

My Findings: Happiness And Place

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outline

why city misery?

my city

urban misery

suburban misery

size fetish

bad city

appendix: statistics, regressions

outline

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my city

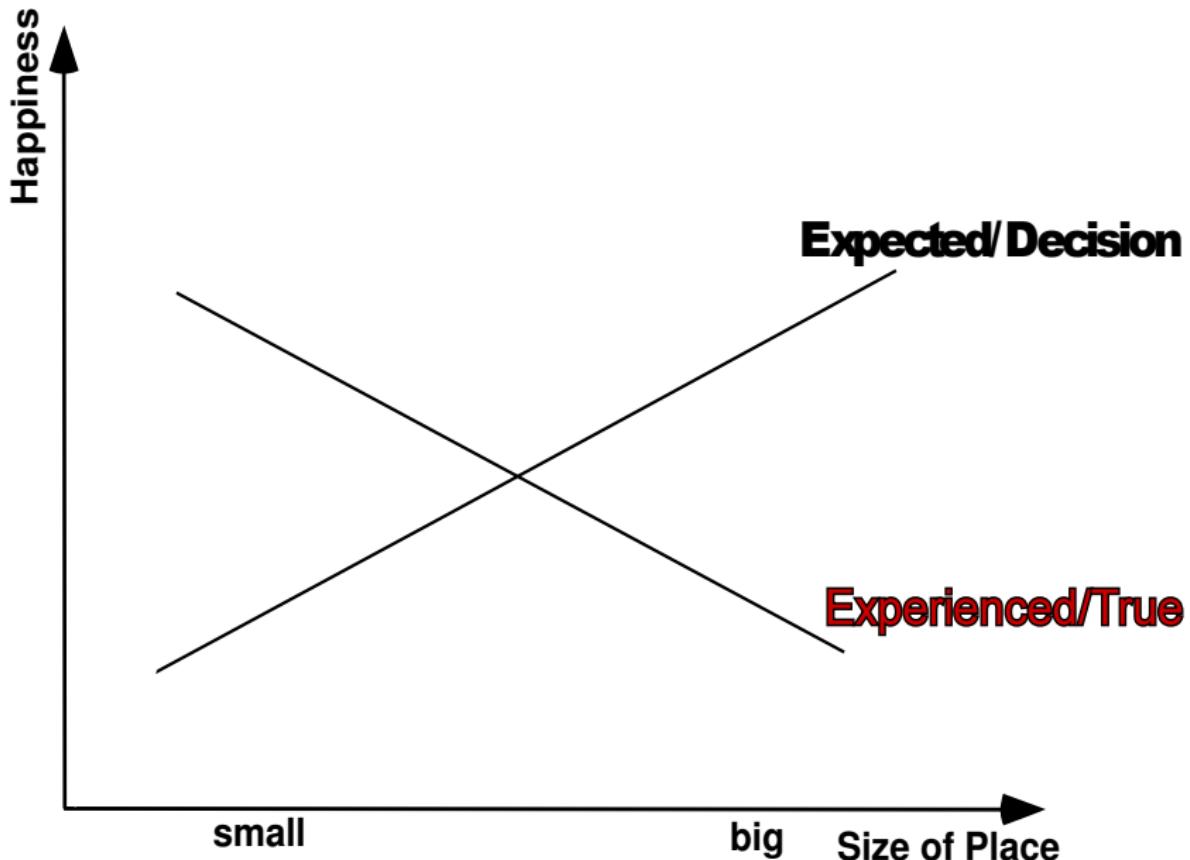
urban misery

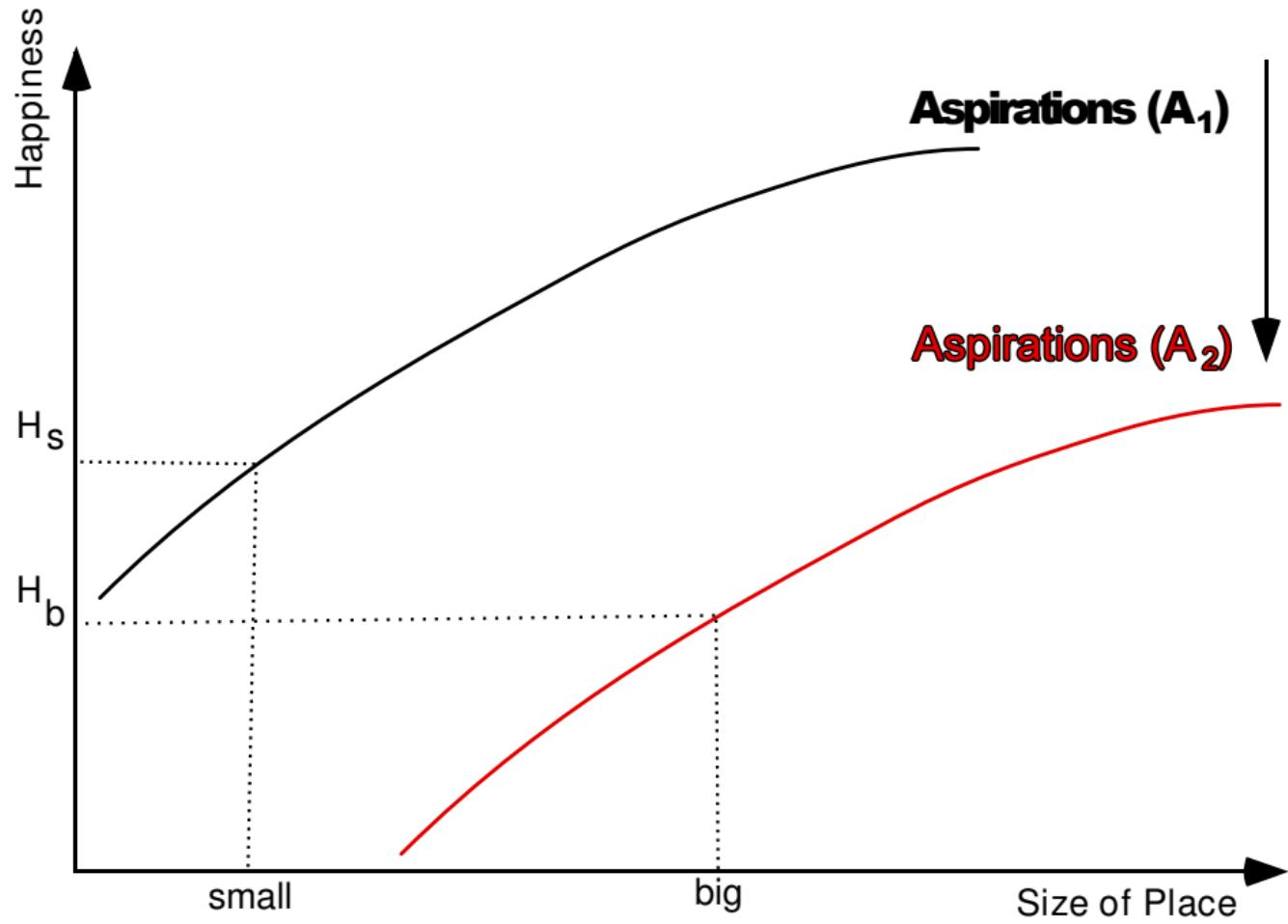
suburban misery

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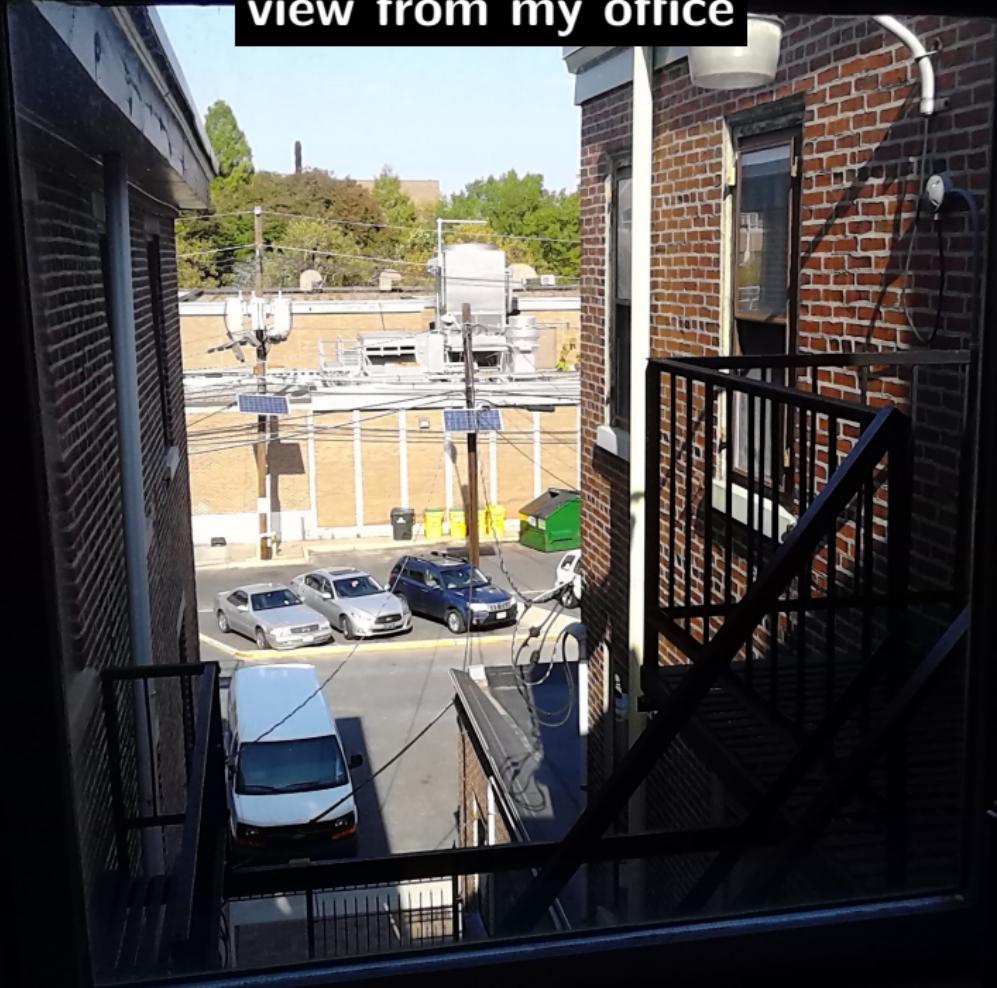
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view from my office







