

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (20821) - ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISALS IN OUTGROUP CULTURAL LANDSCAPE: THE CASE OF MUSLIM ELEMENTS IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Anna Bornioli¹; Amit Biremboim²; Pazit Ben-Nun Bloom²

1 - Erasmus University Rotterdam; 2 - Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Background and objectives

Cultural landscapes can contribute to positive environmental experiences, including perceived restorativeness. However, previous works focused on ingroup environmental experiences in cultural landscapes. We suggest that group identities, including religious identities, might impact cultural landscape environmental experiences in outgroup settings. This study compared outgroup environmental experiences during a simulated walk in a cultural landscape (a Muslim setting) and a neutral environment, and examined the influence of perceived threat and intolerance on environmental appraisals.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

We explored between-subject differences in environmental appraisals during a simulated walk in a cultural landscape—an urban environment with Muslim elements - and in a control environment, with neutral elements that were embedded instead of the Muslim ones. We examined environmental appraisals and the moderating effect of perceived threat and intolerance. Participants were adults from three European countries (France, Germany, Netherlands). We included measures of place attachment, Perceived Restorativeness Scale, Interestingness, perceived greenery and the perceived length of walk.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Results show that overall the Muslim environment was associated with better environmental appraisals. Multiple linear regressions showed that participants experiencing threat or intolerance reported less favourable environmental perceptions in the Muslim environment, in terms of place attachment, perceived restorativeness, and perceived interestingness. There were not systematic differences between countries.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

These findings contribute to research on the top-down psychological constructs (e.g. personal characteristics) that likely play a role in environmental and restorative experiences. Feelings of perceived threat and intolerance can generate opposite environmental appraisals. While previous work showed that place attachment and identification predict positive environmental perceptions and restoration, we showed the potentially negative effects of exposure to cultural cues, as these might worsen environmental experiences of those who feel threatened or intolerant towards a specific culture. Findings point at the importance of policies for cultural integration and tolerance. Reducing intolerance and/or perceived threat, experiences of the urban landscape can be improved.

Palavras-chave : restorative environments, environmental appraisals, political psychology, cultural landscape