Dive Into SWB:
history and philosopy
major theories
measurment

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adam.okulicz.kozaryn@gmail.com

outline

why study happiness ?

common and ancient wisdom (the 5 theories!)

history and philosophy

can we study it scientifically? [validity]

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

the classics, the pioneers [subjective]

today

- motivate "why happiness?" and some philosophy and history
- "prove" it is science: validity, reliability
- and start the 5 theories (dig deep next week)
○ (and only then, in 2 and 3 wks, pub pol/adm and community stuff)

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why?

- end in itself!
- "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?

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money (discuss like 40min)

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

- A wealthy man is one who earns $ 10,000 a year more than his wife's sister's husband. H.L. Mencken [comparisons]

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

- If thou wilt make a man happy, add not unto his riches but take away from his desires. Epicurus [aspirations/expectations; Carver/swb as motivator; human as center of universe/Jung/look inside, not outside]; Megadeath v Metallica (Manson, 2015)

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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 most popular:
- • Aristotelian Eudaimonia (good life, living well)
- • Benthamite Greatest Happiness for the Greatest Number

Aristotelian Eudaimonia

○ Eudamonia=realization of one's potential !! carol ryff

  `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1EUawAO-oo` 1:20

○ 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 all
- 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

Mill

- "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." (Mill, 2010) discuss ""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
- which one do you like? Bentham or Aristotle?
  (a fascinating philosophical debate (Nussbaum, 2005))

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"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
- life satisfaction$\approx$ utility
- max(life satisfaction) $\approx$ utilitarianism
- life satisfaction$\neq$happiness
  cognition$\neq$affect
- here, use interchangeably but remember distinction
- SWB (subjective wellbeing) is another popular term
- SWB: "a person feeling and thinking his or her life is desirable regardless of how others see it" (Diener)

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) [some criticism, i guess wording in wvs little better 'sat w life' as opposed to 'happy', just 3steps]

- a see swsl sc
  http://labs.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/Documents/SWLS_English.doc and
  self-anchoring carntril ladder

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

validity (Diener et al., 2013)

- self-reported and subjective, but valid (people know whether they are happy) (Myers, 2000) and some reliability (precision varies)

- corr with objective measures eg brain activity (PET scans) (Layard, 2005)

- corr with suicide and mental health problems (Bray and Gunnell, 2006)

- corr with other people ratings (Layard, 2005, Di Tella and MacCulloch, 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)

validity, cont

- persons own eval: persons own weighteing, as opposed to some expert! useful eg as in swb v qol
- fleeting? no, relatively stable over time

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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) [rather momentary affective happiness than global cognitive life satisfaction]

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 that genes were misused doesn't mean they don't exist(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 Brulé and Suter (2019)
- 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
- or at least i'd say 20-90; quite unhappy fine, may be even
  motivating!; but extremely unhappy inhibts functioning
- 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
- ○ limtation of swb–that people adapt, poverty is not fine

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, self-actualization
- 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 satisfy needs and make it livable

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)

- [rather momentary affective than global cognitive]
- "Happiness is the feeling that power increases–that resistance is being overcome." Nietzsche
- SWB merely signals that task at hand done
○ then it dissipates

  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, maybe 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)
- Linden (2011) also says that pleasure is the key motivator!!!

dark side of happiness [follows from Carver]

- 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"
- homeostasis say swb=3-9, like temp, blood pressure, etc
- food makes us thrive physically, happiness makes us thrive psychologically–but like food, swb 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, sex, etc]

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) (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991)

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

Do what you hate to do, but do it like you love it

- seek unhappiness and pain much of the time, repeatedly
- and then you'll be happy

- David Goggins: Do the things you hate like you love it
  After 70 hrs of running every question I had is answered
  (happy, relaxed, not in one's head overthinking)
  https://youtube.com/shorts/Q7qQe2L7PbY?si=gxA-mfgmxl4Ogz5l

- Mike Tyson: Do what you hate to do, but do it like you
  love it
  https://youtube.com/shorts/nI8ir6m76Fo?si=e9P_o19pChaVEv72

