Dive Into SWB:
history and philosopy
major theories
measurment

Adam Okulicz-Kozaryn

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adam.okulicz.kozaryn@gmail.com

outline

why study happiness ?

common and ancient wisdom (related to the five theories)

history and philosophy

can we study it scientifically?

five major theories [just quick, properly next week!]

the classics, the pioneers [subjective]

today

- we'll properly motivate "why happiness?"
- review some of the common and ancient wisdom
- have a snapshot of history and philosophy
- "prove" it is science: validity, reliability
- and start with the 5 theories, which we will dig deep into next week
- and only then, in few wks, get to pub pol/adm and community stuff

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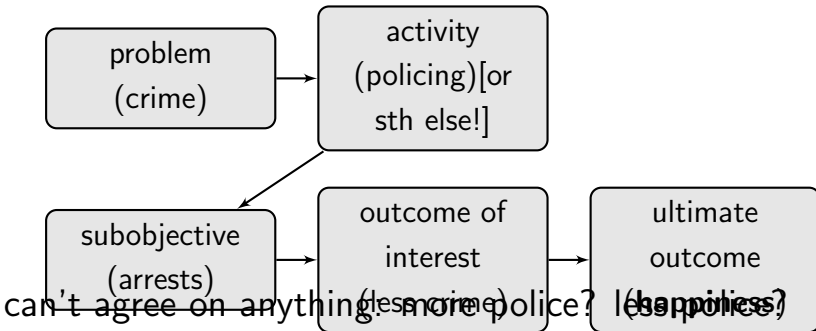
the classics, the pioneers [subjective]

why?

- "a prince who will not undergo the difficulty of understanding must undergo the danger of trusting"
  - [everything, eg happiness experts, car mechanics, physicians]
-
- a number of fascinating research questions to answer eg: can money buy happiness?
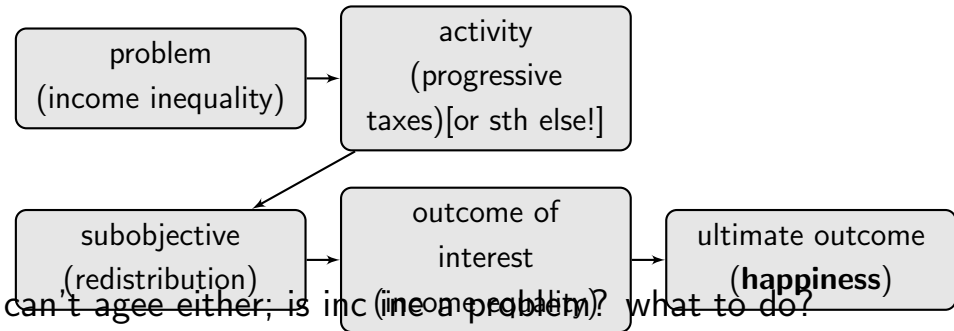
why?

- end in itself
- a measure of utility/well-being/QOL/standard of living
- a better, more comprehensive and precise measure than individual or national income/consumption
- the ultimate outcome in public policy/adm process>

the outcome line (not easy)

can't agree on anything: more police? less police?

