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Contact CEH NORA team at
noraceh@ceh.ac.uk

Environmental tastes as predictors of environmental opinions and behaviors

DANIEL E. ORENSTEIN (Corresponding author), Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning,
Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel.

Mailing address: Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning
Technion – Israel Institute of Technology
Haifa, 32000, Israel
Telephone: 972-4-8294070
Email: DanielO@ar.technion.ac.il.

TALLY KATZ-GERRO, Department of Sociology, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel.
tkatz@soc.haifa.ac.il.

JAN DICK, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Bush Estate, Edinburgh, Scotland.
jand@ceh.ac.uk.

Environmental tastes as predictors of environmental opinions and behaviors

Highlights

- Environmental tastes can be identified by querying individuals about their preferences regarding various environmental characteristics.
- Environmental tastes are shown to have consistently high explanatory power regarding environmental behaviors and opinions.
- Tastes may be stronger predictors of environmental behaviors and opinions than socio-demographic variables.

Environmental tastes as predictors of environmental opinions and behaviors

ABSTRACT

We develop a novel way to assess how individuals perceive and utilize their local environment. Specifically, we query local residents in Scotland's Cairngorms National Park regarding their preferences for different characteristics of their environment and examine how these preferences correlate with environmental behaviors and opinions. We identify groupings of preferred characteristics as distinct environmental tastes that, drawing upon Bourdieu's theory of taste, represent general dispositions, preferences, or orientations regarding the environment. We then test whether these tastes are useful for explaining environmental behaviors and opinions.

We introduced this idea previously using survey data drawn from residents of a hyper-arid ecosystem. Here, we seek to establish whether our framework has potentially universal applications generalizable to other socio-ecological settings. We analyze survey data collected from inhabitants of the Cairngorms and, using data reduction methods, identify four distinct environmental tastes. We demonstrate how tastes constitute significant correlates of private sphere environmental behavior, engagement in outdoor activities, opinions about development, perceived economic benefit from the environment, and environmental concerns.

Environmental tastes defined for the Cairngorms are similar to those drawn from previous research and we find several parallels between the two different settings in the associations between tastes and opinions and behavior. There are similarities in the way individuals with certain profiles of environmental tastes are more inclined to have certain opinions and to engage in certain activities. We suggest that tastes can be elucidating for understanding diverse

preferences for environmental characteristics and their broader implications for how humans interact with the landscape.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sociological and psychological literature has proposed various theories to explain behaviors that impact the environment. These theories articulate associations between various constructs such as values, attitudes, concerns, awareness, and socio-demographic characteristics, which shape pro-environmental behavior (Barr, 2007; Olli et al., 2001; Steg & Vlek, 2009). Although we see differences between these theories in the dimensions they emphasize and in their depictions of the processes that lead to engagement in pro-environmental behaviors, the general picture that emerges is that socio-psychological factors, such as values and beliefs, have been more successful than socio-demographic factors in predicting pro-environmental behaviors (Boldero, 1995; de Groot & Steg, 2008; Guagnano et al., 1995). For example, the value-belief-norm theory (Stern, 2000) has shown how environmental behaviors stem from holding particular personal values emphasizing certain perceptions of altruism and care for other humans, plants, and animals. While values cannot and should not be completely separated from socio-demographic factors (which may underlie values systems, as noted above), they are often shown to be more closely associated to behaviors and opinions.

In this research we continue this line of inquiry by deriving and testing a new construct that measures the way individuals perceive the environment, which we call “environmental tastes”.

We explore whether this construct can shed new light on the factors that influence environmentally significant behavior and opinions. We developed this concept in previous research, and apply it here to an entirely new socio-ecological setting. We reason that if analogous relationships are established elsewhere, then environmental tastes may have universal applicability.

1.1. Environmental tastes and landscape preferences

We identify **environmental tastes** as clusters of orientations toward the environment. We define environmental tastes by querying people regarding their preferences for a specific set of biological, physical and climatic components of the landscape (e.g. mountains, rain, trees, birds; details provided in methods section). In developing this notion, we rely on Bourdieu's theory of taste (Bourdieu, 1984) to claim that environmental tastes are embedded in lifestyle and consumption preferences that would have an impact on environmental behavior. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of taste posits that tastes (e.g. cultural, ethical, or environmental preferences) are socially constructed, cultivated through socialization, and used to demarcate social groups in a hierarchical way that distinguishes "legitimate" from "illegitimate" norms, values, and preferences. Because tastes are cultivated through socialization, they are often taken for granted or interpreted as innate, individualistic choices of the human intellect. However, Bourdieu argues that in fact tastes are acquired dispositions that individuals use to evaluate and differentiate things in the social world (Lizardo, 2013). These dispositions produce tastes, which are embedded in lifestyles and in turn shape behavior.

The link between tastes, lifestyles and behavior has been applied in diverse ways to environmental research (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Horton, 2003). In the environmental context, tastes have been shown to reflect dispositions toward nature, sustainability, preservation,

landscapes, daily consumption practices, etc. Further, environmental tastes have been posited to form a set of dispositions that generate perceptions and practices (Crossley, 2003; Haluza-DeLay, 2008; Sela-Sheffy, 2011). These practices are embedded in individuals' lifestyles and are therefore conditioned by particular social contexts. For example, Carfagna et al. (2014) report a class of ethical consumers characterized by a high cultural capital who exhibit an eco-habitus (i.e. environmental orientation) that encourages environmental awareness and sustainability principles. To summarize, in the environmental field, tastes may shape attitudes and behavior in realms such as reflexivity about daily practices, seeking time in nature, or conscious effort to live environmentally.

In this research, we identify and measure environmental taste variables and analyze their relationship to environmental behaviors and opinions. As such, we suggest our research is similar in several ways to the study of landscape preferences because preferences for the landscape are among the taste indicators that we employ and because landscape preferences are often studied with regard to their interaction with environmental opinions and behaviors (e.g. DeLucio & Múgica, 1994; Larsen & Harlan, 2006; Múgica & De Lucio, 1996; Sevenant & Antrop, 2010). One difference between this literature and the research presented here, however, is that most, if not all, of the landscape preference literature focuses on the determinants of landscape preferences and not the reverse relationship, as we examine in this work, whether landscape preferences (or, in our case, environmental tastes) can be used as possible predictors of environmental behaviors and opinions (e.g. Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006; Takahashi & Selfa, 2015).