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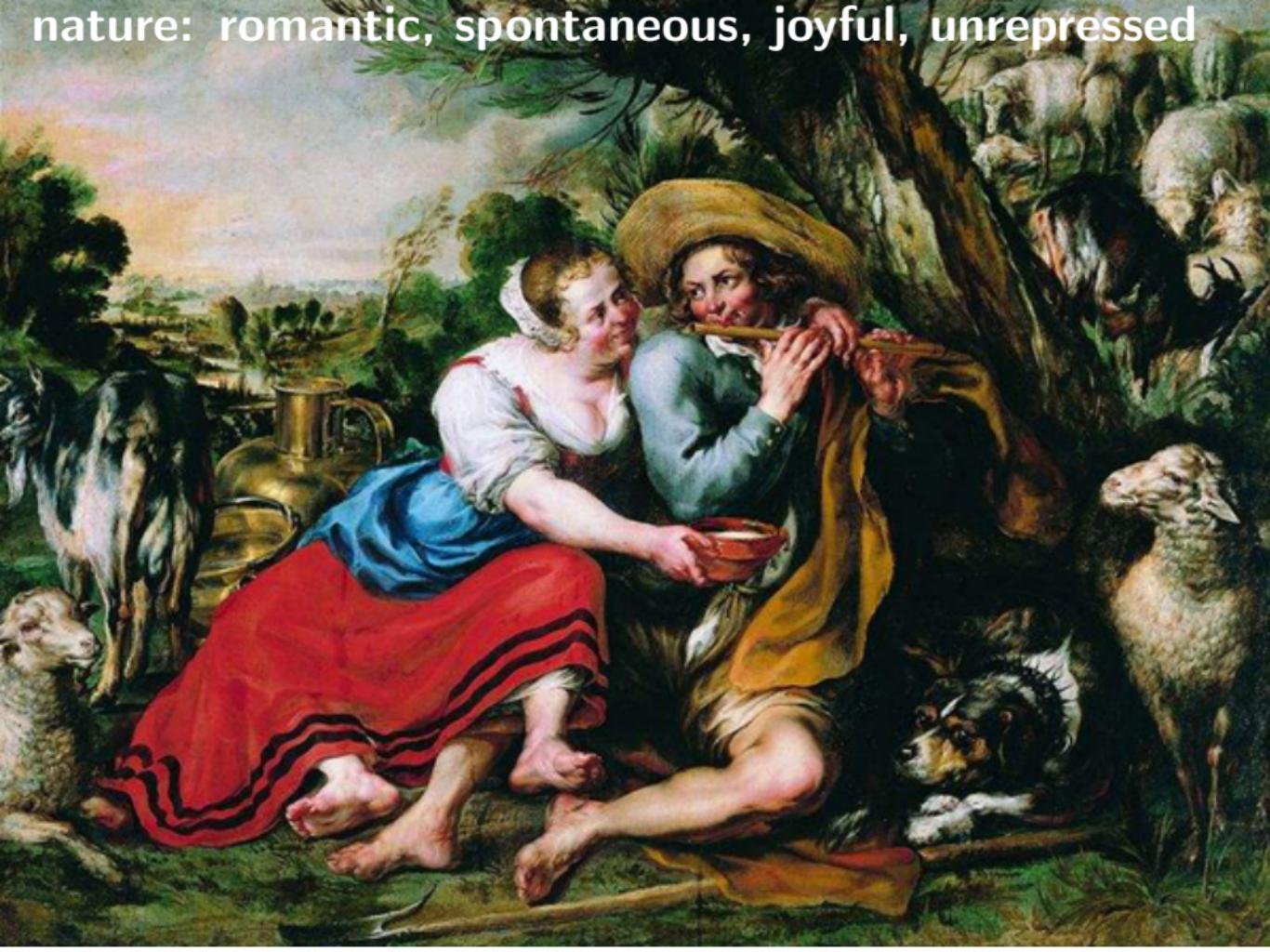
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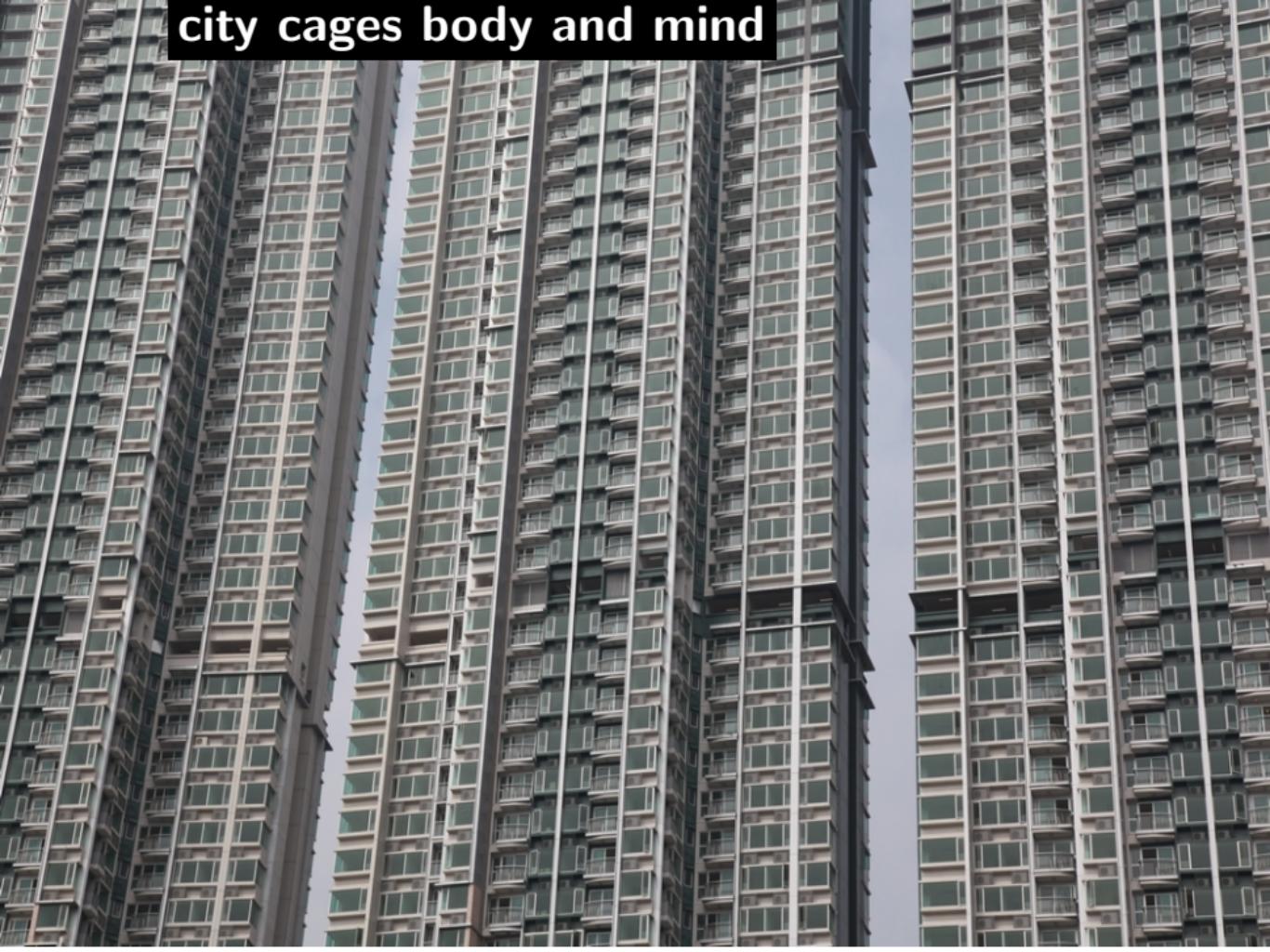
nature: romantic, spontaneous, joyful, unrepressed



