

Opinion: What your vacation says about you

By Arthur C. Brooks, New York Times

Twenty-three years ago, my wife and I were having an argument about how to celebrate our first anniversary. Money was tight, and we had to choose between taking a beach vacation or buying a couch, which we did not have. Being a Spaniard, she naturally advocated for the beach. As a thrifty American, I argued for the couch because it was permanent. In the end, we compromised – we went to the beach.

Vacations say a lot about people. For one thing, where people choose to go indicates how much they like to be around others. In new work in the *Journal of Research in Personality*, psychologists from the University of Virginia quizzed college students about their geographical preferences and found that introverts prefer the mountains while extroverts prefer the ocean. The researchers found more evidence for this when they looked at who actually lives where: Residents of especially mountainous states were more introverted on average than their counterparts who live in flatter places.

This finding is fairly intuitive. In the mountains one can easily find seclusion and isolation. Meanwhile, beaches tend to be crowded places full of seminude strangers, a potentially unappealing scene for introverts but exactly the point for extroverts.

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