



## Happiness and Outdoor Vacations Appreciative versus Consumptive Tourists

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**HAPPINESS AND OUTDOOR VACATIONS  
APPRECIATIVE VS CONSUMPTIVE TOURISTS**

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**Abstract**

Recently particular attention has been devoted to the relationship between leisure activities and subjective well-being. Less attention has been dedicated to tourism as a life satisfaction domain, despite it being one of the most relevant leisure activities. The aim of this paper is to contribute to expanding this line of investigation. Building on the Dunlap and Heffernan hypothesis and employing activity-based segmentation, it verifies to what extent environmental attitudes are related to activities that tourists perform during their vacation, and whether a relationship exists between the activities performed and life satisfaction. The hypothesis is that tourists involved in more appreciative activities are normally more concerned about the environment, more beneficial for host territories, and happier. The paper demonstrates that a positive association exists between these aspects and the way tourists “use” nature.

**Keywords**

Happiness; appreciative tourist; consumptive tourist; environmental attitudes.

## **Introduction**

There is now a growing consensus that people's well-being is not, or at least not exclusively, related to their possessions, once basic needs are sufficiently satisfied (Helliwell 2003; Kasser 2002). Since Easterlin's (1974) seminal paper, which evidenced that economic growth maybe decoupled from the dynamic of people's happiness, many studies have attempted to settle this issue and investigate the determinants of happiness. With the aim of estimating the impact of variables other than income on self-reported happiness, numerous studies have tested the correlation between socio-demographic, institutional and contextual (e.g. social capital, trust, quality of the public sector, equity) conditions, and subjective life satisfaction (Blanchflower 1996; Blanchflower and Oswald 2004; Di Tella, MacCulloch, and Oswald 2001; Easterlin 2001; Frey and Stutzer 2000; Helliwell 2003; Veenhoven 2000).

Recently specific attention has been devoted to leisure activities as a means of pursuing a higher level of subjective wellbeing. Tourism is surely one of the most relevant leisure activities. However, tourism as a life satisfaction domain is still little investigated. It has normally been considered within leisure domains (see Gall and Evans 2000; Lance, Mallard, and Michalos 1995; Lever 2000), although more recent studies have explicitly measured its contribution to life satisfaction. They seem to confirm that tourism contributes to improvements in people's quality of life. However, according to Dolnicar, Yanamandram, and Cliff (2012), it remains unclear to which extent, and whether people differ in the extent to which vacations contribute to their quality of life (p. 59).

Although some studies try to investigate into this aspect, almost no attention has been devoted to discover whether different type of tourists differ in terms of self-reported wellbeing. This paper tries to investigate into this aspect. In particular, following the novel line of investigation developed by Bimonte and Faralla (2012), it tests whether people

characterized by different attitudes and preferences, as expressed by the activities performed during the vacation, have a different level of reported life satisfaction. In others words, it tests whether a relationship exists between participation in outdoor recreation characterized by different types of environmental involvement and utilization, tourists' environmental attitudes and concerns, and their self-reported happiness. While the first aspect has received some attention in the literature, the second has not been investigated. We believe that it is an important issue to test.

To investigate into these aspects, a survey was carried out in Maremma, a very famous cultural, beach and nature tourism destination. The paper presents and discusses the results of the comparative analysis runs between three typologies of tourists: Pure Park Visitors (PPVs), Park and Beach Visitors (PBVs), and Beach Visitors (BVs). Tourists were grouped according to an ex-ante and activity-based segmentation process. The three typologies consist of tourists who relate to, experience and make use of the environment differently during their vacations. Considering the different level of fragility/integrity of the resources experienced/used, the typology of activities being permitted and the norms governing the visit at the various destinations, on a hypothetical continuous scale, they range from appreciative to consumptive.

Vacation is an extension of the everyday lifestyle. Like any other purchasing decision, the typology of holyday is an expression of peoples' preferences. Therefore, we expect that more appreciative types of tourists are consistently more characterized by positive environmental attitudes. We also expect that more appreciative forms of tourism are associated with higher level of happiness and that its determinants vary across typology of tourists. In our opinion, this may depend on that both experiencing nature rather than possessing it can boost emotional, mental, and physical personal well-being, because of the properties of the action, or that happy people, because of their beliefs, consolidate their

satisfaction by acting consistently. This aspect is reinforced by the fact that, compared to others consumers, tourists are more directly faced with the consequences of their actions.

## **Happiness and tourism**

### *Essential literature review*

Since the ancient world, philosophers debate about the concept of happiness and the way it may be attained<sup>i</sup>. In the last decades, a renewed interest for it has emerged, because empirical and experimental evidence has shown that aspects other than income or tangible goods may impact individuals' welfare (see Deleire and Kalil 2010; Frey and Stutzer 2002a, 2002b; Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz 1999; Powdthavee 2007; Rojas 2011).

Although differences exist, in the literature the concept of happiness is often used as synonyms of subjective wellbeing, life satisfaction, quality of life (Easterlin 2004; McGillivray and Clarke 2006; Veenhoven 2007). Whatever the term, it is normally conceived as being the degree of how one views one's life as a whole, or some particular domain of one's life, as favorable (Powdthavee 2007, p. 5). As a non-observable attitude, researchers maintain that happiness can be studied by asking people how they feel. In the first case, happiness is directly measured through a single-item question, based on the Cantril Ladder, which asks people to rate how they value their life in terms of the best possible life (10) through to the worst possible life (1); in the second, it is indirectly measured through a multi-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments on some specific aspects of one's life. This is the case, for example, of the Satisfaction with Life Scale method (Diener et al. 1985).

In empirical research, happiness is normally measured by means of subjective (e.g. surveys), objective (e.g. psychological and neurobiological indicators) and, recently,

experience-sampling (Kahneman et al. 2004; Scollon, Kim-Prieto, and Diener 2003) methods. Of these techniques, subjective methods have been shown to be among the more appropriate tools for measuring happiness that is commonly measured with single-item question, such as “Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, rather happy, not very happy, or not at all happy?” (World Values Survey 2009; OECD 2011) or “All things considered, on a one to ten scale, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?” (Veenhoven 2009).