the outcome line (not easy!)

```
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│    problem      │ ───▶ │    activity     │
│(income inequality)│     │  (progressive   │
└─────────────────┘      │ taxes)[or sth else!]│
                         └─────────────────┘
                                  │
                                  ▼
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│  subobjective   │ ───▶ │   outcome of    │ ───▶ │ ultimate outcome│
│ (redistribution)│      │    interest     │      │  (**happiness**)│
└─────────────────┘      │ (income equality)│     └─────────────────┘
                         └─────────────────┘
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can't agee either; is inc (income equality)? what to do?

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carpe diem

- "Happiness, not in another place but this place...not for another hour, but this hour." <small>Walt Whitman</small>
  - mindfulness: feeling/being without constructs and concepts
  - being present, being now; no past or future, no TODOs etc

money

- Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment. <small>Samuel Johnson, 1776</small> [treadmill]

- People who claim that money can't buy happiness just don't know where to shop. <small>Anonymous</small> [livability v consumerism]

- A wealthy man is one who earns $ 100 a year more than his wife's sister's husband. <small>H.L. Mencken</small> [MDT]

- If thou wilt make a man happy, add not unto his riches but take away from his desires. <small>Epicurus</small> [aspirations/expectations; Carver/swb as motivator; human as center of universe/Jung/look inside, not outside]

civilization

- "Happiness," said Freud, "is no cultural value."
- ○ (civilization is based on suppressed or delayed gratification/happiness)
- Freud defined happiness as the "subsequent fulfillment of a prehistoric wish. That is why wealth brings so little happiness: money was not a wish in childhood"
- ○ com dev: suppressed/delayed gratification; culture of poverty; banfield unheavenly city

work (and edu)

- "Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful" Herman Cain

- "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." (Mill, 2010) ""A being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering"

  `https://open.library.okstate.edu/introphilosophy/chapter/pigs-or-socrates/#:~:`

  `text=It%20is%20better%20to%20be,own%20side%20of%20the%20question.`

- ○ Wong (2018) grad sch— > bad menHea

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history: McMahon D "Happiness: A history"

○ From beginnings we were interested in happiness:

○ essentially two ideas, "good life" v "happy life/pleasure"

• kind of like Apollo v Dionysus:

○ Apollo: rational thinking and order, and appeals to logic, prudence and purity.

○ Dionysus, the god of wine and dance: irrationality and chaos, and appeals to emotions and instincts.

○ but more precisely:

• Aristotelian Eudaimonia (good life, living well)

• Benthamite Greatest Happiness for the Greatest Number

Aristotelian Eudaimonia

- Eudaimonia=good life: virtue, good spirit
- Eudaimonia (happiness) = active, complete life inclusive of all that has intrinsic value
- perfection in respect of virtue; resources sufficient for a living creature
○ https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/eudaimonia/

○ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eudaimonia

Benthamite Greatest SWB for the Greatest Num

- more pleasure than pain for as many as possible
- hedonic calculus: seek pleasure, avoid pain:
- ○ happiness = pleasure - pain
- have political and legal reforms to produce
- ○ Greatest Happiness for the Greatest Number
- this is what we're witnessing today!
- ○ early political advocates: (Stiglitz et al., 2009), now even Sachs!
- ○ UK, New Zealand, UAE/Dubai, OECD, Bhutan, etc

Epicurus

- all pleasure is good! (Annas, 1987)
- but not unnecessary desires (consumerism!), rather simple and frugal life; desire only the very basics, otherwise setting up yourself for hedonic treadmill (Weijers, 2011)
- overindulgence often leads to pain
- achieve inner tranquility
- http://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/history-of-happiness/epicurus/

- (Brooks, 2021)
- be frugal and social, ie like a commune/hippie! (School of Life-Epicurus) https://youtu.be/Kg_47J6sy3A (fun; and others by school of life)

Dionysus aka Bacchus

- god of the grape-harvest, wine making and wine, of fertility, ritual madness, religious ecstasy and theater
  - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysus

- on hedonism, pleasure,
  - eg see doctoral thesis by Dan Weijers: http:

    //researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10063/2370/thesis.pdf?sequence=2

and the winner is...

- which one do you like? Bentham or Aristotle?
  (a fascinating philosophical debate (Nussbaum, 2005))

__outline__

"but it is in the clouds!"

○ "happiness is something different for everyone"
○ "one moment i am happy, another moment i am unhappy"
○ "it doesn't really matter; it's just a silly fleeting emotion"
• nope! it's solid science!

definition

- self-reported
- subjective
- sometimes surprising
- life satisfaction$\approx$ utility
- max(life satisfaction) $\approx$ utilitarianism
- life satisfaction$\neq$happiness
  affect$\neq$cognition
- here, use interchangeably but remember distinction