Landscape is often defined as the product of the interaction between a biophysical space and the human activity occurring within that space (Council of Europe, 2000; Naveh, 2000, 2001; Naveh & Lieberman, 1994). Landscape is perceived and interpreted by the observer within particular

90 contexts, defined by culture, expectations, needs and other variables (Arriaza et al., 2004;
91 Barroso et al., 2012; Egoz et al., 2001; Gobster et al., 2007). Landscape preferences have been
92 assessed using two paradigms, one which considers landscape beauty to be inherent in its
93 physical properties (i.e. the objectivist paradigm), and the other focusing on the subject
94 observing the landscape (i.e. the subjectivist paradigm; Daniel, 2001; Dramstad et al., 2006;
95 Lothian, 1999). Research extending from these approaches addresses the question of whether
96 there is a general consensus regarding what constitutes aesthetic beauty (Kalivoda et al., 2014;
97 Stamps III, 1997; Ulrich, 1986), or whether landscape aesthetics differ widely according to
98 cultural, social and demographic variables, including nationality, age, residential profile, religion
99 and other characteristics (Buijs et al., 2009; Duncan, 1973; Gee & Burkhard, 2010; Natori &
100 Chenoweth, 2008; Zube & Pitt, 1981). Still other work identifies diversity in landscape
101 preferences, but finds factors other than socio-demographic variables to be stronger correlates
102 with landscape preferences, such as knowledge of the landscape and on-site experiences (Brush
103 et al., 2000; Múgica & De Lucio, 1996) or educational background (subject matter, not
104 necessarily years of study; Dramstad et al., 2006; Zheng et al., 2011). On the other hand,
105 Sevenant and Antrop (2010), who defined the latent characteristics of landscapes that are
106 preferred or not preferred, and then tested whether there were distinct preferences to these latent
107 characteristics based on socio-demographic variables, found that latent characteristics were
108 correlated with both socio-demographic variables (including age and education level) and
109 behaviors and attitudes.

110 Several researchers have studied whether environmental values, activities and/or opinions might
111 explain landscape preferences. For instance, DeLucio and Múgica (1994) and Múgica and De
112 Lucio (1996) investigated whether activities and opinions of visitors to national parks in Spain

can be used to determine their landscape preferences. In their first study, they found that landscape preferences were based on the activities in which visitors intended to engage and on the decisions they had made regarding which parks to visit (e.g. they preferred the landscapes for which the parks were known; DeLucio & Múgica, 1994). In their second study, they investigated the determinants of landscape preferences of park visitors to the Doñana National Park, and found that visitors who had acquired knowledge about the park and those with stronger environmental opinions more strongly preferred park landscapes than those with less knowledge or more moderate environmental opinions.

Larsen and Harlan (2006), in their study of private yards in a suburban landscape, investigated the relationship between landscape preferences and behaviors, as expressed by how residents maintain their front and back yards. They concluded that the way residents maintained their yards (i.e. behavior) reflected their landscape preferences, although, recalling earlier work by Duncan (1973), they also showed that both behavior and preference are at least partially determined by social class. On the other hand, they also found that demographic variables did not correlate significantly with landscape preferences. Larson and colleagues (2010) were able to explain residential landscaping decisions through interactions among environmental values, land cover and neighborhood effects.

While the directionality of the relationship between tastes (among them landscape preferences) and behavior could be further tested in various domains, there is general agreement in social psychological research on environmental issues that attitudes antecede behavior (e.g. Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006; Takahashi & Selfa, 2015).

1.3. Environmental tastes as predictors of environmental opinions and behavior

In this work, we first define environmental tastes based on preferences for various biological and physical features of the environment and then test whether these environmental tastes can explain variation in environmental behaviors and opinions more strongly than socio-demographic variables. This path of inquiry is somewhat analogous to landscape preference research that explores the underlying relationship between landscape preferences, on the one hand, and environmental behaviors and opinions, on the other.

We introduced our hypothesis regarding the importance of environmental tastes as possible determinants of environmental opinions and behaviors in previous research (XXX, 2015; masked for blind review). In that work, we measured preferences of local environmental characteristics in a hyper-arid region of Israel, used these characteristics to define a set of environmental tastes and found that these tastes provided explanatory power with regard to frequency of engagement in outdoor activities and to opinions regarding various environmental issues.

In the present research we seek to examine whether the connections between our environmental taste construct and their connection to environmental behaviors and opinions are robust enough to apply to an entirely different ecosystem. We once again aim to identify distinct dimensions of environmental tastes that represent affinities for specific characteristics of the environment. Our first research question is whether such distinct tastes can be identified in a setting of a northern boreal ecosystem in Scotland's Cairngorms National Park, and whether these tastes are at all similar to the ones identified in the hyper-arid ecosystem. If the answer to the latter question is affirmative, this provides an indication that environmental tastes as we measure them are more widely applicable than only in the specific case study. Second, to give further credence to this new concept, we ask whether these environmental tastes provide potential explanatory power

regarding environmental behaviors and opinions, and whether the pattern and direction of relationship is similar to that of previous studies. Aside from its theoretical contribution, identification of clusters of environmental tastes and understanding their relationship with environmental behaviors and opinions could be consequential for research on strategies to change behaviors in the environmental sphere.

2. METHODS

2.1. Research site

Our research area is the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) in Scotland (Fig. 1), which has also been a long-term social and ecological research (LTSER) platform since 2013. The ethos of the LTSER platforms in Europe (under the auspices of the LTER Europe network) is to encourage use of the data and infrastructure provided by long-term ecological research (LTER) sites and to marry this knowledge with social and economic research in a place-based approach to facilitate sustainable management of an area (Haberl et al., 2006; Singh et al., 2013).

The Cairngorms are a mountain range in the eastern highlands of Scotland, and the national park is 4,500 km², or approximately 6% of the Scottish land area (Cairngorms National Park Association, 2012). The park has boreal and sub-arctic mountain landscapes and provides habitat for a quarter of the threatened animal and plant species of the UK (CNPA, 2012). This makes it an important area for nature conservation. The population of the park is 18,000 people (Cairngorms National Park, 2015) with approximately 1.4 million tourists visiting per year. The economy is based on tourism, farming, forestry and wild game hunting (CNPA, 2012), though tourism remains the most significant component (Cogent Strategies International Ltd, 2013) and

the relative contribution of this industry to the Cairngorms economy is higher than elsewhere in Scotland. Part of the strategic plan of the area is tourism growth throughout the year, especially during late autumn and spring, to increase the length of time tourists stay in the CNP and increasing the amount of money tourists spend during their visits (CNPA, 2012). Other cornerstones of long-term development policy are diversification of economic opportunities, provision of land for residential development, development of clean energy sources, and encouragement of local higher and further education opportunities (CNPA, 2012; Cogent Strategies International Ltd, 2013).