Together with measuring happiness, these researches have also been developed for understanding the determinants of happiness. Frey and Stutzer (2002a) distinguished between five categories of factors that determine happiness: personality, socio-demographic, economic, contextual and situational, and institutional. Personality and socio-demographic factors (such as education), as well as contextual and situational factors (e.g. health, marital status) have also been found to have a large influence on happiness (Diener and Fujita 1995; Diener and Lucas 1999; Frey and Stutzer 2002a; Lyubomirsky, Tkach, and Dimatteo 2006; Murrell, Salsman, and Meeks 2003; Oishi et al. 1999; Taylor, Funk, and Craighill 2006). The same emerges in the institutional context, where the effect of factors such as trustworthy governance, democracy, human rights and social capital have been shown to be positively correlated with happiness (Diener and Seligman 2002; Helliwell 2003; Thoits and Hewitt 2001). Higher life satisfaction has also been found in countries with low levels of corruption (Helliwell 2003), whereas ideological and faith-related psychological factors influence the relationship between income and happiness (Alesina, Di Tella, and MacCulloch 2004; Diener and Seligman 2004; Lelkes 2002).

Recently the role of family travels has been found to exert a positive effect on well-being, since these experiences facilitate and enhance the communication and cohesion within the family itself (Lehto et al. 2009). More in general, leisure activities as a means to pursue a

higher level of subjective well-being have been investigated. It is widely accepted that leisure activities allow people to build social relationships, experience positive emotions, and expand their knowledge. This improves their quality of life and, therefore, their perceived well-being (e.g. Brajša-Žganec, Merkaš, and Šverko 2011; Diener et al. 1999; Iwasaki 2007; Iwasaki et al. 2005; McCabe 2009; Richards 1999; Rodríguez, Látková, and Sun 2008).

Tourism, as a leisure activity, is a powerful mean to pursuing such goals. However, it is still little investigated as a specific life satisfaction domain (Dolnicar, Yanamandram, and Cliff 2012). Nonetheless, interest and research on the subject is increasing and our understanding of the issue at stake has been broadened. Various studies have explicitly measured the contribution of tourism to life satisfaction, testing the association between overall life satisfaction and travel experiences (Neal, Sirgy, and Uysal 2004; Neal, Uysal, and Sirgy 2007; Sirgy 2010; Sirgy et al. 2011), analyzing potential change in vacationers' feeling over the course of a vacation (De Bloom, Guerts, and Kompier 2012; Milan 1997; Nawijn 2010; Nawijn et al. 2013), comparing pre- and post-trip appraisals (Besser and Priel 2006; Gilbert and Abdullah 2004; McCabe and Johnson 2013; Nawijn et al. 2010), or measuring how destination characteristics influence visitors' experience (Lehto 2013).

Gilbert and Abdullah (2004) measured subjective wellbeing for two groups of people: those taking a holiday and non-participants. The survey measured it twice. For those participating to the holiday, this was done before and after the vacation. The tourists evidenced a small increase in subjective wellbeing compared to non-tourists. Similar results emerged in the research carried out by McCabe and Johnson (2013). They explored whether a relationship exist between perceived life satisfaction and the participation to a project of social tourism. They showed that the participation to a holiday for disadvantaged groups produced improvements in aspects of well-being.

A different approach has been developed by Bimonte and Faralla (2012), who investigate whether a relationship exists between reported happiness and lifestyle, as expressed by consumer behaviors. Their starting point is that, like any other individual manifestation, people involved in different forms of tourism have a host of different motivations, needs, values, opinions, which normally translate into specific consumer behaviors, such as those that an individual experiences during her/his vacation time. The authors assert that tourists characterized by an “other-oriented” motivational state are happier than those with a more self-oriented motivational state, i.e. they establishes a positive correlation, with no causality direction, between happiness and motivational state. In the former group the basic value is transcendence, and satisfaction is gained from the feeling that one’s own participation has had a positive impact on others (people, groups, causes)<sup>ii</sup>. In the latter the basic value is individuality, and participation is mainly related to instrumental reasons, e.g. rent-seeking or status (Apter and Carter 2002).

### *Research objective*

This paper aims to enrich and further explore the latter novel line of investigation. In particular, it tests whether a relationship exists between participation in outdoor recreation characterized by different types of environmental involvement and utilization, tourists’ environmental attitudes and concerns, and their self-reported happiness. More precisely, using a kind of enlarged Dunlap and Heffernan (DH) scheme, it aims to verify whether the strength of these associations differs across types of outdoor recreationists, and whether it is positively related to more appreciative forms of tourist activities.

### **Happiness and tourists’ activities: the research hypothesis**



The basic assumption in developing this research is that proximity to nature can boost emotional, mental, and physical personal well-being, and that the results are stronger the more appreciative, as opposed to consumptive, are the activities performed. This depends on the different role played by the environment in distinct situations. In the non-appreciative case individuality prevails and the environment is viewed almost as a mere setting, an external factor, whose utilization is instrumental to the pursuit of individuals' needs. Elements of possession, rivalry in consumption and externalities emerge. In the appreciative case transcendence prevails, the environment becomes more of a partner in the process, and its use contributes to the pursuit of the needs of others (people, things, causes, groups). Here, life experience (appreciation) and non-rivalry in resource utilization prevail. According to some empirical findings (Carter and Gilovich 2012; Van Boven 2005; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), pursuing "experience" rather than "possession", or, using Scitovsky's words, "pleasure" instead of "comforts", makes people happier (Scitovsky 1976).

