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Choice of Bus Seat as an Indicator of Human Sensitivity to the Environment

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Abstract

Cities are a very recent feature of human evolution and have entailed significant behavioural adaptations, including the development of social pathologies. Human adaptation to an environment of increasing population density and a consequent decreasing availability of privacy and personal space was explored through natural observation and analysis of the seat choices made by 546 passengers on 26 bus journeys. As hypothesised, passengers predominantly distributed evenly between zones of the bus, actively selected seats that maximised their distance from other passengers, and that facilitated a greater sense of space. The observed behaviour reflects high sensitivity to the spatial environment and supports the need to consider possible behavioural and psychological effects of urban intensification in plans to manage urban population growth.

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