Dissatisfaction with city life

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measurement

◇ General Social Survey question: "taken all together, how would you say things are these days - would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?" (1-3)

◇ this measure was cross-validated using other measures: suicide, PET scans , other people ratings (Layard, 05, Di Tella and MacCulloch, 2006)
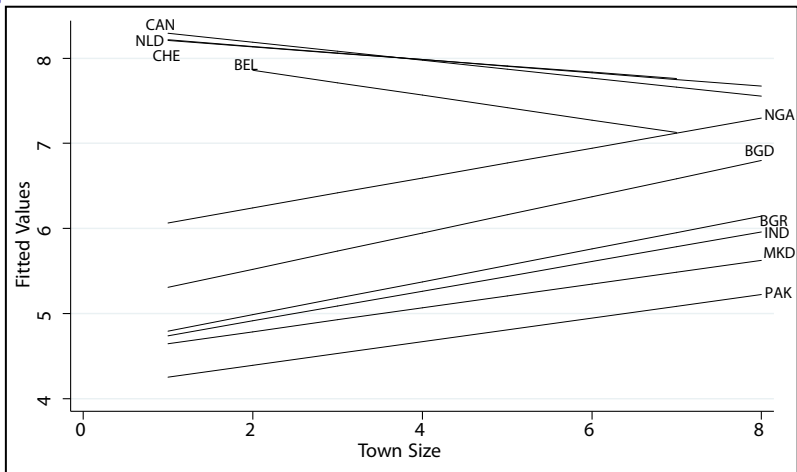
two major theories

◇ **adaptation theory** (Brickman et al., 78)

   ▸ adjustment to external circumstances
   ▸ 'hedonic treadmill'
   ▸ *the more one has the more one wants, since satisfactions received only stimulate instead of filling needs* (Durkheim, 1950)
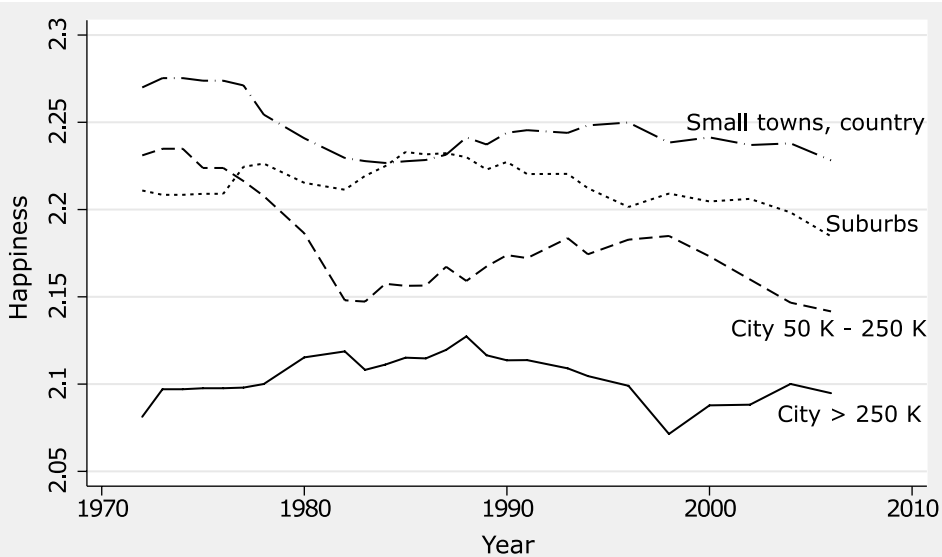
◇ **multiple discrepancy theory** (Michalos, 1985)

   ▸ social comparison
   ▸ comparison to various standards
   ▸ *it is better to be a big frog in a small pond than a small frog in a big pond* (Davis, 66)
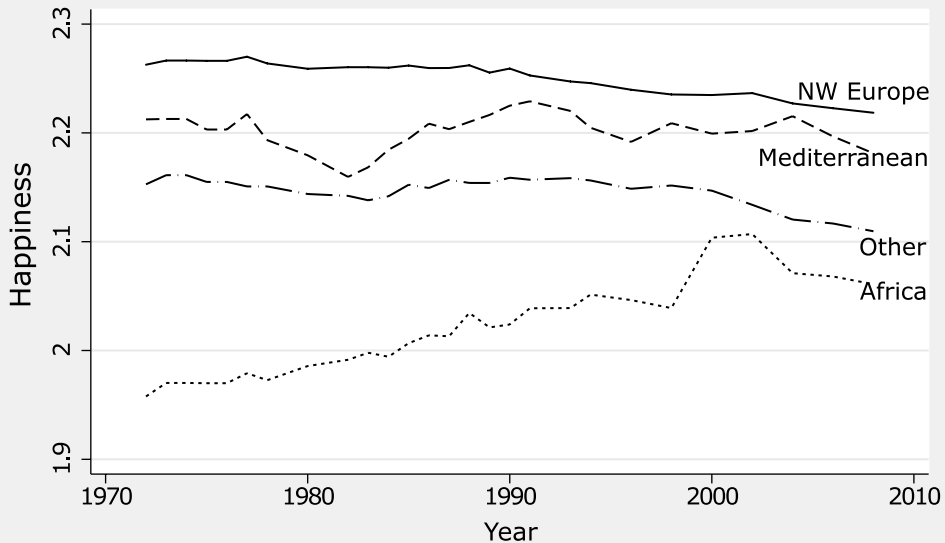
a puzzle

*a hamburger can kill you in NYC and
save your life in Addis Abeba* (?)

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happiness and location in the U.S.

happiness and ethnic origin in the U.S.

happiness model

◇ a number of factors predict happiness

◇ personal characteristics: age, marital status, size of a houshold , employment status, income, whether a person was born in the U.S.

◇ geographical and time heterogeneity

happiness odds ratios

	initial model 1	initial model 2	with race
city 50k-250k	1.15***	1.12**	1.09*
suburbs	1.18***	1.12***	1.08*
small towns, country	1.25***	1.15***	1.10**
NW Europe		1.17***	1.11***
Mediterranean		1.08	1.02
Africa		0.81***	1.09
black hh			0.75***
white hh			1.1
time fe	yes	yes	yes
region fe	yes	yes	yes
ind. controls	yes	yes	yes
observations	32073	25219	24715

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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