Like preferences, opinions, and beliefs, the way in which individuals value, use and experience the environment varies from tourist to tourist, and a relationship normally emerges between the way individuals relate to the surrounding environment, the impact they have on it and the value they assign to it. In their seminal paper, Dunlap and Heffernan (1975) classified tourists' activities as appreciative (hiking, sightseeing, bird-watching), which encompass activities that involve enjoying the environment without altering it, and consumptive (hunting, fishing, building), covering activities that involve possession and entail extraction from or modification to the environment thus reflecting a "utilitarian" orientation toward it. Geisler, Martinson, and Wilkening (1977) introduced a third category, abusive activities (water-scooter, snowboarding, motor-biking), which produce environmental degradation or externalities. These studies evidenced that environmental concern and nature-friendly attitudes are normally more closely related to appreciative

activities (Dawson 2003; Porter and Bright 2003; Teisl and O'Brien 2003). This result is somehow predictable, because it reflects the correspondence between preferences and actions. What is more intriguing to test is whether more appreciative activities are also positively related to personal well-being, i.e. whether those practicing more appreciative forms of tourism are also happier.

It is often stated that the modern way of life, pervaded by materialism, has produced a rupture in social and environmental processes, as well as within human communities and between the latter and nature. This leads to a worsening of psychological well-being and ultimately emotional problems and ill health (Kasser 2002; Kuhn 2001; Pilisuk and Joy 2001; Roszak 2001; Totton 2003). This is why eco-psychologists claim that reconnecting people with nature is useful not only for the preservation of the physical environment but also for people's well-being and happiness (Berger 2004; Beringer and Martin 2003; Naor 1999; Roszak 2001; Totton 2003). Consequently, participating in an appreciative activity that, together with fulfilling a personal need, contributes to preserving environmental integrity would be doubly beneficial.

According to its standard definition, nature tourism partakes of these characteristics (Smith and Eadington 1995)<sup>iii</sup>. Over the last decades nature-based tourism has acquired significance and attracted increasing attention. This growing interest in nature-based forms of tourism has been explained from a socio-psychological perspective, among others, taking into consideration the influence of external factors, such as the new environmental beliefs concerning peoples' behavior that have emerged in post-modern Western society. Since beliefs influence attitudes and the way in which social norms are perceived, the evolution of beliefs determines a modification in tourists' intentions and behaviors (Espinoza n.d.; Lindberg, Wood, and Engeldrum 1998; Mostafa 2007; Witt and Wright 1992). As a consequence, tourism experiences in the environment have to be evaluated for their intrinsic

value and attractiveness, but also for their usefulness in attaining physical and psychological recovery from stress, as well as external material or transcendental goals.

This selfish altruistic position is quite evident in the market for organic products (Miller 2003). In general, it is a qualifying property of the green consumerists. In fact, the motivation of their purchasing decisions is twofold: to protect oneself and to protect one's world (Ottman 1992). The consciousness of contributing to a transcendent goal makes them happier.

At the same time, one would expect that the individual's appraisal of an action depends on the degree to which it is conducive to her/his goals fulfillment, and compatible with one's normative and moral standards (Hosany 2012). As for other actions, when performing tourism people put ideas into practice (Leiper 1990), trying to match the images/attributes of products/activities to, or render it/them congruent with, their self-concept/attitudes (Sirgy 1982; Sirgy and Su 2000). Therefore, considering the evolution in societal environmental beliefs, the value of a tourist activity is also affected by its ability to contribute to a transcendent goal that goes beyond the individual's personal needs, and to repair the rupture and recover people's relationship with nature. In other words, we may expect individuals to evaluate a tourist activity in itself, but also in relation to its ability to permit the pursuit of another outcome of greater valence, which goes beyond the action in itself. Satisfaction is gained from the feeling that participation in a given activity produces a positive impact on others (group, things, people, causes) and conforms to societal beliefs (congruity). This means that it is not so important to discuss of the direction of the causality. It may be that both experiencing nature makes people happier, because of the properties of the action, or that happy people, because of their beliefs, consolidate their satisfaction only by acting consistently.

To test this hypothesis the paper carries out a comparative analysis between three typologies of tourists, who relate to the environment differently during their vacations. They

represent three different ways of putting ideas into practice and recovering people's relationship with nature. Methodology and results of the research are presented and discussed in the next section.

## **Appreciative vs. consumptive tourists: methodology and results**

### *Study site and sampling procedure*

The survey was carried out in Maremma, a well-known tourism destination located on the coast of southern Tuscany. In order to protect its outstanding natural landscape and beauty, in 1975 part of this territory was set aside as a Natural Park, to preserve it from the pressure of real-estate development. The Natural Park area is centrally located and is now an important destination for nature-based tourists (Figure 1). Due to the region's characteristics, the type of tourist influx, and because of the research goals, the Maremma represents a natural outdoor laboratory in which to carry out experiments and studies.

Figure 1 about here

The survey followed a systematic sampling procedure and, using an activity-based segmentation process, classified tourists as follows: PPVs, encompassing tourists whose "main" or "unique" reason for travelling was to visit and appreciate the park's beauty; PBVs, consisting of summer tourists whose vacation was mainly devoted to enjoying the sea, but also included a visit to the park; BVs, comprising summer tourists who spent their vacation enjoying the sea, sand and sun in the surrounding area without visiting the park. All these three typologies are nature oriented tourists, in the sense that they make use of natural resources during their outdoor recreation activities, albeit for different purposes and uses

(Newsome, Moore, and Dowling 2002; Weaver, 2001). They imply different levels of environmental involvement and impact. Considering the characteristics of the park, the allowed activities and the strict rules to comply with during the visit, and the characteristics of vacation in the surrounding area, where people are involved in urbanized and more mass forms of tourism, the three typologies range from the more appreciative to the consumptive.

The three sub-samples are mutually exclusive. All types of tourist were asked to answer the same questions. Since several types of park visitors overlap with other types of tourist, to avoid any overlap, the BVs were asked to answer a filter question, i.e. whether or not they had visited or were going to visit the Natural Park during their stay in the area. Those answering positively were not considered in the survey. As for the PPVs and PBVs, they were classified and grouped according to how they answered to the question whether the visit to the park was or not the main or unique reason for travelling.