city: mechanistic, automaton, repressive



city cages body and mind



city cages body and mind



city is fake



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suburbs are fake, too



sometimes more nature...



1000 ft
200 m

.but sometimes more concrete and asphalt



1000 ft
500 m

typical suburban fakeness



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city spreads as far as the eye can see



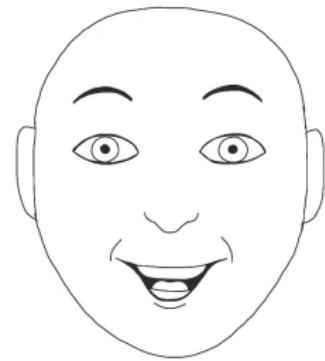
and rises as tall as the eye can see



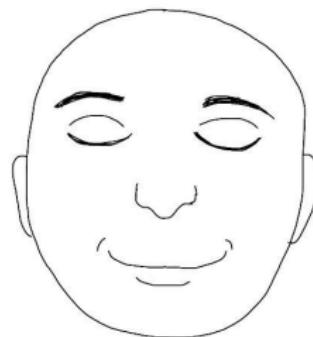


(a) spectacular, awesome, sexy, fantastic

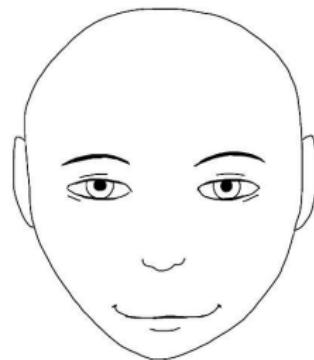
(b) ordinary, dull, normal



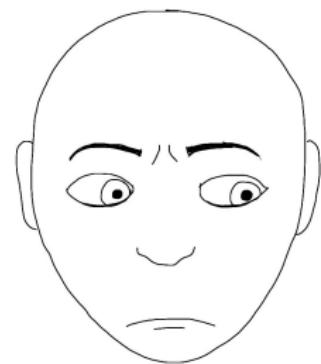
(c) ecstatic



(d) adored



(e) adoring



(f) embarrassed

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Moscow looks like Mordor at night



