artscraft* variable, which does not operate through citizens' pride, attenuates the indirect effect attributed to general, not distinctive, urban cultural offer. Consequently, including *Artscraft* within the factor model mechanically lowers the indirect effect attributed to the general cultural offer, thereby masking its specific role. While this robustness check confirms the stability of our findings, incorporating *Artscraft* into factor analysis would both contravene the results of the PCF analysis and most notably prevent its assessment as a distinctive cultural asset with

potentially independent effects—an aspect that constitutes a central novelty of this case study.

5. Discussion

This exploratory study examine whether and how pride in place, conceptualised as a distinct evaluative emotion, is associated with residents' perceptions of place and whether it helps explain residents' endorsement of tourism as a place-based strategy. Using Limoges as an empirical case—a post-industrial medium-sized city designated in 2017 a UNESCO Creative City for its porcelain tradition—we analyse the relationships between residents' place image, pride in place, and willingness to recommend the city as a tourist destination, and explored whether these relationships vary across levels of urbanisation.

First, we find that the residents' place image in Limoges is captured by three 'generalisable' dimensions, namely: *CulturalOffer*, *UrbanVitality* and *NaturalSocialEnv*, consistent with prior research (Ghasempour Ganji et al., 2021; Stylidis et al., 2014; Stylidis et al., 2016). However, the item *Artscraft* did not load strongly on any of these components. This result

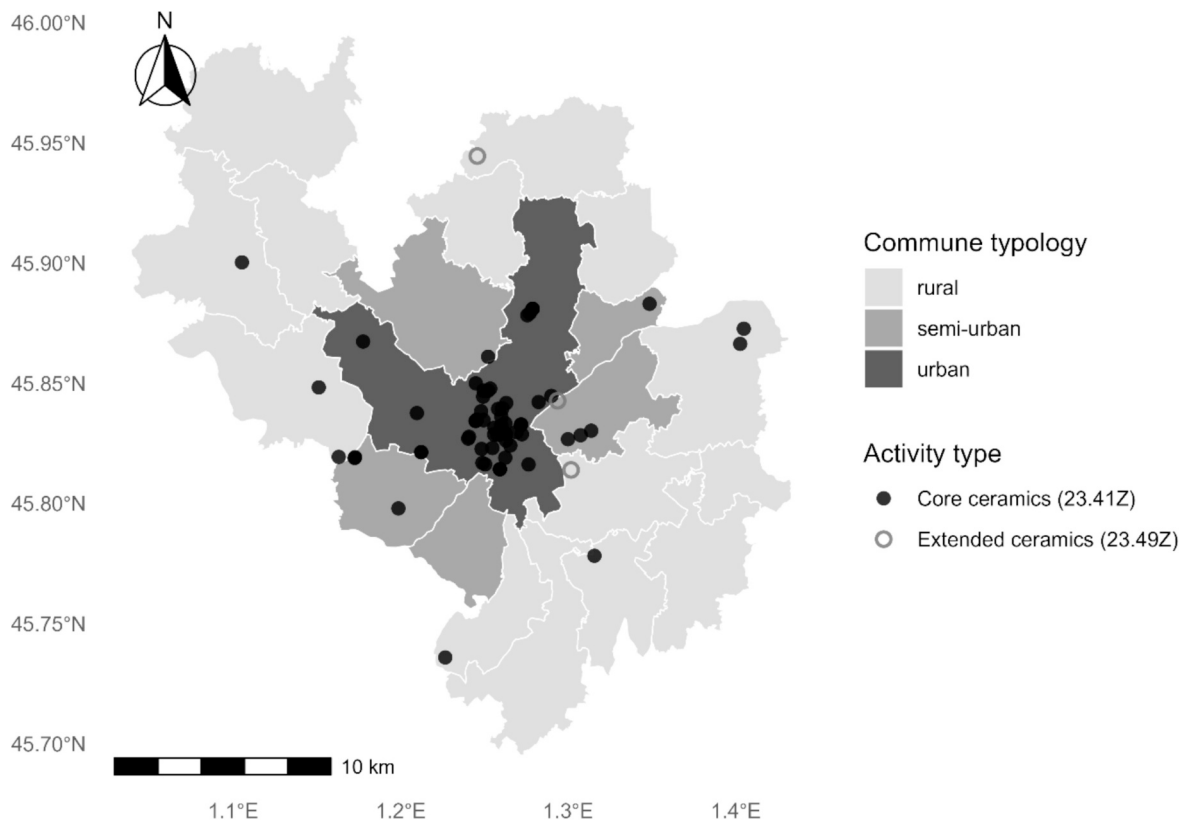


Fig. 3. Ceramic-related establishments in Limoges Métropole by commune typology.