Data were gathered during the summer tourism season for both the park and the neighboring coastal area by means of direct interviews through a quadrilingual questionnaire. Direct interviews combined with a pre-test produced a high return rate. The sample comprised 424 individuals, including 158 PPVs, 131 PBVs, and 135 BVs, with an age ranging from 18 to 80 years ( $M = 45.28$ ), of whom 46% were females and 54% males. PPVs and PBVs were selected and interviewed at the park gates, while queuing for admission to the park visit; as for BVs, 95 were randomly selected in different types of accommodation drawn from the list of those available in the area, and another 40 were interviewed directly on the beach, in order to include owners of second homes.

## *Methods*

According to the standard and widespread procedure followed in the literature (Bruni and Stanca 2008; Frey and Stutzer 2002a; Veenhoven 2007), participants were asked to answer to a numbers of questions. The first was devoted to a preliminary individuals' assessment of their happiness, as measured by a single-item response on a 10-point ordinal scale, ranging from 1 (unhappy) to 10 (very happy). The subsequent questions were grouped into three different sections, aiming to: (1) investigate the different domains that have consistently been found in the literature to be important determinants of happiness; (2) determine behaviors and spending habits during vacation time; and (3) record the tourists' socio-demographic characteristics.

Consistently, the first section was devoted to evaluating, on a 1 to 10-point scale, individuals' satisfaction with respect to different contextual, situational, and institutional factors. All these factors are grouped in two main sections: "*aspects of own life*" and "*aspects of the environment in which one lives*". The first group considers those aspects regarding the individual (e.g. work, health, family, and relationship status); the second, those associated to the characteristics of the home environment (e.g. environmental quality, public services, security) (Frey and Stutzer 2002a). Unlike, for example, the Satisfaction with Life Scale method, the aim here is to discover whether a relationship between the above mentioned factors (domains) and the self-reported happiness exists, i.e. detect the determinants of happiness.

The second section comprised questions aimed at clarifying tourists' attitudes and behaviors during the vacation, paying particular attention to the size and composition of the consumer's basket, especially in terms of preferences for local products, typical restaurants, quality brands, and accommodation. Finally, the third section was devoted to detecting interviewees' personal socio-demographic characteristics.

In order to explore the main differences between the three types of tourist, a preliminary descriptive analysis of the data was carried out. Next, an independence test was applied to calculate the significance of the differences observed between the three samples. Due to the size and the characteristics of the sample (non representative), no assumption was made on the probability distribution of the variables, and a permutation technique, or the Fisher exact test (i.e. a non-parametric test of independence), was used to analyze the data<sup>iv</sup>.

Moreover, considering the hypothesis put forward in the paper (i.e. that the proportion of individuals with certain characteristics is higher among certain typologies of tourists) and the qualitative and categorical nature of the data, an ordered regression model (ORM) was run in order to identify any correlation between the predictor variables investigated in the survey and self-reported happiness, which was treated as the response variable. Each item included in the categories “aspects of own life” and “aspects of the environment in which one lives” represents a different predictor variable of the model.

Since ordinal variables are coded as consecutive integers from 1 to 10, it is tempting to analyze ordinal outcomes with linear regression model (LRM). However, an ordinal dependent variable violates the assumptions of the LRM, which can lead to incorrect conclusions (McKelvey and Zavoina 1975; Winship and Mare 1984). Although many different models have been designed for ordinal outcomes, in this research we focus on the logit version of the ORM.

The ordinal logistic regression (OLR) was applied with the aim of highlighting differences between the three types of tourists, rather than estimating the absolute value of the impacts. In fact, with this model, once a reference variable has been selected (in our case tourist type), coefficients inform us of variations in probability that a change of status (moving from one type to another) would imply. These coefficients are also called proportional odds ratios and should be interpreted as odds ratios in binary logistic regression.

Specifically, a positive coefficient means that a unit change in the independent variable increases the likelihood of obtaining a higher score in the dependent variable by the amount of the coefficient (Long and Freese 2006).

Data were analyzed using the R 2.13.2 software developed by the R Foundation for Statistical Computing.

### *Main results of the analysis*

Gathering and processing the data separately prevents succumbing to what Pearce (2005) calls “the sin of homogenization”. The main characteristics of the samples are summarized in Table 1 that presents the median class for data arranged in classes and the mode for the others.

Table 1 about here

Although at a first glance the three types of tourists seem quite analogous in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, closer scrutiny reveals various dissimilarities. In fact, notwithstanding the median class, the frequency distribution shows that with respect to BVs, PBVs and PPVs have a more similar occupational profile and a higher level of education. The same applies to income. With respect to the latter aspect, non-responders were about 8.5% for PBVs and PPVs, and 29% for BVs.

Diversities arise in relation to beliefs and spending habits, despite major similarities between PBVs and PPVs. Concerning political beliefs, 67% of the former and 69% of the latter describe themselves as centre-left/left-wing, compared to 47% of the BVs. Sixty-eight percent of BVs define themselves as believers, against 59% of both PPVs and PBVs,



apparently highlighting a kind of inverse relationship between tourists' religious beliefs and their environmental appreciation. We also found that BVs have about one hour a day more exposure to television than PPVs and PBVs.

The same polarization appears in relation to spending habits, with BVs on one side and PBVs and PPVs on the other. The data evidence that all three types of tourists spend between 20 and 35 Euros per day (median class), excluding travel and accommodation costs. However, while 14% and 7.4% of BVs spent between 35-50 and more than 50 Euros respectively, these change to 38% and 6.8% for PBVs and 31% and 8.5% for PPVs. These figures acquire particular interest if merged with the information on accommodation and typology of restaurant elected for meals. PBVs and PPVs prefer farm stays (*agriturismo*), whereas BVs express a preference for hotels. The former also declare a stronger preference for typical local restaurants.