not much friendlier during the day



a vampire sucking up physical and psychic energy



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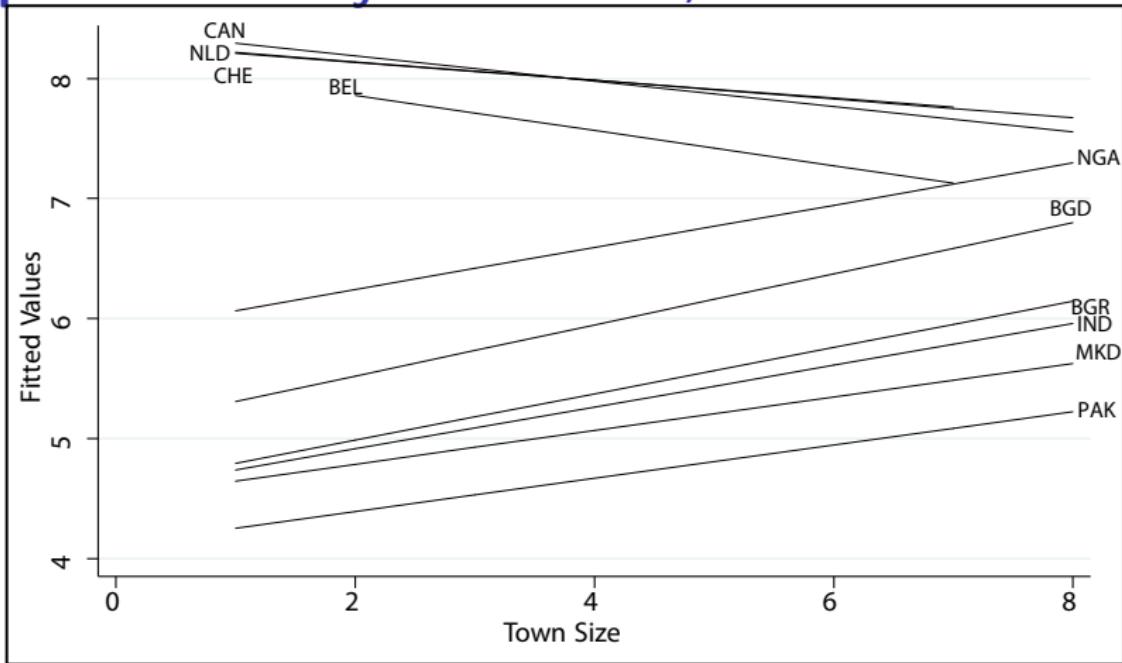