Source: Figure by authors based on data from SIRENE (Stock établissements 2026). Active establishments at the commune level. Ceramic activities defined using NAF 23.41Z (core) and 23.41Z + 23.49Z (extended). UN Statistical Commission *Degree of Urbanisation* method used to distinguish rural (<300 inhabitants for km²), urban (>1500 inhabitants for km²), and semi-urban areas (at least 300 inhabitants per km²).

suggests that, although highly salient, this attribute does not function as part of a broader evaluative dimension of place image. Instead, it represents a distinctive heritage marker, closely tied to the historical and symbolic identity of the city rather than to residents' holistic assessment of everyday urban experience.

Moving to the hypotheses, the results indicate that residents' place image is indeed associated with tourism endorsement, but in a selective manner, thus providing partial support for H1. While the cultural dimensions of place image - captured by both the broader *CulturalOffer* and the city-specific *Artscraft* variable - are positively associated with residents' willingness to recommend Limoges as a tourist destination, evaluations of *UrbanVitality* and *NaturalSocialEnv* do not translate into direct endorsement. This suggests that residents' recommendation intentions are primarily shaped by attributes perceived as distinctive or emblematic of the city, rather than by more general assessments of urban functionality or everyday environmental qualities. This finding is consistent with tourism research highlighting the importance of uniqueness and symbolic differentiation in shaping both a destination image (Velikova et al., 2024) and residents' advocacy (Boley et al., 2018). In the case of Limoges, cultural assets—including its specific craft-based living heritage—appear to function as key reference points through which residents frame the city's touristic appeal, even when other dimensions of place image are positively evaluated.

The results also show that residents' place image is positively associated with pride in place, but that this relationship varies across image components, again offering partial support for H2. *CulturalOffer*, *UrbanVitality*, and *NaturalSocialEnv* are all positively associated with pride, suggesting that residents' emotional evaluation of their city reflects a broad set of place-related experiences, including everyday urban and socio-environmental conditions. This finding resonates with recent evidence showing that residents commonly locate sources of local pride

in different types of everyday urban environments. For example, Hall et al. (2022) report that 82% of respondents in the UK identify the high street as central to local pride, while 94% consider local parks and green spaces—attributes closely aligned with the *UrbanVitality* and *NaturalSocialEnv* constructs—to be particularly important.

In contrast, *Artscraft* - despite being widely recognised as a distinctive and valuable heritage asset - does not show a significant association with pride in place. This finding is particularly salient in the context of culture-led regeneration, as it challenges the implicit assumption that heritage mobilised within regeneration strategies automatically translates into collective pride. However, rather than indicating a rejection of local heritage, this result points to the importance of how heritage is socially interpreted and unevenly internalised. This interpretation is consistent with Guedes et al. (2022), who argue how people's social representations of heritage shape their willingness to engage actively in its preservation. In the specific case of Limoges, one plausible explanation is that even if perceived as highly emblematic, porcelain may fail to elicit pride because closely associated with trajectories of labour conflict, industrial decline, and employment loss. This interpretation resonates with qualitative insights from other craft-based, post-industrial cities. Jayne's (2004) analysis of Stoke-on-Trent—another urban area globally renowned for ceramics—shows how the continued dominance of a craft-oriented industrial past, embedded in hierarchical labour relations and inward-looking social structures, constrained the city's ability to develop a broader post-industrial cultural identity, despite the global reputation of its products. Contemporary social and economic dynamics may further reinforce this pattern: as craft-based industries become increasingly associated with luxury consumption, segments of the local population may find it difficult to identify with or access what was once a more embedded everyday practice.