These data are consistent with the preferences declared for typical local or organic products and quality brands. Almost 65% and 61.4% of PBVs and PPVs claim to buy local and organic products, against 39.3% of BVs. Moreover, notwithstanding the median class, 46% of PPVs and 45% of PBVs spend more than 10% of their daily outlay, with 12.2% and 13.8% spending more than 30%. Among BVs this figure is 38% and 5.6% respectively. Finally, 78% of PPVs and PBVs declare that quality brands influence their consumer choices, whereas this is true for only 55.6% of BVs. All these results are consistent with the hypothesis that more appreciative types of tourists have greater interaction with their surrounding environment and are more characterized by positive environmental attitudes. These differences were found to be statistically significant by means of Fisher's exact test (p-value <.001, except for the variable "beliefs" for which it was <.01) (Table 2).

Table 2 about here

This aspect is further confirmed by the analysis of personal concerns. Tourists were asked to indicate in a decreasing order the three most important things for a happy life and the three that have the most negative influence on its quality. The survey revealed that PPVs' well-being is mainly positively affected (in decreasing order of importance) by health, sentimental situation, and social relationships, while socio-economic variables, such as a prestigious job, come lower down the scale. Inversely, things that negatively impact their quality of life (in decreasing order of importance) are more associated with contextual factors: quality of the environment, security, and civic sense. This is also true, but with different and decreasing intensity, respectively, for PBVs and BVs. Both of these groups are quite interested in income and social position.

Table 3 about here

The three types of tourists do not show significant differences in terms of individuals' satisfaction with respect to "*aspects of own life*" and "*aspects of the environment in which one lives*". Although with small variations, all are very satisfied with their family, sentimental situation, friendships and health, whereas they are all relatively dissatisfied with the quality of the urban environment, environmental quality in general, public services, recreational and cultural services, and especially community spirit, management of migration and the fairness of public administration. In most cases a higher uniformity of opinions emerges between PBVs and PPVs, and sometimes between PBVs and BVs. However, with regard to all these aspects, PPVs are more demanding. They always express more extreme evaluation compared to PBVs. Except for security and family, all these differences were found to be statistically significant in the independence test, albeit at different levels.

These aspects are further confirmed by the ordinal logistic regression analysis, which makes it possible to present the abovementioned data in a more intuitive way (Table 3). Compared to BVs, considered as the base category in this analysis, PBVs and PPVs are more likely to get a higher score for variables like health and friendships from the category *aspects of own life* (work and sentimental situation were not significant in the ordinal logistic regression). The opposite applies for variables with a negative coefficient, as in the case of income and some factors included as *aspects of the environment in which one lives*. These results confirm that PPVs and PBVs are more critical about contextual and environmental factors than BVs.

#### *Tourists and happiness*

On a scale of 1-to-10 for happiness, all three types of tourists mostly define themselves as eight, even if the percentage is higher for PPVs tourists (40%) than PBVs and BVs. For the latter two types, the percentages reduce to 35% and 32% respectively. The differences between typologies of tourists are better understood by looking at the frequency distributions (Figure 2). Figure 3 shows the dispersion index of the three datasets: the lower the index the less dispersed are the data. In our case, it also means happier people. Therefore, if we set these indices against the intensity of environmental involvement, or the level of appreciation of an activity, we obtain a kind of Cost Curve of Consumptivism. The difference in scores between PPVs vs. BVs is also found to be statistically significant by means of both Fisher's exact test (p-value <.1) and ordinal logistic regression, as displayed in Table 3.

This finding confirms that less appreciative tourists (BVs in this case) tend to be less satisfied with their lives. This corroborates previous results (Bimonte and Faralla 2012), highlighting that, *ceteris paribus*, the less appreciative tourists are, the less satisfied they

appear. The figure could appear unremarkable; however, we should consider that people are normally more satisfied during their vacations, and this may tend to level out differences (see, for example, Gilbert and Addullah 2004; Nawijn 2011).

Figure 2 about here

Figure 3 about here

Table 4 about here

To further explore differences between tourist types, ordinal logistic regressions were applied to the three datasets (each including data from PPVs, PBVs, and BVs separately) in order to highlight which variables presented a higher relation with the happiness of tourists. The results are presented in Table 4. Data analysis shows that, all other things being equal, the level of happiness of all types of tourists is positively related to a wide range of personal factors, in particular relationships, such as family or friendships, and contextual aspects. These results once more confirm that aspects other than money may influence individuals' happiness (Frey and Stutzer 2002a). They also confirm that factors such as values and ideology may impact the connection between aspects of life and happiness in different ways. In our case a distinguishing factor emerges, namely the way in which people relate to the environment, i.e. whether they exploit or experience it.

Despite the similarities between the three typologies of tourists, a more in-depth analysis on coefficients and their significance shows that PPVs' happiness is less related to more material aspects of life, such as income and work. Their satisfaction with aspects such as quality of the environment is strictly related with their reported life satisfaction. Compared to

the previous, the PBVs' happiness is more related to work and management of migration, but is less associated with aspects such as quality of the environment. Together with security, the management of migration has a greater impact on the BVs happiness. In general, compared to PPVs and PBVs, BVs' happiness is related to a wider range of aspects, both of a material and non-material type. This confirms that the type of tourist one belongs to is a strong distinguishing factor.

## **Conclusions**

The blind pursuit of wealth and status is resulting in the decay of our planet and a deterioration of interpersonal relationships. Many studies have sought to demonstrate that this has an impact on our quality of life and well-being. Since the seminal studies of Easterlin (1974) and Scitovsky (1976), a flourishing field of research has developed, to demonstrate that variables other than income may contribute to people's happiness and that the pursuit of comforts to the detriment of pleasures is producing a "joyless economy". The rupture of social and environmental ties and the ensuing deterioration of the perceived quality of life have convinced many that the time has come to change our lifestyles. This demands a modification in reference values and in our capacity to enjoy things.

