

# Comparison of motivations and crowding preferences between Austrian and Japanese urban forest visitors

Tetsuya Aikoh, Arne Arnberger, Yasushi Shoji, Taro Mieno

**Abstract** — Do Japanese urban forest visitors have the same crowding perceptions than European visitors? Traditionally, it has been considered that an Asian is more tolerant of congestion compared to Western people, because of their different cultural backgrounds and living conditions. However, in many Asian countries, life style has been rapidly westernized, and many Asian people travel or immigrate to Western countries. Our purpose is to investigate the differences of recreation motives and crowding preferences of urban forest visitors between Austria and Japan. We compared motivations and crowding perceptions of on-site forest visitors using the same questionnaires, asked in 2006. Visitors to the Viennese part of the Danube Floodplains National Park, Austria (N = 312) and visitors to the Nopporo Forest Park in Sapporo, Japan (N = 302) were asked to rate 15 motivation items and to choose preferred scenarios of computer-generated choice set images of a discrete choice experiment. Among 15 motivation items, a statistic significant difference was found in 14 items. Both Austrian and Japanese respondents assigned high importance scores to health and nature observation. The Austrians rated highly the motives exercise/sport, quietness and recreation, whereas Japanese visitors placed more importance on experiencing nature and family. We found four motivation factors: Landscape, Solitude, Nature and Health. Results of the choice model showed that Austrian respondents preferred less walkers and dog walkers, whereas Japanese preferred less bikers, joggers and plant pickers. Japanese visitors scored higher on nature observation, and fewer bikers are in this urban forest. Conflicts with dog walkers have been one of the main management issues in the Austrian forest. We found that visitors' crowding preferences are related to current trail use conditions, and to their motivations. Tourism and recreation become more and more globalized, and this information about differences and similarities of visitor attitudes based on different backgrounds will be helpful for urban forest management.

**Index Terms** — crowding, motivation, urban forest visitor, choice model.



**Tetsuya Aikoh** is with the Hokkaido University, Japan

**Yasushi Shoji** is with the Hokkaido University, Japan

**Arne Arnberger** is with University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Austria

**Taro Mieno** is with University of Illinois, U.S.A.