There are a large number of stakeholders involved in the management of land and tourism in the Cairngorms: local residents, land owners, tourists, farmers, housing developers, the tourism industry, environmental organizations/conservation groups, and the national park authorities. In recent years, the CNP has seen an in-migration of 18 to 25 year-old residents (Cogent Strategies International Ltd, 2010). Many of them are moving to the CNP to work in the hospitality sector.

-- Figure 1 Map of area --

2.2. Survey

We prepared and distributed a 'self-completion' questionnaire in the Spring/Summer of 2012 on people's relationship with their natural environment in the CNP. The questionnaires were originally designed to reveal whether local residents were aware of the services they receive from their ecosystem, and thus batteries of questions dealt with respondents' appreciation of various ecological, climatic and geological characteristics of the local environment (cultural ES), their recreational activities (also cultural ES), and their perceived economic dependence on these characteristics (provisioning, cultural or regulating ES). To measure behaviors and opinions we used sets of questions that frequently feature in research on these issues (e.g. de Groot & Steg,

2008; Guagnano et al., 1995; Stern, 2000). A pilot version of the questionnaire was distributed in the spring of 2012 and, based on 29 completed surveys, the questionnaire was modified for greater clarity and more geographic and environmental specificity based on respondents' comments.

The final version of the questionnaire was publicly distributed by the research team over a period of four days in August, 2012, in the western portion of the Cairngorms National Park. Using a "quota sampling approach" (Fogelman & Comber, 2007) we aimed to collect 250 completed surveys that would provide a representative sample of Cairngorm residents, as determined by demographic profiles of the region (e.g. gender, age, occupation, income; Cogent Strategies International Ltd, 2010). Questionnaires were distributed in person by research staff in the business districts of two of the larger towns – Aviemore and Granton on Spey – as well as in numerous smaller towns – in a broad variety of venues, including shops, bus stations, city parks, camp grounds, and tourist sites. Following a preliminary analysis of the demographic profile of respondents, we identified a gap in representation from the agricultural sector and subsequently hired a research assistant to visit farmers in the area and distribute the questionnaire among them; this yielded an additional 17 completed surveys from farmers. Altogether, we received 331 completed questionnaires, of which 251 were completed by residents and 80 by tourists or individuals who did not specify whether they were residents or tourists. We conducted our analysis on the 251 questionnaires completed by residents.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. In Section 1, participants were requested to mark on a map an area that they engage with. This focus area refers to where the respondent interacts with the environment or experiences it in some way. The goal of this request was to both provide data to the researchers regarding where the respondents located themselves within

the region and to provide the respondent with the opportunity to focus on a geographic region for the remaining survey questions. Section 2 consisted of a series of questions applied to the ‘focus area’ marked in Section 1, but also general questions relating to the Cairngorms National Park. These questions are outlined according to variable type, i.e. series of questions, below. Section 3 consisted of questions regarding the socio-demographic profile of the respondent.

2.3. Survey questions to determine environmental tastes, opinions and behaviors

Environmental tastes. Respondents were asked to rank characteristics of their environment with regard to how much they appreciate them on a scale from 1 (strongly dislike) to 5 (love/strongly enjoy). The 18 qualities included summer climate, winter climate, precipitation, openness, quality and variety of light, topography, quiet, snow storms, wind/gales, mountains, landscape, animals (birds, mammals), biting insects, non-biting insects, wild flowers, wild trees, day length – summer, and day length – winter. This series of questions assisted in determining which physical and biological components of the landscape are valued by respondents. We interpret preferences of such characteristics as indicating certain inclinations or dispositions that pertain to aesthetic, climatic, and visual qualities, considered together as ‘environmental tastes’.

Level of engagement in outdoor activities was measured by asking respondents to indicate the frequency of engaging in a list of 16 activities, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (almost every day). The activities included walking/running outside, road biking, mountain/trail biking, horseback riding, driving off-road vehicles in the countryside, swimming in river, recreational fishing, recreational shooting, having campfires, bird watching, kayaking and other water sports, camping, collecting biological material (e.g. mushrooms and blueberries), art-related activities, skiing/snowboarding, and golfing.

247 *Private-sphere environmental behavior* refers to frequency of engagement in six particular
248 environmental activities, including: turning off appliances and lights when not in use, recycling,
249 walking or riding a bike in lieu of using a motor vehicle (for environmental reasons), saving
250 water, using energy-efficient light bulbs and re-using bags or using cloth bags for shopping.
251 Ranking was from 1 (never) to 4 (always).

252 *Perceived economic benefit from the environment* measures the extent to which listed natural
253 resources provide economic benefits to them or their communities on a scale from 1 (no benefit)
254 to 4 (my economic wellbeing is dependent on this resource). The list of 13 resources included
255 water, soil, sun/heat, insects, fish, birds, game or wild animals, domesticated animals,
256 plants/trees, minerals/rocks, snow/ice, open land, and wind. These questions lend insight into
257 whether the respondent *perceives* an economic reliance on ecosystem services, regardless of
258 whether or not it is true in economic terms.

259 *Environmental concern* refers to respondents' level of concern regarding eight local to global-
260 scale environmental challenges, including climate change, water availability and quality, stream
261 pollution, toxic waste storage and disposal, preservation of open space, protection of
262 biodiversity, public access to roam, and level of recycling in place of residence. Respondents
263 ranked their opinions from 1 (not concerned) to 5 (very concerned).

264 *Opinions on development issues.* Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they
265 agreed or disagreed with 16 statements regarding local and regional development issues, on a
266 scale from 1 (strongly disagree with the statement) to 5 (strongly agree with the statement). We
267 chose topics based on our a priori knowledge of local and regional issues. Full text for this
268 battery of questions is included in Appendix 1.

Socio-economic and demographic variables included gender (male or female), age (in years), resident or tourist (our analysis pertains only to residents), tenure (years lived in the region), marital status (married/cohabiting or single/living with a housemate who is not a partner), and formal educational achievement (high school or less, undergraduate degree, graduate degree). Response categories and descriptive statistics of these variables are presented in Table 1. The age distribution of our sample was representative of the population, though women were slightly oversampled relative to their proportion of the general population (Cogent Strategies International Ltd, 2010).