However, despite an almost general consensus on this diagnosis, difficulties arise in terms of policies and in translating principles in practices. To escape this dilemma, more than actions, what really matters is to construct motivations that make the pursuit of the change socially desirable. The feasibility of change depends on the desirability of its results, which ultimately depends on the prospective advantages and their appropriability. This aspect particularly comes to the fore the more a good, activity, or action has public properties (in the economic meaning of the term), i.e. the more it is non-rival and non-excludable. What we

have sought to demonstrate in this paper is that being appreciative, and as consequence more sustainable, is good for “others” but also pays out dividends for oneself. To state it in a slogan, we could say that doing good makes good.

As stated above, recent research has focused on leisure activities as a means to improving life satisfaction. Leisure activities allow people to build social relationships, experience positive emotions, deepen knowledge and, as a consequence, ameliorate their quality of life. Tourism is one of the most powerful leisure activities for the pursuit of such goals, although its effect differs in intensity depending on the type. Unfortunately, tourism as a domain of life satisfaction is still scarcely investigated.

This paper seeks to contribute to filling this gap. However, instead of investigating the relationship between travel experiences and personal well-being, it proposes to verify whether the way the trip is undertaken is positively related with individuals’ happiness. It evidences that tourists involved in more appreciative tourism activities are normally more concerned about the environment, in its social and natural dimension, have more nature-friendly attitudes and are more beneficial for host territories. In the present study, the distinguishing variable turns out to be visiting the park, irrespective of whether this is the main or a subsidiary reason for the trip. More appreciative tourists are also happier: importantly, with respect to the issue of happiness, what emerges is that tourists’ personal satisfaction grows the more appreciative their activities are. Therefore, as well as supporting the DH hypothesis (that is that environmental concern is positively related to more appreciative tourists, in our case PPVs and PBVs), and the hypothesis put forward in the definition of alternative tourists (that is that they positively impact local territories in environmental, social and economic terms - Bimonte 2008), this paper also evidences that being appreciative, and/or practicing appreciative activities, is beneficial for personal well-being. We refer to the latter relationship as the Cost Curve of Consumptivism.

A tentative explanation may be the following. When performing leisure activities, tourists put ideas into practice (Leiper 1990), trying to match the tourist experience to their self-concept/attitudes (Sirgy 1982; Sirgy and Su 2000). Because of the evolution in societal environmental beliefs, activities that better conform to such concepts contribute more to (or simply are needed to consolidate the) personal wellbeing . Satisfaction also accrues from the sense of belonging that some tourist activities entail – those in which the experience component (as opposed to possession) prevails (Carter and Gilovich 2012; Van Boven 2005; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003) - and from the awareness that those activities contribute to a transcendent goal that goes beyond one’s own personal needs. In the less appreciative activities, materialistic values (possession, rivalry in consumption) tend to prevail and tourists treat “others” (environment, people, things, causes) as objects, somehow reproducing their everyday way of life. They cannot count on relationships and connectedness, and thus face conflict and feelings of alienation (Kasser 2002). In the more appreciative case, life experience and non-rivalry in resource utilization prevail and tourists treat “others” as partners in the process, which contributes to forming relationships and fixing the rupture in social and environmental processes.

This paper tells us a similar story. Practicing tourism is surely beneficial for our spirit. But practicing certain activities rather than others is more beneficial, both for “others” and for ourselves. The causality direction is not so important. It may well be that is the activity to cause happiness or that happy people experience nature: in the first case the typology of the tourist activity is beneficial in itself; in the second, being congruent with the individuals’ beliefs, it is required to consolidate their happiness. This reward in terms of happiness constitutes the motivation for making change socially desirable. The reward will be higher the more the environment becomes a “necessary good”. Adam Smith considered necessary “not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life, but

whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people, even of the lowest order, to be without. .... All other things, I call luxuries” (Smith 1976, pp. 869-870).

More appreciative tourists’ activities, under careful management, may contribute to promoting healthy societies, because of the double dividend they produce: for the environment and host communities, as well as for participants. Grasping and communicating this insight is crucial in order for change to take place. This could be a core concept of a societal marketing campaign (Kotler and Lee 2008). Therefore, policy makers and local territorial promoters could start to advertise it in order to enhance environmental preservation, make their territories more competitive and, eventually, through a virtuous circle, generate higher profits and satisfaction.

#### *Limitations and further research*

Like any other, this study is not lacking in limitations. It shares many of the limits of this kind of study. The first is related to data collection and sampling procedures. Because of the population of interest (tourists), we had to work with a non-probability sample and this surely affected our results. Moreover, budget limitations caused restrictions in terms of sample dimension and period of time covered. A larger sample, selected over a longer period, would prevent possible bias, most probably returning more differentiated groups. A final crucial aspect is the skepticism about what happiness really means and the use of subjective (as opposed to objective) measures of well-being, as well as the difficulties in defining the direction of causality between happiness and its determinants. However, we believe that this latter aspect is not of crucial importance to the aim of the present study.

Another limit regards the segmentation procedure. We used an a priori and activities-based procedure, which is one of the ways of discriminating between types of tourists.



Segmenting tourists is not an easy task, since they normally engage in a variety of activities during their vacations and many of the participants in appreciative activities may be consumptive or abusive tourists engaged temporarily or by chance in such activities. This could affect the study's results. Many suggest that tourists should be segmented and investigated, both theoretically and empirically, according to specific features such as individual interests, experiences, and motivations (Dolnicar 2004; Hvenegaard 2002; Luo and Deng 2008; Mehmetoglu 2007; Weaver 2005; Witt and Wright 1992).

Despite these limitations, we believe that this research contributes to filling the gap in the research on tourism as a determinant of happiness and reinforces its preliminary results. However, we believe that it would be worth exploring this line of investigation further, by replicating this study using different segmentation methods and different settings, and trying to avoid the likely overlapping of tourists. Discovering that “doing good makes good” would constitute an important step on for the journey toward a less materialistic society.