In addition, our analysis demonstrates the pivotal role of pride in

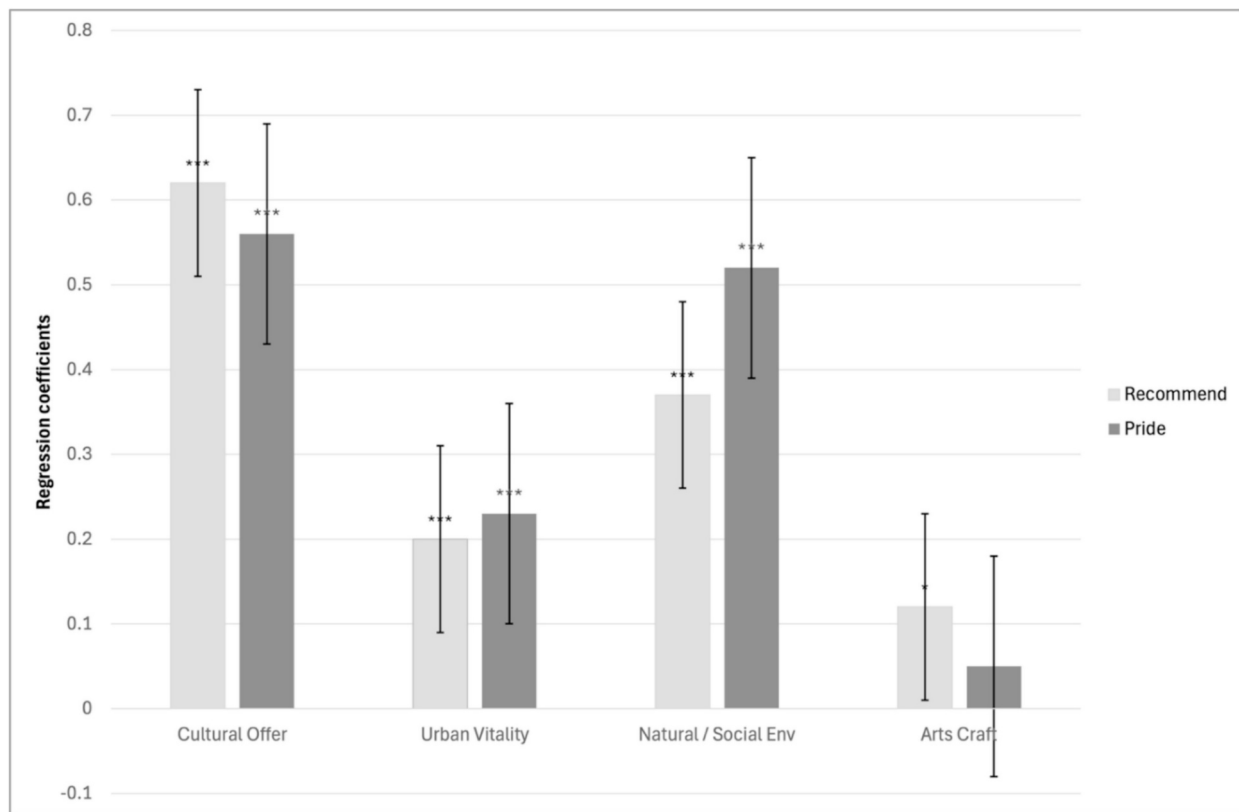


Fig. 4. Regression coefficients (with 90% confidence intervals) for place recommendation and pride across place image components.

Source: Figure by authors.

*:p-value≤0.10;**p-value≤0.05;***:p-value≤0.01.

Table 5

Direct and indirect effect of the residents' place image on tourism endorsement.

	Overall	Urban	Semi-Urb.	Rural
Direct effect				
Cultural Offer	0.34*** (0.14)	0.37*** (0.18)	0.76** (0.39)	0.16 (0.29)
Nat. Soc. Env.	-0.06 (0.14)	-0.03 (0.17)	0.08 (0.28)	-0.19 (0.24)
Urban Vitality	0.14 (0.12)	0.14 (0.15)	-0.09 (0.28)	0.18 (0.28)
Arts Craft	0.33** (0.15)	0.32* (0.18)	0.16 (0.40)	0.39 (0.31)
Indirect Effect				
Cultural Offer	0.83*** (0.13)	0.85*** (0.14)	0.06 (0.34)	0.69** (0.37)
Nat. Soc. Env.	0.76*** (0.11)	0.84*** (0.12)	0.51*** (0.29)	0.38 (0.37)
Urban Vitality	0.33*** (0.10)	0.34*** (0.10)	0.83*** (0.30)	0.17 (0.40)
Arts Craft	0.16 (0.14)	0.15 (0.14)	0.33 (0.31)	0.07 (0.45)

Source: Table by authors.