- Huberman: willpower brain structure grows if you keep on
  doing consistently what you don't want to do

  https://youtube.com/shorts/nI8ir6m76Fo?si=e9P_o19pChaVEv72

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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 Ryff, Seligman) [psy]
- Easterlin (and Oswald) [eco]
- Radcliff [polSci]

Freud

- eg see his "Civilization and its discontents"
- (civ is based on suppressed or delayed gratification/happiness)

- 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/

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

- later pyramid version: 'transcendence' at top
- further a cause beyond oneself; higher goals outside of oneself; snese of meaning/purpose
- have to have someone; ends rather than means
- 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:

Fromm and Marcuse, the humanists

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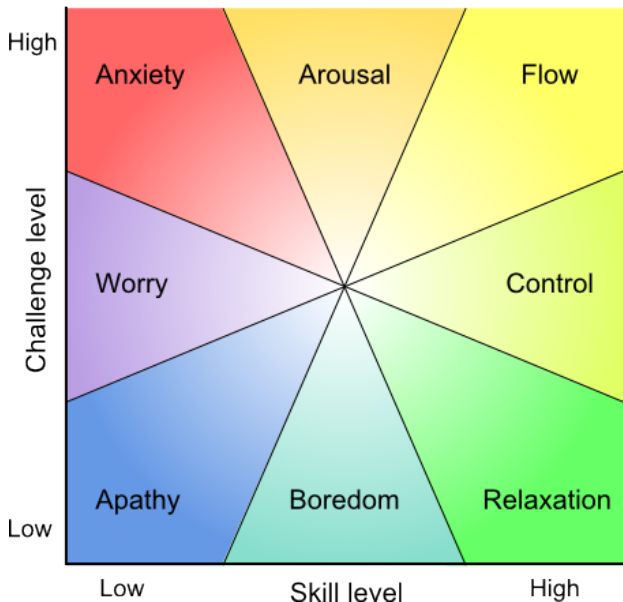
  20advanced%20industrial%20society&f=false

- "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 too much educ doesn't help with happiness https://phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1012

○ not only life but even job satisfaction is lower for university graduates Clark, A. E. (1997). Job satisfaction and gender: why are women so happy at work?. Labour economics, 4(4), 341-372; Heywood, J. S., Siebert, W. S., & Wei, X. (2002). Worker sorting and job satisfaction: The case of union and government jobs. ILR Review, 55(4), 595-609

Carol Ryff's model (Ryff, 2014)
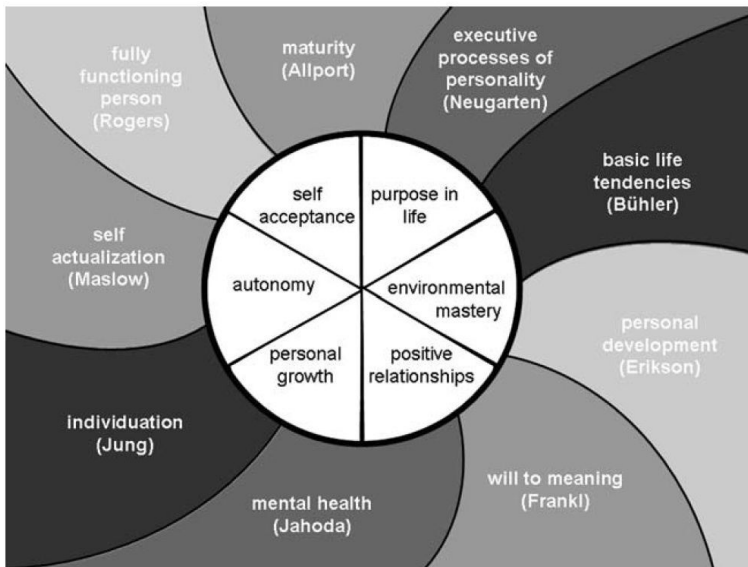
some more key studies

- ○ ◼︎describe in few sentences◼︎
- (the need to belong) (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, Maslow, [1954] 1987)
- evolution/genes:
- ○ Birds of a feather: <u>Homophily</u> 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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