



L-Università
ta' Malta

Workshop on Behaviour, Wellbeing and the Environment

Exploring the reciprocal relationships between wellbeing, behaviour and the natural environment and *developing an agenda for future research in this area*

Wellbeing and the natural environment: Questions from a paradise lost.

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1. Wellbeing and Environment ...VS Environmental Behaviour

"Warm-glow" effects derived from pro-environmental cooperation, suggest significant utility from pro environmental *behavior* (PEB).

Various studies in Malta find PEB responding to education, pro-environmental preferences, pro-sociality, spirituality/religiosity , political preferences, government trust. E.g. Recycling despite disincentives. ... moral motives spill over in business practice in SMEs (Utility as driver).

Using data from a nationally representative survey (n=1057) we create a composite index from four questions covering both PEB and being in the countryside. Significantly predicts life-satisfaction.

Questions: Can we trace causal effects of PEB on wellbeing when environmental quality itself is high/low? If PEB really “makes people happy”, can communicating this message help achieve higher PEB?



e.g. Briguglio et al. (2018) EJPE; Briguglio, et al (2016) JEPM; Briguglio, M. (2021) JCLP; Briguglio, et al (2020) ERL; Briguglio et al 2020 IJW.

2. Wellbeing and Nature ...VS Neighbourhoods

In European Capital of Culture studies, we find significant relationship between “Life satisfaction and “current situation in locality”.

In analysis of EU Silc data 2018 (n=9555), we find “neighbourhood noise” to correlate negatively with life satisfaction, time satisfaction and personal relationships.

In qualitative work (n=250), with respondents aged 6 to 93, in 2 to 20 minutes conversations on the theme “In a typical day, what makes you happy?” and “What makes you unhappy?”, we hear mention of “Birds, the outdoors, fishing, gardening, sunshine” (positive) and “noise, insects, dirt, littering, dog poop smoking” (negative). In an online survey we find similar mentions of “the sea, sunshine, beauty” vs. “traffic, driving, concrete, noise, hooting, barking and litter”

Questions: Are we asking about the right “environmental” issues in quantitative work? What can qualitative work tell us? Potential of emerging data from the EU Silc wellbeing module to assess the effects of proximal environments (home, neighbourhood) on wellbeing?



e.g. Briguglio, M., and Brown, M. (forthcoming) Briguglio, M. (2015). A finger on the pulse of happiness... Briguglio, M. & Sultana, A. (2018). JMS

3. Wellbeing and the Green ...VS the Blue Environment

In Ecoscope Horizon 2020 project on Blue Economy

We ask - what are the wellbeing impacts of well-managed fisheries (marine environment) on

Consumers

Fishers

Coastal communities, tourists

BY IN ON water

Exercise, social, temperature...

Questions: What are the *negative* impacts of blue spaces (flooding, marine litter, migrants, sea level rise)? What is the effect of blue space with/without green space, with/without open space?