Standard errors in brackets.

* p-value ≤ 0.10.

** p-value ≤ 0.05.

*** p-value ≤ 0.01.

place as an influential enhancer of residents' willingness to recommend a visit to Limoges, thus confirming the third research hypothesis of this work (H3). Pride in place not only magnifies the impact of *CulturalOffer* but also makes the effect of the natural, social and urban environment on visit recommendations positive and significant. In other words, the local

natural, social and urban environment becomes worth a visit whenever it contributes to pride in place. This finding is in line with recent work on high streets and town centres, which shows that improvements in urban vitality, safety, and environmental quality can foster local pride, belonging, and optimism, (Maliene et al., 2022; Ntounis et al., 2023), particularly when regeneration plans move away from retail-oriented economic activity towards a rediscovery of the high street as the natural centre for people and local communities (Maliphant, 2021). Rather than being perceived directly as touristic attractions, these attributes shape residents' affective evaluations of place, which in turn influence their willingness to recommend the city to outsiders. Although this study does not explicitly examine broader regeneration strategies in Limoges, it is plausible that culture-led regeneration efforts form part of wider urban regeneration ambitions that influence everyday urban life, place image, and residents' emotional evaluations, thereby indirectly shaping support for tourism-oriented place promotion, as the ongoing urban regeneration programmes seem to indicate (Limoges Métropole, 2019, 2024).

However, and as somewhat anticipated by the results discussed for H1, an opposite finding arises for *Artscraft*: while pride in place significantly enhances the effect of other image dimensions, it is not a significant mediator for arts craft. We interpret this result as an illustration of the mediating role that the affective components of residents' place image have on cognitive and conative components (Agapito et al., 2013; Woosnam et al., 2020): on the one hand, residents are well aware of Limoges' distinctive heritage (cognitive component) and this affect their willingness to recommend the city for a visit (conative component). Based on the positive mediating effect played by pride in place (affective component), we would expect pride to strengthen this positive intention. However, this is not the case since arts crafts does not play a statistically significant effect on pride in place. In a way, Limogeauds' reluctance to endorse *Artscraft* as a factor of pride in place undermines

its potential as a driver of visit recommendations. This finding underscores a missed opportunity, given the role that pride in place can play as a booster to residents' willingness to recommend a visit to their city of residence, enhancing the effect size of the relation for the remaining cultural offer. We interpret this finding as a signal of the specific status that porcelain holds in the city: recognised as a distinctive cultural resource for the city, on the one hand, but linked to a history of economic decline and job losses, on the other. In this sense, the ambivalent legacy of the porcelain industry may help explain why related arts and crafts support tourism endorsement without being internalised as a source of pride, contributing to the persistent image deficit that continues to affect the city. This interpretation is consistent with a broader body of literature emphasising that place-based change—particularly when associated with disruption or loss—does not automatically generate positive emotions or actions. Research on place attachment and place identity has shown that change can be experienced as a form of disruption (Brown & Perkins, 1992) or as a threat to established place identities (Bonaiuto et al., 2002), eliciting feelings of grief, loss, or ambivalence rather than pride (Chow & Healey, 2008; Fried, 2000). From this perspective, the limited role of pride in relation to craft-related heritage in Limoges does not signal resistance to culture-led regeneration per se, but rather reflects the emotional complexity through which residents process forms of heritage that are deeply intertwined with socio-economic disruption. Pride, in this case, may require longer-term processes of reinterpretation and legitimisation before it can emerge as a shared emotional and civic resource. This result can also be interpreted through the lens of the place product literature. Rather than being a fixed bundle of attributes, the place product emerges through processes of co-creation involving multiple stakeholders, including residents, institutions, and economic actors (Warnaby & Medway, 2013). In this sense, results point to a potential misalignment between the attributes that are institutionally foregrounded in culture-led regeneration strategies and those that are emotionally appropriated by local communities. In this regard, pride in place may be understood as an outcome not only of exposure to place attributes, but of the extent to which these attributes are co-produced, recognised, and legitimised within everyday lived experience.

