

Childhood Nature Experiences and Adulthood Environmental Preferences

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The importance of spatial, temporal and social contexts is increasingly acknowledged in the literature of modelling environmental preferences. However, the contexts of childhood nature experiences have not yet been included in economic models of environmental choices, despite significant findings from environmental psychology. We review the existing literature on childhood nature experiences to identify three constructs of the spatial, temporal and social contexts of childhood nature experiences. Based on these constructs, we suggest a dynamic model of environmental policy over time, in which past environmental policies indirectly affect current environmental policies. Using data from a discrete choice experiment, we establish the empirical link between childhood nature experiences and the economics literature of environmental choice behaviour and adulthood environmental preferences. The empirical findings of the present study qualifies the suggested dynamic model by showing that childhood nature experiences are correlated with pro-environmental preferences in the adult population - the same population that democratically decide on the current environmental policies. This may lead to self-reinforcing policy effects over time.

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