-- Insert Table 1 about here --

2.4. Analysis

Survey results were analyzed in three phases. First, we present descriptive statistics for results of each question, including mean scores and standard deviations. Next, using SPSS software, we conduct a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation on the first three batteries of questions – environmental tastes, outdoor activities, and perceived economic dependence on environmental characteristics. Factor analysis is used to identify underlying latent variables (called factors) that represent common worlds of content shared by groups of questions, and has been used in research linking environmental attitudes, values, behaviors and other related variables (e.g. Groot & van den Born, 2003; Marques et al., 2017). For the first series of questions, for example, we identify and conceptualize the factors that emerged as different types of environmental tastes (XXX, 2015; masked for blind review). Each factor is in fact an index that summarizes responses to several questions and in addition attributes different weights to the components of the index, according to the degree to which each question loads on each factor. After reducing a series of questions that addressed a specific topic to several factors, we use

these factors as independent variables in subsequent multivariate analyses. Specifically, we estimate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions to gauge the effect of environmental tastes (opinions regarding environmental characteristics) and socio-demographic variables (gender, tenure, marital status, education, age) on measures of environmental behavior (engagement in outdoor activities, private sphere environmental behavior) and measures of environmental opinion (perceived economic dependency, level of concern, development opinions).

3. RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive statistics

Environmental tastes. Mean preference scores and standard deviations for each of the environmental characteristics are displayed in Figure 2 and Table 2 (right column). They reflect a general affinity with most of the characteristics of the region. Landscape, mountains, animals, and summer day length are the most appreciated characteristics of the environment, while biting insects, precipitation, wind, and winter day length ranked as the least liked.

-- Insert Table 2 and Figure 2 about here --

The factor analysis yielded four unique factors. Rotated factor loadings on the four factors that emerged are described in Table 2. Each factor clustered a group of related variables that revealed particular affinities, or “tastes” for particular components of the environment. The first dimension, which we term “landscape + biota,” includes characteristics associated with the visual and sensory landscape, including mountains, quiet, openness, and light, and also biotic items such as animals and flowers. The next dimension, which we label “climate extreme,” included those climatic characteristics that define the extreme environment of the Cairngorms –

snow storms, wind, winter climate, and winter day length. The third dimension included the biting and non-biting insects, therefore we label it “insects.” Finally, the fourth dimension “dreary summer” included two items which we suspect were biased by summer conditions in the specific survey year, summer climate and precipitation.¹ Corroborating this suspicion is the results of an open question in the survey, “If you could change one thing about the natural environment in the Cairngorms, what would it be?” Among the 251 completed surveys, 198 responded to this open question; of those, 37% commented using some variation of desiring drier summers, less rain, more predictable and less extreme weather and more sun and fewer clouds (other common comments included reducing the amount of wind and midges and having colder, snowier winters). We thus consider the “dreary summer” taste to be an artifact of the particular survey year expressing the discontent of respondents with the weather.

Level of engagement in outdoor recreational activities. Responses regarding engagement in outdoor recreational activities are presented in Appendix 2 (Table A). Walking/running is by far the most prevalent activity (mean score 3.97, equivalent to “1-2 times a week”) and next comes outdoor art, bird watching and road biking. Horseback riding is the activity with the fewest adherents, followed by shooting and fishing.

The attempt via data reduction (factor analysis) to identify latent factors that capture the list of outdoor activities resulted in five dimensions. The first dimension is “active – on the ground”, which includes physical activities that require minimal equipment (walking, running and swimming) or camping related activities. The second factor is “active – on equipment” and it includes physical activities requiring equipment, such as biking, boating, or skiing. The third factor, “pensive” includes the slower, more reflective activities, including bird watching, outdoor

¹ The week in which the survey was conducted was rainy, and the summer of 2012 was characterized by 15% more rainfall than the long-term average (<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/08/1634/15>)

art activities, and collecting from nature. The fourth factor, “macho”, includes ORV driving, fishing, and shooting (and, as we will show below, is significantly correlated to gender). Finally, the fifth factor combines horseback riding and golf; we call this factor “highbrow activities”, as they are often (though not exclusively) associated to higher economic strata of society and require significant economic investment and leisure time to partake in the activity.

Perceived level of economic benefit received from environmental resources. Sun / heat are the resources that received the highest score (i.e. highest perceived dependency) followed closely by water and plants. Wind and insects received the lowest scores (see Appendix 2, Table B).

For perceived level of economic dependency, factor analysis distinguished between two dimensions, which we termed “agricultural” and “tourist-dependent”. The first factor reveals perceived dependency on soil, sun/heat, water, domestic animals, plants, open land, and insects – all components of an agricultural system. The second factor concentrates a seemingly disparate group of characteristics, although they are highly correlated with each other. These include fish, snow / ice, wild animals, wind, minerals, and birds. We note that all of the elements in the second factor received low rankings with regard to perceived economic dependence, and they are related to a variety of potential tourist-dependent economic endeavors including fishing and hunting, skiing and winter sports, bird and animal watching and (perhaps) wind power production.

Private sphere environmental behavior. Respondents reported a high frequency of activity in all of the questions on pro-environmental behavior, with the exception of walking/bike riding in lieu of using motor vehicles (Appendix 2, Table C, top). The most popular behavior is recycling. We treat the question regarding ‘private sphere environmental behavior’ as a summed scale because it produced only one dimension in factor analysis. Additional evidence that the various indicators

of private sphere environmental behavior can be summed in one index is provided by a reliability score, demonstrating that all indicators are significantly correlated and can be interpreted as part of the same construct (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.689$).

Level of concern regarding regional and global environmental issues. Overall, there was a high level of concern for environmental challenges across all categories (Appendix 2, Table C, middle). Biodiversity protection, toxic waste storage, open space preservation, and water quality and quantity rank highest, while the level of recycling in the region and public access to roam ranked lowest from among the choices. We treat the questions regarding 'level of concern' as a summed scale because they produced only one dimension in factor analysis. The reliability score of all questions indicates that they are part of the same construct (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.827$).

Opinion on development. The items measuring opinions regarding development issues did not form a scale, nor did we expect them to represent distinct underlying dimensions, therefore we treat them as separate questions. Means and standard deviations are presented in Appendix 2 (Table C, bottom). Residents disagreed the most with the statements that there are not enough people living in the area, that economic development should always take precedent over environmental protection, that the economic benefits of building outweigh the environmental costs, and that wind farming is an important activity and should be expanded in the Cairngorms National Park. Residents agreed the most with the statement that they personally enjoy nature, that it is important to improve A9 road to dual lanes, that economic development and environmental protection can occur together, that developing tourism infrastructure in the area is important for the future of the region, that most tourists come to the Cairngorms for the nature, and that their economic wellbeing depends on a clean environment.