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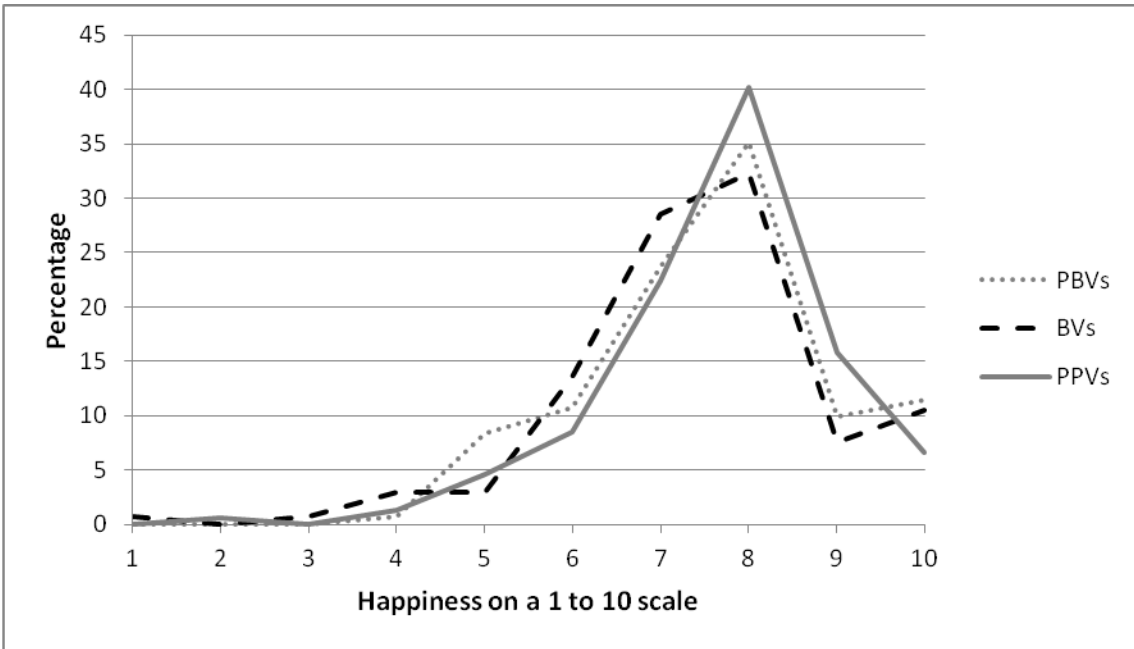
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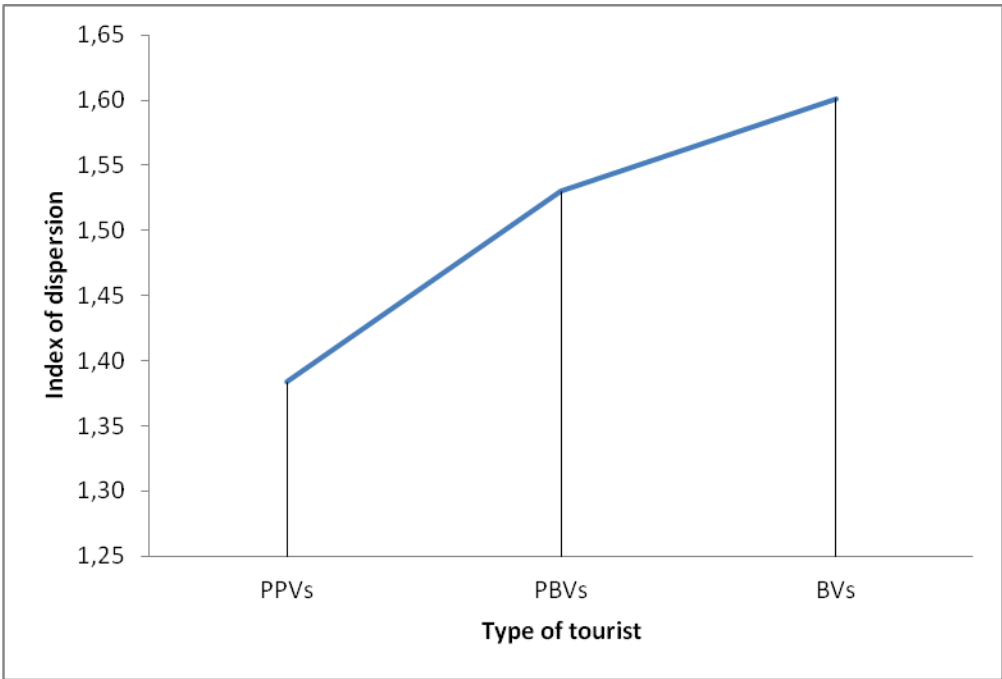
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**Figure 1:** *The Park and surrounding area*



**Figure 2:** *Distribution of happiness score (% of relative frequencies)*



**Figure 3:** *The Cost Curve of Consumptivism*

**Table 1.** *Main socio-demographic, economic and behavioural characteristics*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>BVs (N=135)</b>	<b>PBV (N=131)</b>	<b>PPV (N=158)</b>
Median age	45 (s.d. 12.86)	44 (s.d. 12.79)	46 (s.d. 11.66)
Sex	48% male; 52% female	46% male; 54% female	46% male; 54% female
Level of education ( <i>median class</i> )	High school diploma	High school diploma	High school diploma
Net income per year ( <i>median class</i> )	EUR 15,001-25,000	EUR 15,001-25,000	EUR 15,001-25,000
Current employment status ( <i>median class</i> )	Full time employee	Full time employee	Full time employee
Religious beliefs	Believers 68%	Believers 59%	Believers 59%
Political views	Centre-left 30%	Left 38%	Left 47%
Hours of television per day	2.11 (s.d. 1.36)	1.23 (s.d. 0.98)	1.47 (s.d. 1.18)
Average daily spending ( <i>median class</i> ) <sup>a</sup>	EUR 20-35	EUR 20-35	EUR 20-35
Region of origin	Tuscany or neighbouring regions 80%	Tuscany or neighbouring regions 50%	Tuscany or neighbouring regions 85%
Accommodation	Farm-stay 8%	Farm-stay 31%	Farm-stay 29%
Food	Typical restaurants 42% ( <i>always or often</i> )	Typical restaurants 70% ( <i>always or often</i> )	Typical restaurants 75% ( <i>always or often</i> )
Local and organic products	39%	65%	61%
% of daily spending for local/organic product ( <i>median class</i> )	Between 1%-10%	Between 1%-10%	Between 1%-10%
People influenced by quality brands	55%	76%	78%

Note: <sup>a</sup> Excluding the costs of travel and overnight accommodation.