○ SWB (subjective wellbeing) is another popular term

measurement

- wvs question: "all things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?" (1 to 10)

- gss 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)

- these measures were cross-validated using other measures: suicide, PET scans , other people ratings

  (Layard, 2005, Di Tella and MacCulloch, 2006)

validity (Diener et al., 2013)

- self-reported and subjective, but valid (people know whether they are happy) (Myers, 2000) and some reliability (precision varies)
- correlates with objective measures eg brain activity (PET scans) (Layard, 2005)
- correlates with suicide and mental health problems (Bray and Gunnell, 2006)
- not only correlates highly with other non-self reported measures, but also does not correlate with measures that are not theoretically related to it: happiness has discriminant validity (Sandvik et al., 1993)

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five major theories

- genes/set point (eg Schnittker, 2008)
- adaptation/adjustment; hedonic treadmill (Brickman et al., 1978)
- needs/livability (Veenhoven and Ehrhardt, 1995)
- comparison/discrepancies (Michalos, 1985)
- happiness just a motivator (Carver and Scheier, 1990)

genes/set point theory

- genes explain about half of everything, incl swb (eg Schnittker, 2008)
- genes: bad rep in soc sci bc of Eugenics, Nazi, etc
- but shouldn't downplay the genes (Pinker, 2003, Haidt, 2012)
- indeed, some are just happy/unhappy no matter what!
- genes aka 'set point theory': you win lottery, lose a limb, doesn't matter, your swb comes back to its set point

genes/set point theory

- a see homeostasis, eg cummins ch4 "wealth(s) and swb"
- swb, like any physiological system requires homeostasis, a
  stable narrow range to function properly
- about 70-90 on 0-100 scale; still some people are
  chronically low say due to arthisis or caring for an elderly;
  and some over time change is still possible
- not that set point is set in stone

adaptation theory (Brickman et al., 1978)

○ [related to genes/set point]

• adjustment to external circumstances

• 'hedonic treadmill'

• *the more one has the more one wants, since satisfactions received only stimulate instead of filling needs* (Durkheim, [1895] 1950)

• human adaptation is astonishing:

○ winning millions in a lottery, losing limbs, etc

○ 1b in poverty and somehow manage, don't commit suicide–people can adapt to just about anything

needs/livability theory (Veenhoven and Ehrhardt, 1995)

- humans, like other animals have certain needs
- physiological needs like water, food, sleep; and other needs:
  - eg contact with other living organisms (biophilia, social capital, nature, etc)
  - and higher (human) needs eg belonging, selfactualization
- kind of like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- if needs are satisfied, then happiness follows
- then there are attr of places, environment, or ecology
- if it is "livable" then happiness follows
- this is optimistic for public policy–we can change needs and livability provision

comparisons/discrepancies

- multiple discrepancy theory (Michalos, 1985)
- social comparison, eg co-workers, HS friends, relatives
- comparison to various standards, eg clothes, car expected in a given profession
- over-time: your swb now is determined by how you were doing in the past and what you expect in the future
  - eg losing may be more felt than gaining (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979)
- "it is better to be a big frog in a small pond than a small frog in a big pond" (Davis, 1966)

happiness just a motivator (Carver and Scheier, 1990)

- "Happiness is the feeling that power increases–that resistance is being overcome." Nietzsche

- SWB merely signals that task at hand has been accomplished

○ then it dissipates and pain settles in

so that the signal is that I can move to another task!

- Earth is not for comfort/happiness, humans have not evolved to be happy but to reproduce (Euba, 2019) see superb 'Selfish Gene' (Dawkins, 2006); (also Schopenhauer, eg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0zmfNx70M4)

- it's for struggle, and pain has its motivating place

- happiness-seeking/pain avoidance is complacence

- "The word 'happiness' would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness" Jung

happiness just a motivator (Carver and Scheier, 1990)

- no pain, no gain!
- one must struggle to succeed
- one must even struggle to discover oneself!
- see Nietzsche, eg: `https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/10/nietzsches-guide-to-better-living/568375/`

- people who are very emotionally stable may be too happy to feel the need to create
- "One must have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star." Nietzsche

happiness just a motivator (Carver and Scheier, 1990)

- also like the earlier equation (Carver, 2003):

  swb=achievement/experience−expectations/aspirations
- ○ if rate of progress below the reference rate: negative affect
- ○ if above: positive affect
- also if doing well: become satisfied, comfortable, possibly complacent (Carver, 2003)
- ○ until you fall below the reference line and it goes over again
- note: winner-take-all capitalism raises the reference line

  (Frank, 2012)

various models (Carver, 2003)

- cruise control: going over the hill
- gets tough, increase velocity and fuel use