3.2. Multivariate analysis of environmental tastes, behaviors, and opinions

382 The statistically significant standardized effects from regressions of perceived economic
383 dependency, environmental concern, private sphere environmental behavior, and outdoor
384 activities are displayed in Table 3. In Table 3a, we see that the environmental taste constructs are
385 all strongly associated to one or more of the outdoor activities. Among the socio-demographic
386 variables only gender and age have significant effects on some of these factors. Males are
387 positively associated with active – on equipment and macho activities. Age is negatively
388 associated with active – on the ground activities, and positively associated with pensive
389 activities. The taste variables show relatively high standardized effects with all of the dependent
390 variables, with all of them significantly influencing the pensive activities factor. The climate
391 extreme taste has a significant effect on four out of the five activity factors (three of which are
392 positive, while one – highbrow – is negative). This means that respondents who appreciate the
393 extreme climate (or have more tolerance for it) tend to engage in active, pensive, and macho
394 outdoor activities, but not in highbrow activities. Overall, the models are quite predictive of some
395 of the activity factors as indicated by relatively high explained variance (Adjusted R^2),
396 particularly for pensive ($R^2 = 0.291$) and active (both on the ground ($R^2 = 0.198$) and on
397 equipment ($R^2 = 0.138$)).

398 Turning now to panel b in Table 3, we see that the tourist-dependent economic factor is not
399 associated with any of the variables in the model. Recall that the tourist-dependent factor was an
400 amalgam of seemingly disparate items that were nonetheless highly correlated with one another.
401 Agricultural dependency is positively associated with dreary summer taste and with tenure, and
402 has a negative association with the climate extreme taste. These relations suggest that the dreary
403 summer taste may be associated with farmers who are especially dependent on predictable
404 weather patterns and averse to climate extremes. Likewise, those who are not averse to climate

405 extremes (reflected in the climate extreme taste factor) are also negatively associated with
406 agricultural dependence. The only socio-demographic variable associated with the economic
407 dependency factors is tenure, with those living for longer in the region reporting more economic
408 dependency on the agriculture factor.

409 Environmental concern is positively associated with the landscape + biota taste and with the
410 insects taste, as well as having a negative correlation with gender and marital status, meaning
411 that men are less concerned than women and married are less concerned than non-married.
412 Further, age is positively associated to environmental concern. Private sphere behavior correlates
413 with landscape + biota and insect tastes as well, in addition to having a negative correlation with
414 gender, indicating that women adopt environmentally friendly private sphere behaviors more
415 than men.

416 -- Insert Table 3 about here --

417 Table 4 shows the associations between various opinions on development in the region and
418 environmental tastes and socio-demographics. Explained variance is generally modest across all
419 of the opinion questions (with the exception of “I enjoy nature”), but the landscape + biota taste
420 has a significant positive effect on nine of the 16 items and climate extreme and insects tastes
421 each have a significant effect on four opinion items. Respondents who have a taste for the
422 landscape + biota characteristics think that most tourists come to the region because of nature,
423 they self-identify as environmental, think that environmental and economic development can go
424 together, that more tourism infrastructure is needed, and they also favor a clean environment,
425 protection of the area, and valuing biodiversity. They disagree that wind farming should be
426 developed in the region or that the economic development should come before environmental
427 considerations. Respondents who appreciate the extreme climatic features of the region tend to

428 be against wind farming and expanding the tourism infrastructure, and they support biodiversity
429 and enjoy nature. Respondents who scored high on the insects taste also consider their
430 community to be environmental, express that they need a clean environment and biodiversity,
431 and state that they enjoy nature. Finally, those associated with the dreary summer factor tend to
432 consider themselves environmental, they enjoy nature, and they tend to oppose fish farming.

433 While the environmental taste factors show multiple and strong correlations to various
434 environmental opinions, socio-demographic variables also show some significant associations.
435 Relative to females, males show stronger support for development, as reflected in two questions.
436 Likewise, those who have spent more time in the region (tenure) also showed stronger
437 development tendencies than those with less time in the region (although tenure is also positively
438 associated to needing a clean environment). Married respondents were less environmental than
439 non-married respondents, as defined by three questions. Respondents with more formal
440 education disagreed that environmentalists were extreme, less likely to desire to prioritize the
441 economy over the environment, and less likely to consider fish farming a desired economic
442 activity. On the other hand, those with more formal education were less likely to want to protect
443 the core area from development. Finally, age is negatively associated to support for wind
444 farming, negatively associated to believing that economic development and environmental
445 protection can go hand-in-hand, and less likely to consider a clean environment as vital to their
446 economic wellbeing. Thus, while environmental taste constructs show a high degree of
447 explanatory power, socio-demographic variables are also significant explanatory factors for
448 environmental opinions.

449 In sum, our findings suggest that taste factors are significantly correlated with environmental
450 opinions and behaviors and that these associations persist when controlling for an array of socio-

demographic variables. Residents of Cairngorms who have a taste that we depicted as landscape + biota show strong environmental concern, adopt environmental private sphere behaviors, and report strong environmental opinions on various environment and development issues. Residents who hold a taste that we named climate extreme are engaged in a variety of activities, with the exception of highbrow activities. They also express relatively strong environmental opinions, but do not report strong environmental concerns or private sphere environmental behaviors. The insect taste is associated with environmental concern, environmental private sphere behavior, pensive outdoor activities, and it exhibits some pro-environmental opinions. Finally, those with a taste we classify as dreary summer correlate positively with agricultural economic dependency and tend to consider themselves as environmental, but don't express strong environmental opinions and don't correlate with strong environmental concerns or behaviors. Socio-demographic variables also provided significant correlates (especially with regard to questions about environmental opinions), and thus cannot be disregarded.

-- Insert Table 4 about here --

4. DISCUSSION

In this study, we generate statistically significant environmental taste constructs through the analysis of survey data reflecting preferences of environmental characteristics. We find that environmental tastes constitute statistically significant explanatory variables for environmental behaviors and opinions. The results strengthen our earlier findings that environmental tastes can explain environmental behaviors and opinions, often better than traditional socio-economic and demographic variables. As such, our results reinforce the assertion that socio-psychological factors can be stronger predictors of environmental opinions and behaviors than socio-

demographic variables (Boldero, 1995; Olli et al., 2001). The landscape preference literature, as reported above, is not singular in this regard, with some research finding significant correlates between socio-demographic variables and landscape preference, while in other studies, demographic factors are often found to be weak predictors of preferences.