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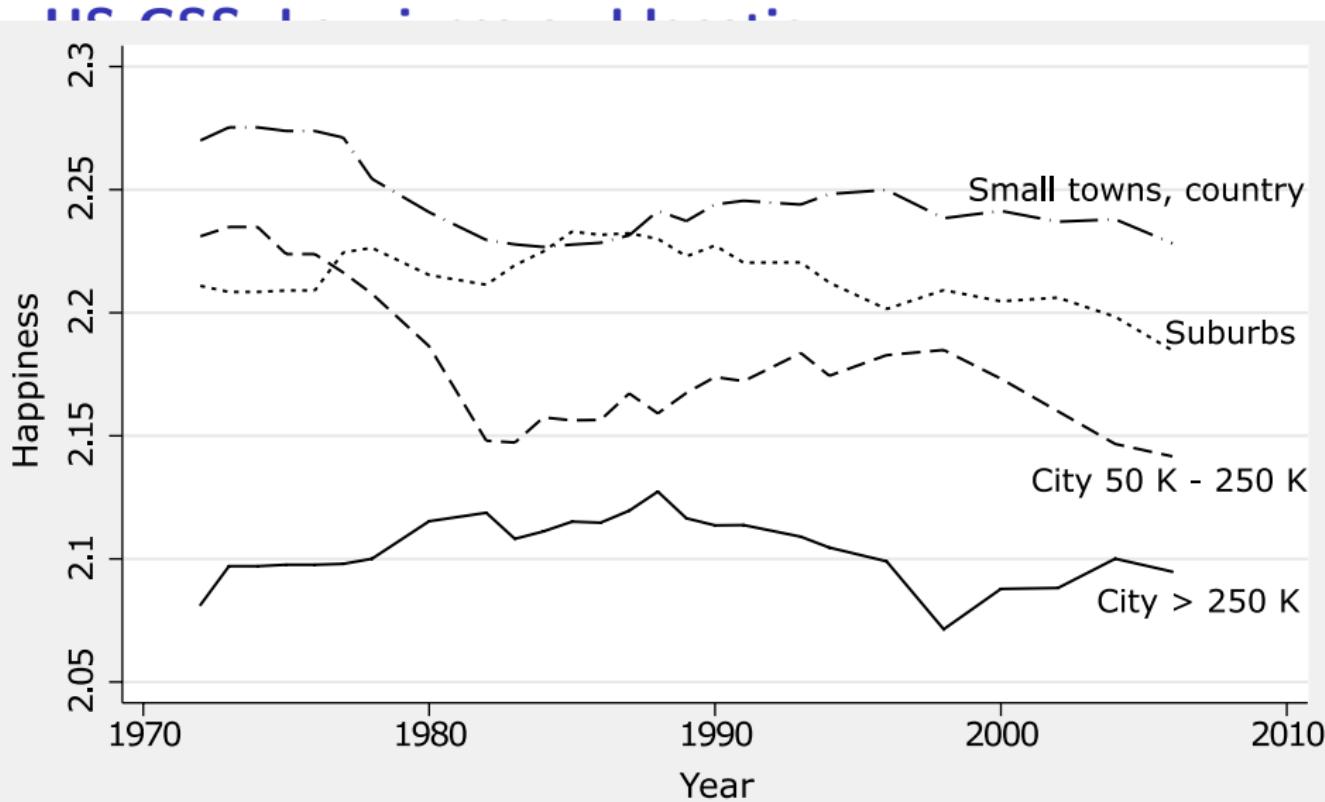
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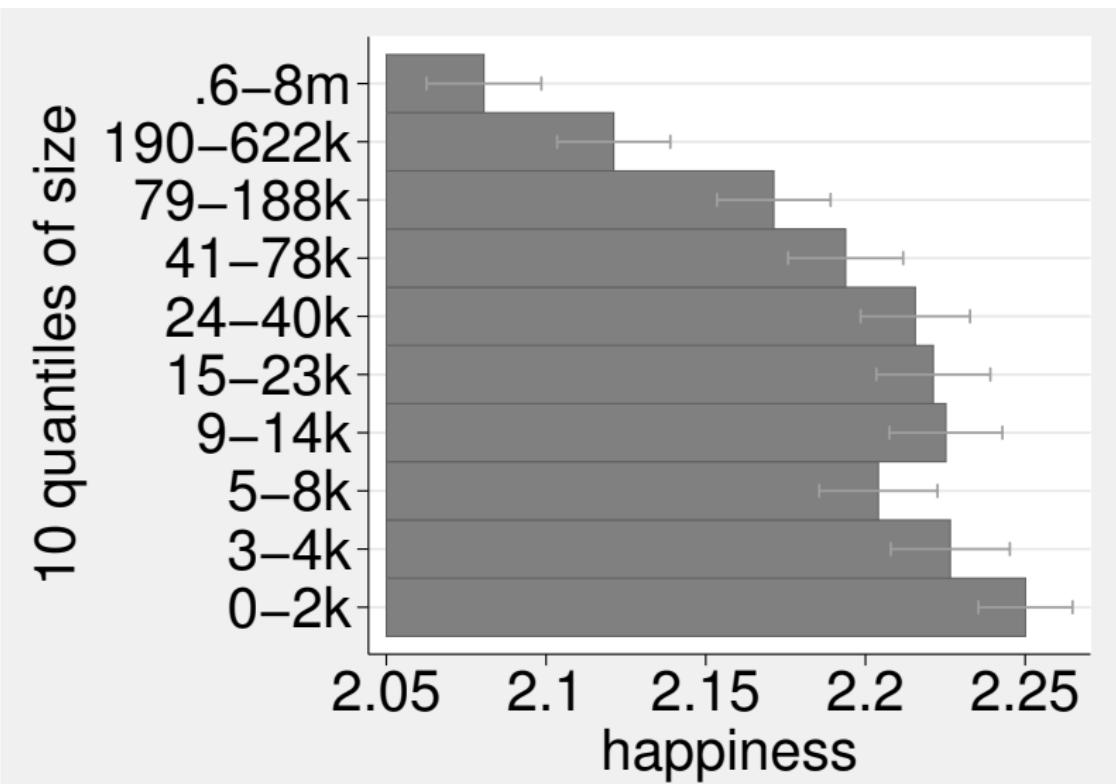
a puzzle from my dissertation; 2008!



