



DOES DESTINATION CHOICE AFFECT ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES OF EUROPEAN TOURISTS?

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ABSTRACT

Different studies have shown that environmental activists at home display an attitude-behaviour gap when they go on holiday. Attribution theory investigates why people who are actively involved in protecting the environment at home do not maintain this type of behaviour when they go on vacation, which may have negative environmental consequences, albeit involuntarily. This paper contributes to a better understanding of such hypothesis analyzing tourists' environmental attitudes distinguishing when they decide to go on holiday domestically or abroad. The paper takes advantage of multilevel approach because destination choice may affect pro-environmental attitudes of tourists heterogeneously across European countries. Since the individuals are nested into countries, a random slope logistic model specifically may take into account such hierarchical data structure considering simultaneously individual and contextual variables (Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal, 2012). This model can adequately split the variation in environmental support of tourists into a between-individual level and a within-country level, allowing the intercept and/or the coefficients (slopes) to vary randomly across countries. The analysis is conducted for EU-27 countries, combining micro-data, correspond to the Flash Eurobarometer 281 drawn from the European Commission and data from the European Value Survey, and macro-data from different international sources. The study concludes that the environmental concerns of tourists when travelling domestically were around 15% higher than those travelling abroad. Additionally, the random slope variance regarding destination choice parameter is statistically significant, which allows us to explore the underpinning behind the heterogeneous pattern across countries. In fact, tourists from The Netherlands, Ireland or Spain do not show significant differences in their behavior when traveling outside or within borders.

Key words: Tourist's environmental attitudes, multilevel analysis, attribution hypothesis, destination choice.