

Rejoinder to Kallis et al.'s response to our criticism

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Although Kallis et al. state in their response that methodology was not the purpose of their article, they nevertheless levy various criticisms on monetary valuation methods. In their response they add to this, and we mostly disagree with their arguments. Given limited space, we will concentrate here on one aspect of their response.

In our study on beach valuation in Croatia (Logar and van den Bergh, 2012) we focus on preference uncertainty because this issue can substantially influence the final results of monetary valuation. Kallis et al. suggest that the study fails on the second (equality) criterion. It is fair to say that our project did address the equity aspect in another paper, which concludes that: “Differential entrance fee rates might be considered in order to avoid double-charging of visitors and to enable equitable distribution of costs among various visitor groups (by taking into account differences in income, time spent on the beach, etc.)” (Logar and van den Bergh, 2014). Kallis et al. further suggest that it would be better if the state would secure funds for beach management. However, in this particular case this would not necessarily ensure more equality given that 45-65% of beach visitors live abroad and hardly contribute to the Croatian state budget.

Furthermore, our statement that public funds are running out and that the costs of beach protection against erosion cannot be covered from the town budget is not “taken for granted” as Kallis et al. say, since it is based on the outcome of the in-depth interviews conducted with municipal authorities prior to the valuation study (Logar, 2010).

The study is moreover incorrectly criticized for not considering a variety of other policy instruments. The authors here neglect a preceding study of Logar (2010), which has done precisely that – assessing a whole range of possible policy instruments for more sustainable tourism management (including beaches) in a participatory way. Another study of Logar and

van den Bergh (2014) concludes that: “caution and further research are needed before making a final decision on the implementation of a beach user fee. [...] Other payment vehicles such as (higher) tourist or environmental taxes can be investigated”.

The main reason for selecting the beach entrance fee in our survey on beach valuation in Croatia was that for economic valuation studies it is important that a payment vehicle is credible. Since this instrument already exists in the town where the study was conducted, it was considered to be the most credible instrument. Although the respondents in our study could not choose a policy instrument, they were asked whether in their opinion it would be justified to introduce a beach entrance fee to other beaches in Croatia or in Europe so as to cover beach maintenance costs. The shares of respondents who answered ‘yes’ are 63% and 76% at the two studied beaches.

All these points merely illustrate that Kallis et al. easily criticize valuation research without having a deep knowledge of the particular studies in question. We fear that this has to do with the fact that the authors are ideologically biased against using valuation methods in environmental research.

Finally, the response of Kallis et al. does not acknowledge the confusion we noted to result from not clearly separating monetary valuation and price instruments in environmental policy. We are happy that Kallis et al. accept the criticism that their examples were not “representative”, but they seem not to realize that this means they cannot draw any general conclusions on the basis of them.

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