**Table 2.** *Spending habits and personal data: summary of independence test*

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Average daily spending	<.001
Typical and/or organic products	<.001
Percentage spending of typical and/or organic products	0.78
Food	<.001
Quality brands	<.001
Region of origin	<.001
Religious beliefs	<.01
TV channels	<.001
Political views	<.001
Sex	0.90
Income	0.20

**Table 3.** *Abusive vs. consumptive vs. appreciative: summary of independence test and OLR*

<i>Aspects of own life</i>	<i>Fisher Test (p-value)</i>	<i>Ordinal logistic regression coefficient (SE)* (p-value)</i>
Happiness	(PPVs vs. BVs) <.1 (PBVs vs. BVs) 0.36	(PPVs vs. BVs) 0.3658(0.21) (<.1) (PBVs vs. BVs) 0.1837(0.22) (0.40)
Work	<.05	PBVs 0.0720(0.23); PPVs -0.3157(0.21) (0.15)
Family	0.45	PBVs 0.1771(0.22); PPVs 0.2219(0.21) (0.54)
Sentimental situation	<.01	PBVs 0.0661(0.22); PPVs 0.3493(0.21) (0.20)
Income	<.1	PBVs -0.0296(0.22); PPVs -0.4062(0.21) (<.1)
Health	<.05	PBVs 0.3429(0.22); PPVs 0.4557(0.21) (<.1)
Friendships	<.1	PBVs 0.6186(0.22); PPVs 0.6022(0.21) (<.01)
<i>Aspects of the environment in which one lives</i>		
Security	0.27	PBVs 0.2236(0.22); PPVs 0.3130(0.21) (0.30)
Quality of the urban environment	<.01	PBVs -0.0067(0.21); PPVs -0.2310(0.20) (0.45)
Environmental quality in general	<.05	PBVs -0.4596(0.22); PPVs -0.5085(0.20) (<.05)
Public services (health, transport, etc.)	<.001	PBVs -0.5374(0.22); PPVs -0.7260(0.21) (<.01)
Recreational and cultural services	<.001	PBVs -0.5726(0.22); PPVs -0.6337(0.21) (<.01)
Community spirit	<.01	PBVs -0.4507(0.22); PPVs -0.5729(0.20) (<.05)
Management of migration	<.01	PBVs -0.2536(0.22); PPVs -0.5559(0.21) (<.05)
Fairness of public administration	<.001	PBVs -0.7872(0.22); PPVs -1.0030(0.21) (<.001)

\* The reference variable is BVs. The first coefficient regards the change from BVs to PBVs; the second the change from BVs to PPVs.

**Table 4.** *Happiness and tourists: OLR*

<i>Characteristics (base 1-6)</i>	<i>BVs regression coefficient (SE) (p-value)</i>	<i>PBVs regression coefficient (SE) (p-value)</i>	<i>PPVs regression coefficient (SE) (p-value)</i>
<i>Aspects of own life</i>			
Work	1.2617(0.41) (<.01)	2.0127(0.39) (<.001)	0.8025(0.32) (<.05)
Family	2.6445(0.50) (<.001)	2.4976(0.51) (<.001)	2.2226(0.48) (<.001)
Sentimental situation	1.5213(0.37) (<.001)	2.1652(0.43) (<.001)	1.8324(0.43) (<.001)
Income	1.5474(0.38) (<.001)	0.8328(0.35) (<.05)	0.8409(0.31) (<.01)
Health	1.8544(0.44) (<.001)	1.4398(0.48) (<.01)	1.6540(0.45) (<.001)
Friendships	1.5018(0.36) (<.001)	2.4367(0.57) (<.001)	1.2078(0.43) (<.01)
<i>Aspects of the environment in which one lives</i>			
Security	1.6075(0.34) (<.001)	0.8642(0.32) (<.01)	0.7288(0.31) (<.05)
Quality of the urban environment	1.1897(0.33) (<.001)	0.8654(0.32) (<.01)	0.9946(0.32) (<.01)
Environmental quality in general	0.6528(0.32) (<.05)	0.7293(0.33) (<.05)	1.0182(0.32) (<.01)
Public services (health, transport, etc.)	0.5659(0.32) (<.1)	0.6014(0.32) (<.1)	0.6016(0.32) (<.1)
Recreational and cultural services	0.5971(0.32) (<.1)	0.3306(0.33) (0.31)	0.4832(0.31) (0.11)
Community spirit	0.7410(0.36) (<.05)	0.6564(0.35) (<.1)	0.4373(0.35) (0.21)
Management of migration	1.4352(0.43) (<.001)	1.1949(0.40) (<.01)	0.7775(0.38) (<.05)
Fairness of public administration	0.6766(0.35) (<.1)	0.8570(0.38) (<.05)	0.6894(0.41) (<.1)

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<sup>i</sup> It is not the aim of this paper to enter into this debate. Useful insights may be found in some basic references (for example Bruni and Porta 2007; Frey 2010; McCabe and Johnson 2013; Veenhoven 2007).

<sup>ii</sup> Orientation towards others is not necessarily synonymous with altruism.

<sup>iii</sup> The interested reader is referred to the abundant literature on the topic, for example Mehmetoglu 2007; Meric and Hunt, 1998; Weaver 2005; Wight 2001.

<sup>iv</sup> The Fisher exact test is a statistical significance test for testing the relationship between variables in a contingency table. It corresponds to the nonparametric version of the chi-square test and is appropriate for categorical data analysis.