- reach plateau and going down the hill: decrease fuel
- coasting: positive affect leads to coasting
- opportunistic shifting: positive feelings promote play
- also see Marcuse

dark side of happiness

- it follows from happiness just a motivator
- that too much of happiness is not a good thing
- or perhaps even that there's a dark side to happiness
- Gruber et al. (2011) and https://positivepsychology.com/dark-side-of-happiness/
- (also Gilbert's "Stumbling on happiness")
- "too much of a good thing is a bad thing"
- food makes us thrive physically, happiness makes us thrive psychologically–but just like food, happiness not always good
- (like fame, success or even money–to get them–pursue other stuff like curiosity)

dark side of happiness

- always being very happy may result from being out of
  touch with reality; and this may lead to dysfunction
- moderate happiness allows room for unpleasant emotions,
  which enable us to learn and grow and move forward
- if constantly very happy, why would you do anything?
- being too happy can make you:
  ○ pay less attention to details
  ○ less creative
  ○ take more risks [binging food and alc, drugs etc,sex]

dark side of happiness

- too much happiness can be dysfunctional and maladaptive
- extreme positive emotion is like mania; during mania can't
  experience negative emotions (that may be necessary,
  even for survival, such as fear)
- (btw flow seems similar to mania)

dark side of happiness

- you set some goal, say academic achievement
○ and then you fail
- disappointment/discontent/unhappiness is relatively fine for most goals
- but if your goal is happiness, then failiure kills the goal!
- so the more you strive for happiness, the more likely it is that you will be unhappy
- say you are in a positive situation, a birthday party, and your goal is happiness, but you don't feel happy, then you fail your goal, and feel disappointed and even less happy!!
- instead, accept or not try to decrease negative feelings–be mindful and accept

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key people by the field

- Veenhoven; aka the Godfather of Happiness [soc; sir]
  https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruut_Veenhoven

- Diener (and Seligman) [psy]

- Easterlin (and Oswald) [eco]

- Radcliff [polSci]

- Cantril came up with the famous ladder

○ it is important because it is self-anchoring:

  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK189562

Campbell

- not just an early scholar, a pioneer
- but also comprehensive and indepth
- indeed, his book is not only relevant
- but many of the findings remain cutting-edge!
- also, it's about the US

Maslow

- a humanist, and into spirituality
- (like Jung, Fromm, and Marcuse)
- really great books:
- Toward a Psychology of Being

  https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=jcKbDAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&

  pg=PT15&dq=maslow&ots=eTsqFrXdED&sig=UlvB9X_8k3NCfVa-Nc08Zvw0zeo#

  v=onepage&q=maslow&f=false

- and Peak Experience (kind of like flow) https:

  //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religions,_Values,_and_Peak_Experiences

Freud

- eg see his "Civilization and its discontents"
- https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=AW3z38T3u7YC&oi=fnd&pg=PP13&dq=freud+civilization+and+its+discontents&ots=6emidLE-nd&sig=6sA07tnq7Rk8_i1R2G4hLg4sq9o#v=onepage&q=freud%20civilization%20and%20its%20discontents&f=false
- note, i did psychoanalysis of city :)
- https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/52123/PDF/1/play/

Fromm and Marcuse

○ in general and short: joy, fun, spontaneity, no harm,
  positive attitude, kindness, equality, freedom, etc
● see google scholar for their writings, eg:

Fromm and Marcuse writings

- "Escape from freedom"

  https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=d2g8L1sLykwC&oi=fnd&

  pg=PR9&dq=info:WPqc-LXi3BUJ:scholar.google.com&ots=JnDgRDoiLn&

  sig=dX7ipJr_fK8R6sxnrytdUYkIkMg#v=onepage&q&f=false

- "One dimensional man" https://books.google.com/books?id=

  eXlTAQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=One-dimensional+man:

  +Studies+in+the+ideology+of+advanced+industrial+society&hl=en&sa=

  X&ved=0ahUKEwiImdSzn83dAhVNGt8KHShSBI8Q6AEIKTAA#v=onepage&q=

  One-dimensional%20man%3A%20Studies%20in%20the%20ideology%20of%

  20advanced%20industrial%20society&f=false

- "Eros and civilization" https://books.google.com/books?id=

  eT2UCgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Eros+and+civilization&hl=en&

Flow: the psychology of optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991)
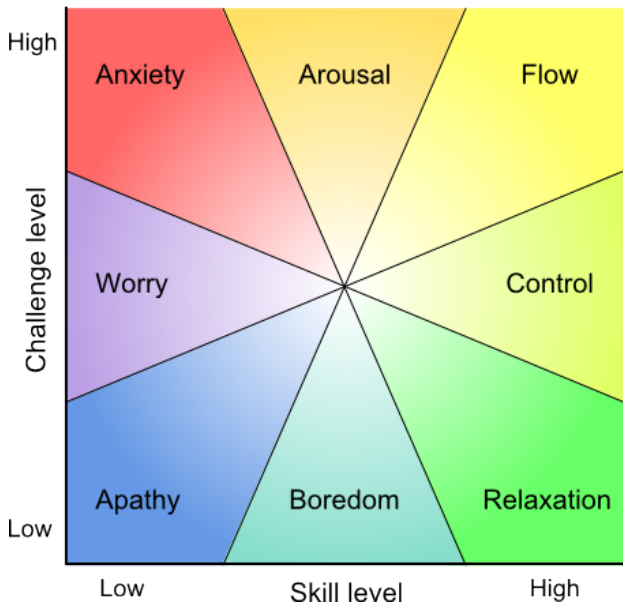
happiness equation

- happiness $=$
  achievement or experience $-$ expectations or aspirations

-

- that's one reason why educ doesn't help with happiness

some more key studies

- ○ describe in few sentences
- (the need to belong) (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, Maslow, [1954] 1987)
- ●
- evolution/genes:
- ○ Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks (McPherson et al., 2001)
- ○ The social cage: Human nature and the evolution of society (Maryanski and Turner, 1992)
- ○ The Compass of Pleasure: How Our Brains Make Fatty Foods, Orgasm, Exercise, Marijuana, Generosity, Vodka, Learning, and Gambling Feel So Good (Linden, 2011)

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