Finally, the analysis shows that the relationships between place image, pride in place, and tourism endorsement are not spatially uniform, but vary systematically across place-image dimensions, in line with H4. In urban contexts, all three latent image attributes—*CulturalOffer*, *UrbanVitality*, and *NaturalSocialEnv*—are directly associated with both pride in place and residents' willingness to recommend the city, suggesting a relatively integrated emotional-behavioural pathway. Outside the urban core, however, these pathways become more selective. In rural areas, associations involving *UrbanVitality* and *NaturalSocialEnv* weaken or disappear, whereas *CulturalOffer* remains associated with tourism endorsement, indicating its differentiated role and its tourism recognised potential across spatial contexts.

When considering pride in place as a mediating mechanism, further spatial differentiation emerges. In semi-urban and rural areas, some image attributes continue to support tourism endorsement without eliciting pride—most notably *ArtsCraft*, reinforcing the idea that craft-related heritage supports tourism endorsement through pathways that are not grounded in emotional internalisation. By contrast, *UrbanVitality* and *NaturalSocialEnv* support tourism endorsement primarily in urban and semi-urban settings, where pride also plays a mediating role. *CulturalOffer* displays a more nuanced pattern: once pride is taken into account, its association with tourism endorsement is observed in both urban and rural contexts, suggesting that emotional identification with the city's cultural profile may operate differently across space. This pattern may reflect a stronger symbolic or reputational attachment to the city's cultural offer among both urban and rural residents, although it may also be influenced by the limited sample size in the semi-urban category.

Although these results call for cautious interpretation, given the exploratory nature of the study, they collectively suggest that the relationships between place image, pride in place, and tourism endorsement are neither automatic nor spatially uniform, and tend to be stronger in urban contexts.

Given the absence of comparable empirical studies focusing on Limoges, these findings provide pioneering insights that may inform ongoing efforts by Limoges Métropole to strengthen residents' engagement in promoting their city. More broadly, the results suggest that pride in place should not be conceived merely as an outcome of culture-led regeneration, but also as a potential lever that can enhance residents' willingness to support tourism-related initiatives. Such resident engagement is particularly valuable in 'left-behind' territories with limited resources for external promotion (Hsu et al., 2004), yet having a rich cultural legacy. In Limoges, while porcelain-related arts and crafts are recognised as distinctive, they currently contribute little to pride. Addressing this emotional disconnect may represent an opportunity to strengthen civic participation and local advocacy, including initiatives such as the Destination Limoges Ambassadors programme. However, the findings also suggest that fostering pride in regeneration-oriented heritage requires careful attention to residents' ambivalent relationships with the city's industrial past.

From a policy perspective, strategies may therefore benefit from going beyond promotion alone and engaging more directly with the social meanings attached to heritage. Internal communication and cultural programming could help showcase the contemporary relevance of Limoges' cultural heritage, for instance, while tourism development itself may contribute to revitalisation by expanding interest in porcelain-related practices and products. Over time, such processes may create conditions under which pride in this traditional craft can be gradually reinterpreted and renewed (Reiser & Crispin, 2009).

6. Conclusions

As tourism promotion strategies increasingly mobilise cultural heritage in places marked by industrial decline and reputational challenges, two fundamental questions arise. Are residents themselves proud of the heritage that is being promoted in the name of regeneration? And to which extent does pride in place contribute to residents' tourism endorsement? Addressing these questions helps clarify the emotional assumptions underpinning culture-led regeneration strategies and provide valuable insights for local governments seeking to design socially sustainable regeneration strategies.

In this study, these questions are examined by conceptualising cultural heritage as a core component of residents' place image and by analysing the relationships between residents' place image, pride in place, and their willingness to recommend the city as a tourist destination. Using Limoges as an exploratory case study of a post-industrial city mobilising its porcelain living cultural heritage for regeneration, the analysis investigates whether pride in place is associated with residents' perceptions of place and whether it helps explain their tourism endorsement. While the findings are context-specific, they provide insights relevant to other territories where distinctive cultural assets play a central role in regeneration strategies but do not necessarily elicit shared emotional identification.

