

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (20907) - IS RESTORATION IN THE 'EYE' OF THE BEHOLDER? DOES LUMINANCE AND PLACE PREFERENCE AFFECT THE PERCEIVED RESTORATIVE POTENTIAL OF URBAN AND NATURE ENVIRONMENTS?

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Background and objectives

Attention restoration theory (ART, Kaplan, 1995) suggests that nature is inherently restorative due to environmental characteristics not present in urban settings. However, nature and urban environments are perceived differently due to identity-related place preference (Author, Year). This study explored whether matching the mean luminance of nature and urban stimuli affects their perceived restoration potential to those with different place preferences.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Images were places in and around Texas, USA (Geisler & Perry, 2011a, 2011b) and were chosen using restorative characteristics (ART). The mean luminance of each image was adjusted to match the average mean luminance of the urban set of images. While the mean luminance of stimuli was equivalent, the standard deviation of the luminance profile of the nature and urban image sets varied; on average, nature images were higher in contrast. Participants ($N = 258$) took part in an online study in which they indicated their place preference (nature = 66.5%) and rated the perceived restoration potential (PRP) of twenty nature and twenty urban images (the order of image presentation was randomised). British Psychological Society ethics procedures were followed.

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

PRP was higher for nature images across place preference groups. However, a preference / environment interaction showed that PRP is greater for the environment you prefer to be in; nature images were rated higher by the nature preference group and urban images were rated higher by the urban preference group.

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

This provides further evidence that higher-level, identity-related processing affects perceived restoration and demonstrates that luminance of the images does not affect this. However, as the nature stimuli were higher contrast than the urban stimuli future research should consider the role of contrast in differentiating judgements of PRP.

Palavras-chave : Restoration, Place Preference, Visual Stimuli