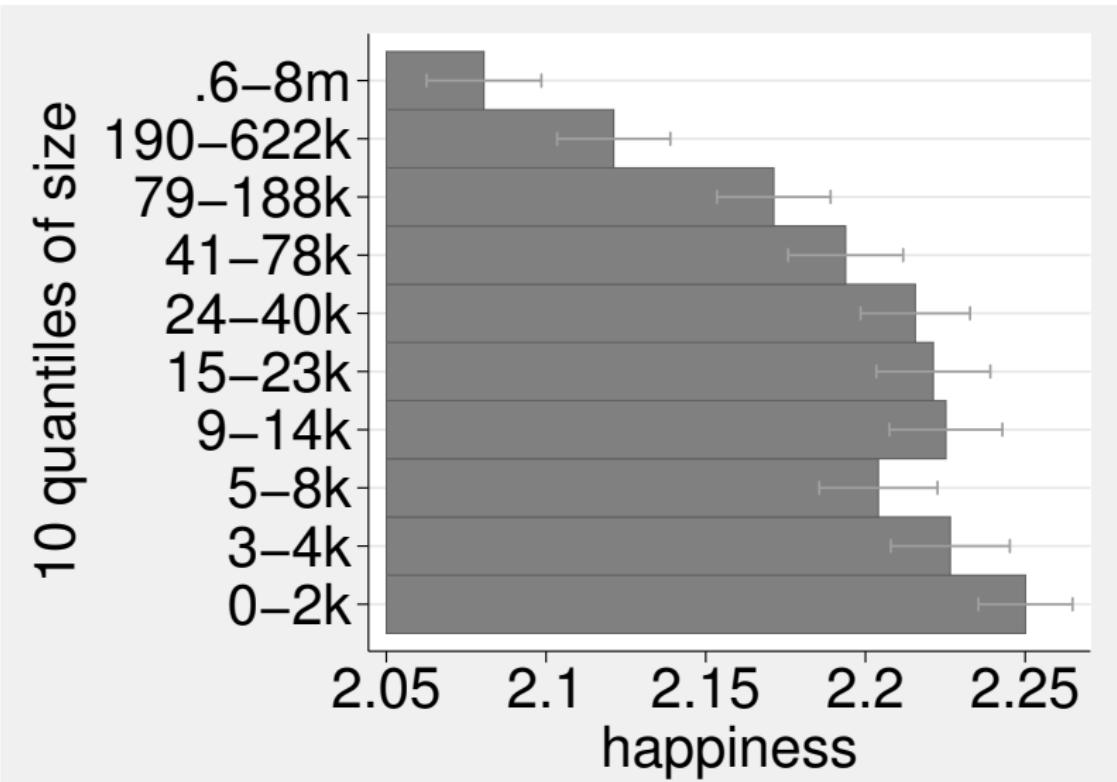
*a hamburger can kill you in NYC and
save your life in Addis Ababa (?)*