We have found that the consolidation and explanatory power of environmental tastes recurs in two seemingly unrelated socio-ecological contexts. This suggests that the environmental taste construct is rather robust and warrants further examination. Further, we found many similarities between the Cairngorms (Scotland) data set and the [MASKED] data set (citation MASKED for blind review). Respondents of both regions/climatic areas ranked environmental characteristics similarly, and similar physical activities were prominent in both regions, albeit with some differences due to climate related specifics. More importantly, environmental characteristics clustered in remarkably similar groupings across the two regions, suggesting that our indicators could be appropriate for tapping environmental tastes.

Unlike our previous research, some socio-economic and demographic variables, including gender, tenure in the region, marital status, and age were each correlated with some of the behaviors and opinions. In particular, men were positively associated to active (on equipment) and macho activities, and negatively associated with pensive activities. Likewise, and similar to other research findings (e.g. Olli et al., 2001; Takahashi & Selfa, 2015), women were found to be more positively associated to both environmental concerns and behaviors. Age was positively associated to environmental concern, while, as elsewhere, education level was not found to be a significantly correlated with either environmental opinions or behavior (Olli et al., 2001; Takahashi & Selfa, 2015).

496 Based on this and our previous study, we strongly recommend further investigation into the use
497 of generating factors reflecting environmental tastes for investigating determinants of
498 environmental behaviors and opinions. We note that there has been enough accumulated
499 evidence to suggest that analyzing opinions and behaviors based on underlying values and
500 preferences (in our case, as expressed in environmental tastes) is not only accurate (e.g. strong
501 and consistent correlations), but that this can also free us somewhat from our tendency to
502 categorize individuals according to narrowly-defined (and sometimes stereotypical) social
503 groups (e.g. gender, age, religion or nationality). Of course, there are also correlations between
504 socio-demographic groups and values and preferences that are valuable to understand. There
505 may also be interactions and correlations between socio-demographic variables on the one hand,
506 and values, on the other, but – as this research demonstrates – characteristics that cut across
507 socio-demographic divides may be more accurate in defining behaviors and opinions.

508 The environmental tastes we identify, and their relationship to behaviors and opinions, may
509 contribute to the landscape preference literature in two ways. First, defining environmental taste
510 categories offers a novel alternative approach to defining preferences for elements within the
511 landscape (e.g. biota or views). We identified clear typologies (e.g. tastes) for groups of people
512 who are attracted to specific packages of landscape elements, and these tastes are somewhat
513 robust across two socio-ecological systems. There is at least one precedent from the landscape
514 preference literature that use similar statistical methods to the ones we apply here (factor
515 analysis) for the identification of tastes. Groot and van den Born (2003) investigated how
516 landscape preferences relate to people's images of nature and their definition of the appropriate
517 relationship between humans and nature. They generated four unique factors from survey results
518 that they defined as typologies of respondents' "images of nature" and, while they did not

investigate these images as explanatory variables for landscape preferences or activities, they do find strong associations between respondents' image of nature and their preferences. Their "images of nature" are somewhat analogous to our "environmental tastes" and individual images show some similarity to our tastes. For instance, their category "elementary nature" emphasizes the climate extremities as does our "climate" taste, and their "penetrative nature" features pesky biota (rats, weeds, mosquitoes), similar to our taste based solely on biting and non-biting insects.

Second, since our "biota/landscape" taste is strongly associated to positive environmental behaviors and strong environmental opinions (Tables 3b and 4), and our previous results suggest stronger connection between "biota" and environmental behaviors, our findings suggest that strengthening one's positive association towards biota can have broader implications regarding their environmental behaviors and opinions. The results support the contention that developing empathy and preference for biotic elements of the landscape, or what Kals et al (1999) call "emotional affinity towards nature" may have positive cascading effects on environmental opinions and behaviors, as has been suggested elsewhere in the large body of literature on the impact of nature experience on environmental opinions and behaviors (e.g. Curtin & Kragh, 2014; Kals et al., 1999; Wells & Lekies, 2006).

This research did not deal with the underlying determinants of environmental tastes, nor did we try to separate and isolate the potentially interacting variables of environmental tastes and other socio-demographic variables, some of which were also correlated with certain environmental behaviors and opinions. These next steps will greatly assist in building the foundation of understanding how environmental behaviors and opinions, via environmental tastes, are developed. Here, too, the relevant literature on landscape preferences, which has suggested underlying paradigms for linking values and beliefs to tastes (Duncan, 1973; Egoz et al., 2001;

542 Larsen & Harlan, 2006; Larson et al., 2010; Nassauer, 1995; Sevenant & Antrop, 2010) will be
543 useful in further developing the theory of environmental tastes.

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List of Tables

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of survey sample

Table 2: Means (standard deviations), and rotated factor loadings of environmental characteristics

Table 3: Standardized coefficients from OLS regressions of outdoor activity factors (6a, upper table), perceived economic dependency factors, environmental concern, and private sphere behavior (6b, lower table) on environmental tastes and socio-demographics

Table 4: Standardized coefficients from OLS regressions of opinion on development on environmental tastes and socio-demographics

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of survey sample

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE (N=251)							
Gender (%)	Female 57.9%			Male 42.1%			
Age (%)	15-19 4.8%	20-29 16.4%	30-39 15.6%	40-49 19.6%	50-59 19.6%	60-69 13.2%	70+ 10.4%
Marital status (%)	Single 22.8%		Married 68.4%		Cohabiting 8.9%		
Years lived in region (%)	≥ 10 38.9%	11-20 21.0%	21-30 13.0%	31-40 10.5%	40+ 16.6%		
Formal education (%)	Elementary 1.7%		High school 35.1%		Undergraduate degree 36.8%	Graduate degree and higher 26.4%	

Table 2: Means (standard deviations), and rotated factor loadings of environmental characteristics

