

# Abstract for Day of Sociology 2023

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## Title

The social structuring of coastal visits and experiences in Flanders

## Authors

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## Abstract

Coastal environments benefit health and wellbeing by reducing stress, restoring cognitive capacities, promoting physical activity, and providing clean air. It is generally accepted that people who reside nearer to the coast, visit the coast more often and gain more of its benefits. However, little is known about how people of different social and health backgrounds visit and experience the coast differently. In this study, we use insights from medical, psychological, and social sciences to explore the social structuring of coastal visits in Flanders. We apply Bourdieu's theory of social space to analyse if and to what extent social-background and health characteristics are related to features of coastal visits, such as how frequently one visits the coast, what one does and why, and with whom. This information was gathered via a survey that was distributed via an access panel to a sample of the adult Flemish population (N = 1949). The position in social space was operationalized via questions on demographic, socio-economic, and health characteristics. The data is currently being analysed via multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) and hierarchical cluster analysis, and the results will be presented at the event. These results will reveal how the coastal visiting behaviour in Flanders is structured and which social distinctions are relevant. The results also fuel the development of a person-specific therapy involving coastal visits on prescription. This study demonstrates that incorporating the social sciences in this developing research field of 'Ocean and Human health' is crucial to fill many of the existing knowledge gaps and to formulate new hypotheses.

**Keywords:** Coastal visits; Health; Wellbeing; Bourdieu; Tourism

## Taal presentatie

English

# Thema

- 1) Cultuur en levensstijl