US GSS: gradient smooth except 3rd decile



happiness gradient smooth except 3rd decile



most miserable and happiest counties from BRFSS



county	density	happiness
St. Louis city MO	5.7k	3.18
Bronx NY	>30k	3.18
Kings NY (Brooklyn)	>30k	3.2
Johnson KS (close to Kansas city)	1.1k	3.51
Shelby TN (some of Memphis)	1.2k	3.54
Douglas CO (borders Denver)	.3k	3.56

most successful cities less happy than non city avg!

- ◊ avg for counties that are nonmetropolitan areas: 3.41
- ◊ Economist's Quality of Living; Mercer's Best cities
- ◊ Boston; Suffolk County MA: 3.29
- ◊ NYC; NY County (Manhattan): 3.31
- ◊ Chicago; Cook County IL: 3.39

causal mechanism or causal pathway

- ◊ overburdens one's brain ([Simmel, 1903](#), [Lederbogen et al., 2011](#))
 - mentally unhealthy—it wears you down
- ◊ unnatural: evol made humans and other animals to live in nature, not in concrete, asphalt, etc
- ◊ visual stimulation and comparison ([Simmel, 1903](#)), conspicuous consumption ([Veblen, 2005a,b](#)) and resulting relative deprivation ([Frank, 2012](#)) are most likely to happen in urban areas; and we know that they are bad for us
- ◊ may intensify materialistic/consumerist orientation, and make us more stressed and overworked
- ◊ humans would not be that way outside of the city

reverse causality, self-selection

- ◊ do miserable people chose to live in cities?
- ◊ if anything, most energetic and able folks move to cities
 - maybe except that deviant/unconventional types choose city ([Wirth, 1938](#))
- ◊ neither it seems likely that happy move out of cities
- ◊ perhaps miserable people are stuck in city but i control for income, poverty

reverse causality, self-selection

- ◊ but definitely moving out of city can make you happy
 - this is where life (incl animals and humans) belongs
- ◊ and moving to city will make you unhappy
 - (noise/air pollution, stress, congestion, cognitive overload, housing prices, etc)

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