Environmental characteristic	Mean (SD)	Environmental tastes (factors)			
		Landscape + Biota	Climate Extreme	Insects	Dreary Summer (artifact)
Topography	4.29 (0.798)	.698	-.006	.093	.080
Mountains	4.69 (0.588)	.669	.335	.194	-.153
Quiet	4.32 (0.750)	.646	.151	.009	-.081
Openness	4.35 (0.772)	.631	.154	-.037	.022
Landscape	4.758 (0.474)	.630	.286	.205	-.164
Light	4.27 (0.837)	.626	.087	-.078	.345
Flowers	4.30 (0.727)	.613	-.058	.474	.062
Summer day	4.54 (0.720)	.604	-.149	-.038	.148
Trees	4.34 (0.764)	.602	-.022	.455	.023
animals	4.59 (0.662)	.588	.092	.349	-.070
Snow storms	3.50 (1.234)	.230	.786	-.121	-.128
Wind	2.569 (1.110)	.035	.745	.133	-.059
Winter climate	3.55 (1.135)	.238	.700	-.069	.323
Winter day	2.60 (1.154)	-.103	.617	.129	.320
Biting insects	1.74 (0.850)	-.096	.082	.817	-.007
Non biting insects	3.22 (0.980)	.331	.031	.589	.052
Summer climate	3.45 (1.154)	.007	-.001	-.060	.836
Precipitation	2.54 (0.951)	.070	.416	.254	.572
Cumulative % of variance explained		23.5	37.4	47.3	55.5

Table 3: Standardized coefficients from OLS regressions of outdoor activity factors (3a, upper table), perceived economic dependency factors, environmental concern, and private sphere behavior (3b, lower table) on environmental tastes and socio-demographics

Explanatory variables	Outdoor activities				
	Active – on the ground	Active – on equipment	Pensive	Macho	Highbrow
Landscape + Biota		0.175*	0.253**		
Climate extreme	0.220**	0.289**	0.231**		-0.235**
Insects			0.212**		
Dreary summer	-0.154*		0.192**		
Male		0.152*	-0.177*	0.341**	
Tenure					
Married					
Degree					
Age	-0.358**		0.212*		
Adj. R²	0.198	0.138	0.291	0.109	0.031
N	162	162	162	162	162

Explanatory Variables	Perceived economic dependency		Environmental Concern	Private sphere behavior
	Agricultural	Tourist-dependent		
Landscape+Biota			0.229**	0.263**
Climate extreme	-0.167*			
Insects			0.152*	0.187*
Dreary summer	0.197*			
Male			-0.225**	-0.302**
Tenure	0.330**			
Married			-0.173*	
Degree				
Age			0.238**	
Adj. R²	0.105	Model insignificant	0.187	0.227
N	139	139	173	173

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Note: only statistically significant results are reported.

Table 4: Standardized coefficients from OLS regressions of opinion on development on environmental tastes and socio-demographics

	Not enough people	Tourism for nature	Building benefits	Improve roads	Extreme environmentalists	Wind farming important	I am environmental	Others are environmental	Economy first
Landscape + Biota		0.414**				-0.249**	0.231**		-0.365**
Climate extreme						-0.188*			
Insects								0.159*	
Dreary summer							0.203**		
Male			0.188*		0.177*				
Tenure					0.205*				
Married									
Degree					-0.301**				-0.163*
Age						-0.177*			
Adj. R²	Not sig.	0.133	0.020	0.010	0.188	0.110	0.129	0.026	0.188
N		173	162	173	173	171	173	173	173

	Economy and environment go together	Tourism infrastructure needed	I need a clean environment	Protect area	Biodiversity first	I enjoy nature	Fish farming good
Landscape + Biota	0.268**	0.257**	0.352**	0.166*	0.222**		
Climate extreme		-0.155*		0.138~	0.204**	0.508**	
Insects			0.158*		0.163*	0.154*	
Dreary summer						0.168*	-0.170*
Male	0.153*						
Tenure	0.180*		0.213*		-0.175*		
Married			-0.157*	-0.350**	-0.239**		
Degree				-0.173*			-0.177*
Age	-0.202*		-0.194*				
Adj. R²	0.057	0.060	0.130	0.152	0.125	0.223	0.064
N	173	173	173	173	173	173	162

~ p<0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01; Note: only statistically significant results are reported

List of Figures

Figure 1. Map of research site (Reprinted with permission of the Cairngorms National Park Authority)

Figure 2. Preferences for environmental characteristics (key denotes “taste” categories)

Appendix 1: Opinion questions from Cairngorms survey

Regional development – please rank each statement by whether you agree or disagree, from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree):

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't have an opinion / Don't know
There are not enough people living in focus area	1	2	3	4	5	DK
Most tourists come to the region because of the natural environment (geology, ecology, aesthetics)	1	2	3	4	5	DK
The economic benefits of building (e.g. An Camus Mor) outweigh the environmental costs	1	2	3	4	5	DK
It is important to improve A9 road to dual lanes	1	2	3	4	5	DK
“Environmentalists” are too extreme in their desire to prevent development in the focus area	1	2	3	4	5	DK
Wind farming is an important activity and should be expanded in the Cairngorms National Park	1	2	3	4	5	DK
I am very environmental in my behaviors	1	2	3	4	5	DK
In general, the people I associate with are very environmental in their behaviors	1	2	3	4	5	DK
Economic development should always take precedent over environmental protection	1	2	3	4	5	DK
Economic development and environmental protection can occur together	1	2	3	4	5	DK
Developing tourism infrastructure in the focus area is important for the future of the region	1	2	3	4	5	DK
My economic wellbeing depends on a clean, healthy environment	1	2	3	4	5	DK
It is important to protect focus area from development	1	2	3	4	5	DK
It is important to protect biodiversity in the focus area, even if it means foregoing economic opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	DK
I enjoy spending time in nature	1	2	3	4	5	DK
Fish farming is an environmentally sustainable economic activity, which would be good to expand in the Cairngorms.	1	2	3	4	5	DK

Appendix 2: Additional data tables.

