

# Author's response

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# 1 Response to Editor

Dear Professor Burger,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a revised draft. We list below in inline format our brief responses to reviewers' comments and attach at the end tracked changes that show precisely the additions and deletions.

You will see that most comments focus (1) on writing style and (2) providing better empirical support that Colombia is a 'happiness paradise'. In addition, you might reconsider (not) including some of the material in the Online Appendix and update the bibliography.

writing style—made it more official and scientific; also rewritten to be more accurate and balanced rather than straightforward or provocative

empirical support for happiness paradise—made points better, clarified, streamlined

appendix—dropped a bunch of stuff, and reorganized a bit

fixed up references (and there will be more checks at the production/publishing stage)

Best,  
Authors

## 2 response to reviewer #4

Below are our inline responses. Please also see tracked changes at the end.

\* The various revisions by the author have certainly contributed to an upgrading of the paper.

n/a

Nevertheless, the study still has some intrinsic weaknesses. Several suggestions by the reviewers have not been fully respected and taken into consideration. The main weakness of the paper is still a somewhat superficial analysis of the Colombian case, interesting as it is.

We tried to go more some more in depth, and also made points better, clarified, and streamlined.

I will offer a few final suggestions to the author, hoping that she/he will be able to digest these comments.

see below

\* The Abstract is not a real scientific abstract. It ought to be written in a scientifically logical and justifiable way, with a focus on scope, scientific challenge, novelty, methodological soundness, and societal relevance. An opening sentence with the generic statement that "Latinos are highly satisfied with their lives..." is not only misplaced, but also empirically wrong. We need a new Abstract following standard principles in science.

Made it more official and scientific.

Focused on scope, scientific challenge, novelty, methodological soundness, and societal relevance.

\* The Title is also a problem. We need a sound and concise title, and not a set of provocative questions.

Made more concise and dropped provocative questions from:

"Colombia: Unlivable but Happy. Fool's Paradise? (No, a Real Paradise, Better than the US)"

to

"Colombia: Unlivable but Happy."

\* The overall text has too much of a popularizing jargon. The current loose text may be good for an oral presentation, but falls short as a solid and convincing scientific product. A rewriting is needed.

Writing style—made it more official and scientific; also rewritten to be more accurate and balanced rather than straightforward or provocative.

\* I am still not convinced that Columbia is empirically a happiness paradise. It would be better to start with some hard statistical facts, e.g. the position of Columbia on the ladder of the World Happiness Report 2024, and to start from there with the formulation of important research hypotheses to be empirically tested.

We do use World Values Surveys and World Database of Happiness. And it is indeed a starting point for our argument (sec 1 "Happy Colombia"), which might have been little lost earlier in our lively prose, but now should be clearer as we made it more official and scientific.

We also added, rephrased, and added references to make our point better, and better grounded in evidence.

\* The final para of the concluding section sounds like propaganda in a newsletter. This entire section ought to have a solid scientific flavour, based on empirical model findings.

We formalized it and moved to appendix.

\* Even though the very long Online Appendix will only be available online, I feel this is a scattered and heterogeneous set of statements and pieces. This also needs a rewriting.

We did cut much of it. And reorganized some.

\* There are many missing elements in the References. They all have to be carefully checked.

We fixed up many references, and there will be more checks at the production/publishing stage.

Also earlier the references were mixed up—those from the online appendix were appearing at the end of the body of the paper—now they are only at the end of the online appendix.