From a theoretical perspective, this study provides three advancements. First, it conceptualises pride in place as a distinct emotional response expressed by residents, specifically addressing its frequent conceptual ambiguity in culture-led regeneration research. Second, it enriches the literature on cognitive and emotional determinants of pro-tourism behaviors (e.g. Shen et al., 2019; Styliadis & Dominguez Quintero, 2022) by proposing a framework that integrates pride in place alongside residents' place image and tourism endorsement, in which pride is not simply expected to be an aspirational emotional outcome of positively perceived image but also an enabler of pro-place behaviors, thus bridging insights from environmental psychology with

urban and tourism studies. Third, it foregrounds culture as a place image component. It shows that its effects on pride in place and tourism endorsement may be differentiated and non-overlapping with those of other image components, particularly when culture lies at the core of local regeneration efforts.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study offer guidance for policymakers seeking to anticipate and manage local responses to tourism development strategies. They indicate that restoring or strengthening pride in place is not merely a communication goal but may function as a psychological lever for mobilising collective support. By clarifying how heritage-related perceptions relate unevenly to pride in place and tourism-related intentions, the study highlights both the opportunities and limits of relying on heritage as a driver of resident engagement in culture-led regeneration. These findings suggest that local authorities and destination managers may benefit from designing policies and communication strategies that are attentive to residents' emotional relationships with living heritage, rather than assuming that symbolic promotion alone will foster pride. Approaches that emphasise the contemporary relevance and evolving meanings of heritage—while acknowledging its historically embedded and sometimes ambivalent character—may help create conditions under which pride can gradually emerge. In this sense, initiatives aimed at sustaining artisanal skills or creating new economic opportunities around traditional knowledge may contribute to renewing the symbolic and functional value of heritage, legitimising place-change efforts and sustaining engagement in contexts marked by industrial decline or identity loss.

More broadly, these findings contribute to current policy debates recognising the importance of emotional connection to places as a driver of civic participation (Shaw et al., 2022) and a key component of place-based policies aimed at addressing the challenges of 'left-behind places' (Martin et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018). By demonstrating how pride in place fosters residents' engagement and willingness to promote their city, this study provides evidence that can inform such policy initiatives and contribute to more socially sensitive approaches to local development.

Like all research exploring novel concepts and hypotheses, this study has some limitations. First, the proposed model is intentionally kept simple. This was done to critically consider the role of pride-related emotions in place image and residents' behavioural intentions, while also laying the groundwork for future research exploring these constructs in other territories where pride in place could be at stake. As such, there is considerable scope to develop a multi-dimensional measurement scale for the pride in place construct and to examine how its effects compare with those of place attachment on a broader set of outcomes, including tourism endorsement and, more generally, civic engagement in culture-led regeneration contexts. A second limitation concerns the cross-sectional nature of the dataset. Panel data would enable a more reliable identification of mediation pathways by better capturing temporal sequencing and mitigating bias from time-invariant unobserved confounders. Third, to strengthen the generalisability of results, it would be appropriate to examine the mediating role of pride in place in other territorial contexts sharing similar characteristics to those of Limoges. A city such as Grasse, also in France, where the local government has contributed to keep the local perfume tradition alive, not just as a legacy from the past but as a creative input to contemporary production and tourism development, may offer an interesting test-case. Similarly, other post-industrial cities that are part of the UNESCO Creative Cities network featuring a strong cultural specialisation (such as Biella and the textile industry, or Carrara and the marble industry, in Italy) could help test a new hypothesis stemming from the preliminary results illustrated in this paper, and according to which the missing association between pride in place and visit recommendation intentions may depend on the local governance setting and its capacity to make such specialisation still 'alive' – in terms of both perceived local identity and contribution to the urban economy. Additionally, while this study examines residents' willingness to recommend the city, it does not

capture their actual participation in tourism promotion. Nor does it consider the potential influence of individuals employed in tourism-related sectors on survey responses, or how the spatial distribution of porcelain activities and the touristic appeal of differently urbanised areas may shape results across urban and rural populations. These aspects warrant further investigation. Future research could also examine the contemporary significance of porcelain among residents, as shifting valuations of this heritage may explain its limited influence on pride in place. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches would allow a deeper exploration of how heritage meanings are negotiated and reinterpreted locally. Finally, adopting a longitudinal perspective could illuminate the temporal dynamics of residents' perceptions, offering a richer understanding of how pride and place image evolve over time.

Taken together, the growing policy attention to pride-related emotions, the study's preliminary findings and the research avenues identified open the way to a more systematic investigation of pride in place, including its conceptualisation, measurement, and variation across different culture-led urban regeneration contexts. This article represents a first step in that direction.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Federica Galli: Writing – original draft, Methodology, Formal analysis. **Valentina Montalto:** Writing – original draft, Visualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Appendix. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2026.107193>.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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