Table A: Means (standard deviations) and rotated factor loadings of outdoor activities

Activity	Mean (SD)	Factors				
		Active – on equipment	Reflective	Macho	Active – on the ground	Highbrow
Mountain bike	2.21 (1.201)	.804	.105	.068	.017	.270
Ski	2.15 (1.287)	.731	-.050	.076	.126	-.070
Boat	1.80 (1.038)	.726	.188	.129	.235	-.061
Road bike	2.33 (1.259)	.579	.177	-.098	-.022	.464
Bird watch	2.48 (1.525)	.045	.807	.052	-.191	.029
Art	2.50 (1.255)	.040	.767	-.123	.238	.005
Collecting	2.15 (1.164)	.173	.691	.181	.147	.079
ORV	1.443 (1.046)	.040	.112	.771	.032	.035
Shoot	1.35 (0.779)	.008	-.072	.734	.112	.001
Fish	1.43 (0.902)	.167	.110	.575	.028	.417
Camp fires	2.19 (0.948)	.017	-.174	.331	.739	.096
Camp	1.83 (0.874)	.215	.186	.078	.668	.177
Walk / run	3.97 (1.250)	.071	.216	-.256	.516	-.037
Swim	1.77 (0.882)	.436	-.065	.190	.470	.041
Horse ride	1.28 (0.815)	-.013	.280	.060	.156	.666
Golf	1.53 (0.977)	.112	-.339	.144	.059	.649
Cumulative % Explained variance		14.8	28.15	39.35	50.05	58.72

Table B: Means (standard deviations) and rotated factor loadings of economic dependency items

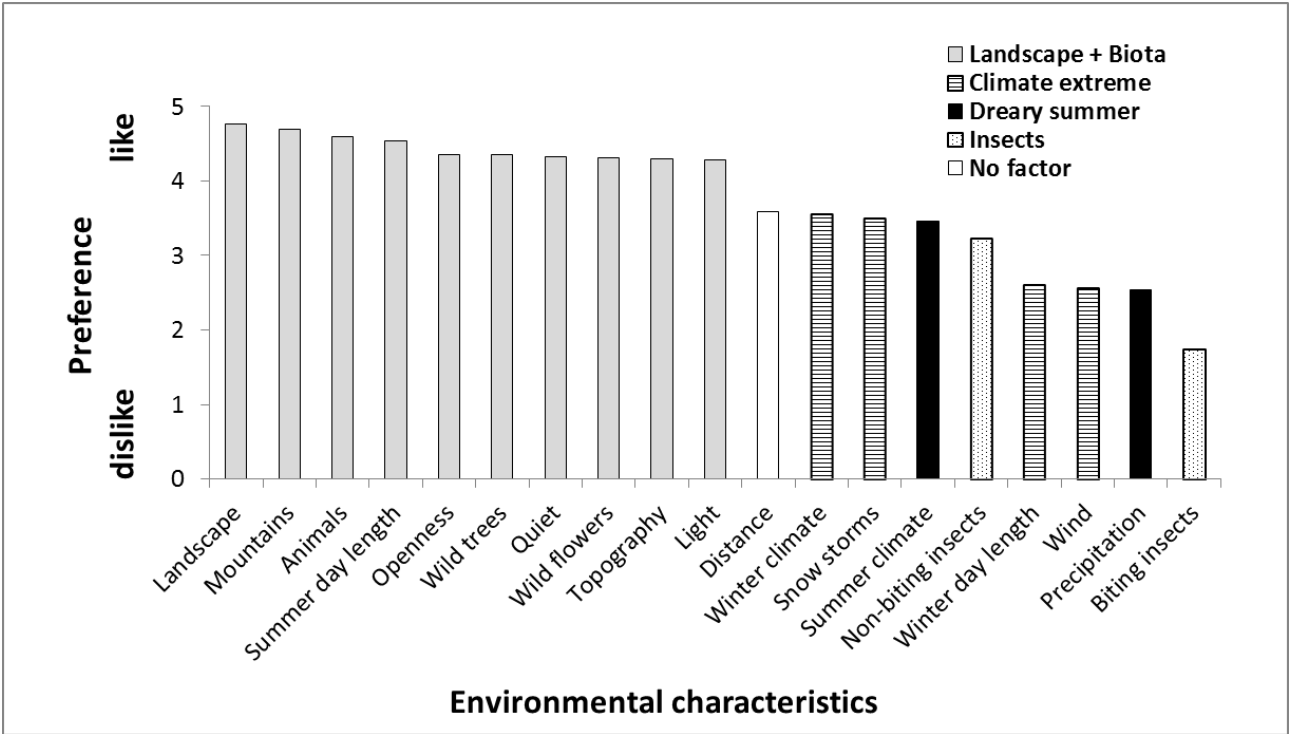
Environmental characteristic	Mean (SD)	Factors	
		Agricultural	Tourist-dependent
Soil	1.91 (1.096)	.901	.170
Sun / heat	2.15 (1.124)	.763	.276
Water	2.11 (1.203)	.758	.306
Domestic animals	1.82 (1.146)	.728	.264
Plants	2.07 (1.124)	.645	.505
Open land	2.00 (1.165)	.623	.441
Insects	1.51 (0.878)	.598	.514
Fish	1.58 (0.895)	.241	.803
Snow / ice	1.80 (1.069)	.193	.734
Wild animals	1.76 (0.998)	.439	.708
Wind	1.47 (0.845)	.193	.703
Minerals	1.58 (0.898)	.383	.696
Birds	1.73 (0.992)	.481	.692
Cumulative % explained variance		33.55	65.28

Table C. Means and standard deviations for answers to questions regarding private sphere behavior (top), environmental concern (middle), and opinions on various development/environment issues (bottom).

	Mean (SD)
Private sphere behavior (1 = not at all; 4 = always)	
Recycling	3.74 (0.53)
Turning off appliances	3.68 (0.50)
Energy efficient	3.60 (0.66)
Reusing bags	3.48 (0.78)
Saving water	3.30 (0.84)
Walking/biking in lieu of motor vehicles	2.80 (0.95)
Environmental concern (1 = not concerned; 5 = strong concern)	
Biodiversity protection	4.39 (0.76)
Toxic waste storage	4.37 (0.88)
Open space preservation	4.34 (0.80)
Water availability	4.12 (1.00)
Stream pollution	4.07 (0.92)
Climate change	4.03(0.90)
Public access to roam	3.98 (0.94)
Level of recycling	3.83 (1.03)
Opinion on development (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)	
I enjoy nature	4.47 (0.74)
Improve roads	4.24 (1.10)
Economy and environment together	4.03 (0.71)
Tourism infrastructure important	4.01 (0.80)
Tourists come for nature	4.00 (1.01)
Need clean environment	4.00 (0.89)
I am environmentalist?	3.68 (0.82)
Others are environmental – not clear	3.48 (0.87)
Biodiversity first	3.47 (0.98)
Protect area	3.46 (1.05)
Extreme environmentalists	3.29 (1.23)
Fish farming good	3.19 (1.00)
Wind farming important	2.76 (1.23)
Building benefits	2.59 (1.12)
Economy first	2.26 (1.01)
Not enough people	2.22 (1.04)



Figure 2. Preferences for environmental characteristics (shading denotes “taste” categories)



Environmental tastes as predictors of environmental opinions and behaviors

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