ECOSCOPE

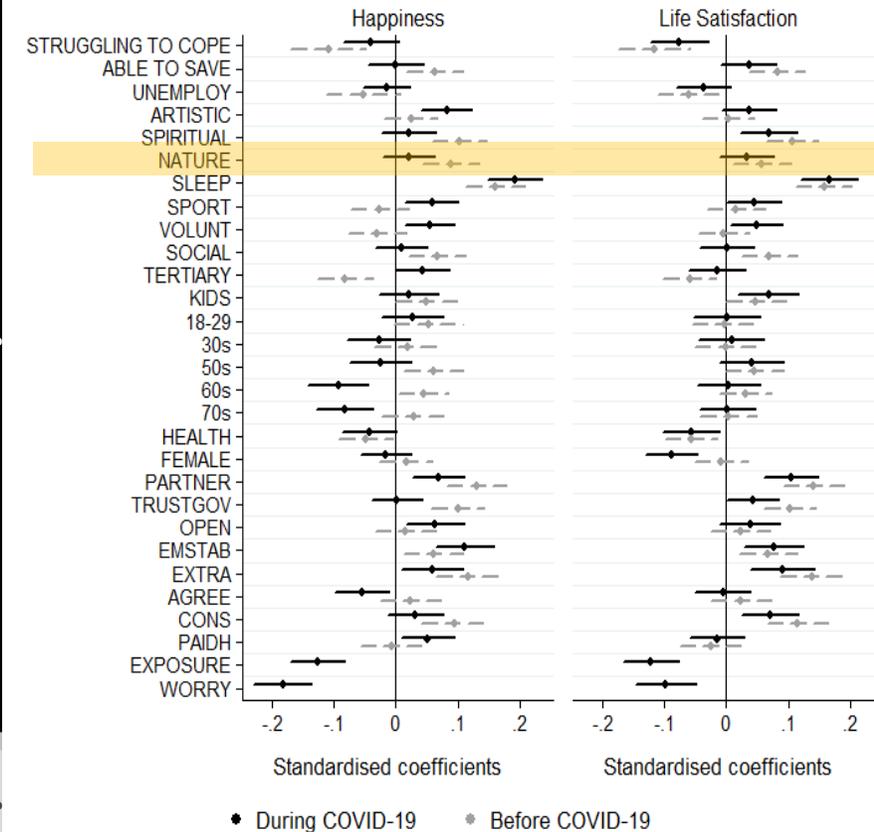
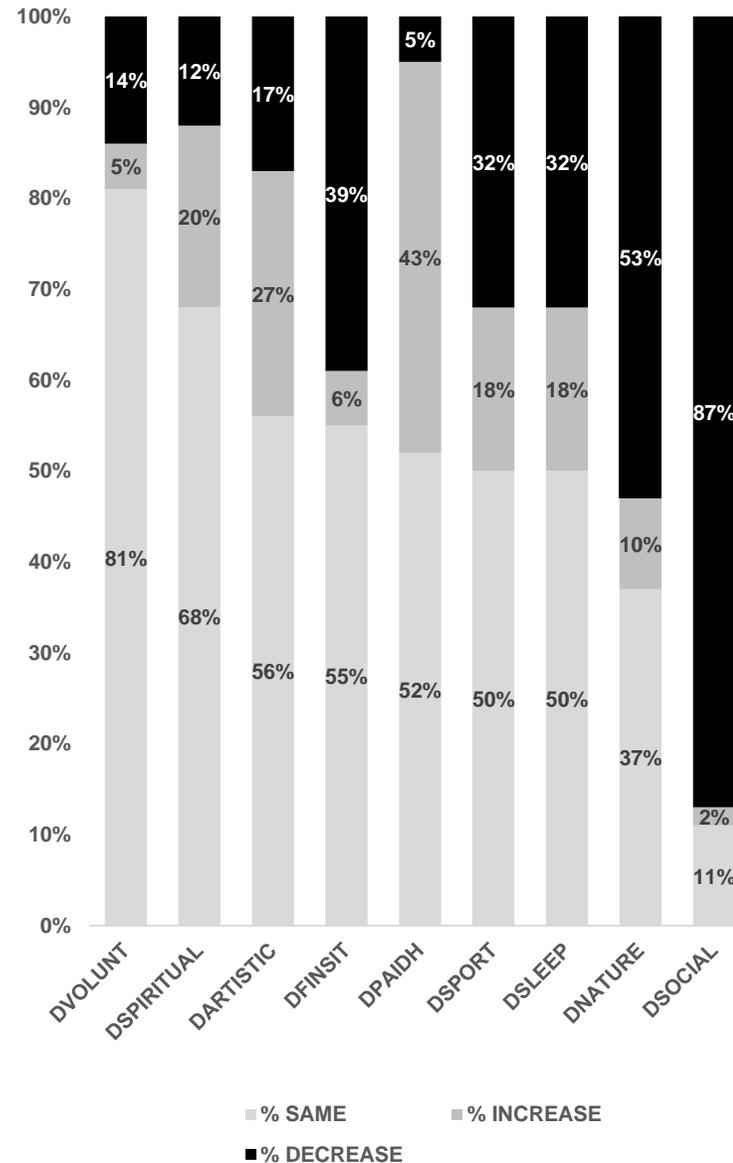


e.g. Gascon et al 2017 systematic review [Blue Health](https://bluehealth2020.eu/)
<https://bluehealth2020.eu/>; www.ecoscopium.eu

4. Wellbeing in ordinary ...VS extraordinary times

In a study on Covid-19 wellbeing disparities, n=900, in Malta during the initial lockdown, we find a large decline in the extent of “Going by the sea or nature” measured on a scale from 0-3 - “never”, “one to three days”, “four to six days” and “every day”. We note this was a significant predictor of self-assessed life satisfaction and happiness prior to Covid but not during lock down.

Questions: Is nature deprivation another unintended cost of lockdown? What are the implications for climate adaptation crises? What disparities?



*Briguglio, M. Caruana, M. and Debono, N. (2021) (APA Traumatology); Jenkins et al European Journal of Clinical Oncology 2021; Zhang et al 2020 Psychiatry Research

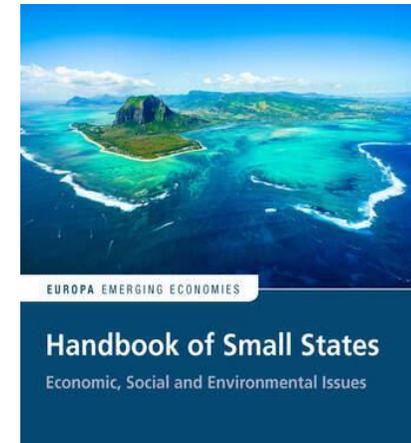
5. Wellbeing & environment in mainlands ...VS islands

Malta has seen a very high and rapid rate of urbanization. In EU, it is lowest in nature cover, noisiest, most densely populated, quasi highest motorization rates, lowest water etc etc. Various studies documenting rapid change in “paradise lost”.

Malta Wellbeing Index Project (and other projects) assessing implications to guide policy.

More generally, islands tend to have high exposure to environmental issues (like climate change) and high cost of adaptation.

Questions: Potential to assess environmental implications on wellbeing in more diverse, wider contexts? (Promising data sets: SDG dashboard; EU Silc). What are the implications of rapid urban and natural environmental change (identity?) Can we develop wellbeing lens for environmental policy? Can we include wellbeing modules in more data sets? (e.g. ONS4);



www.wellbeingindex.mt; Moncada S., Spiteri, J., & Briguglio M. (2018) in Handbook of Small States (Routledge); _Briguglio, M. & Bonello, S. (2018). No man's land.. (Kite) Dolan, P., & Metcalfe, R. (2012). (Journal of social policy)

AGENDA

Wellbeing and environment:

The role of PEB

Qualitative insights

Blue spaces

Extraordinary times

Diverse contexts

Emerging datasets

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