Very Quick Introduction, Quick Look at Data, Discussion of Your Happiness Research

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outline

quick data

discussion

- first go over syllabus
- then these slides here
- and then, once we have basic idea about the class
  - we'll do lengthy introduction of ourseleves
  - and discussion for the reminder of tonight

setup

- no pre-requisites, but we will go as fast as possible
- want this to be more conversation than lecture
- do interrupt me and ask questions

but wait, there are bad news :(

- i teach it for the first time
- it will be intensive–i will assign a lot of work
○ make sure you set aside plenty of time
○ do ask questions often:
  i tend to be overly parsimonious
  but i respond fast to emails
  asking questions early is important for your success!

today

- we'll do proper intro to the topic next week
- today just very quick intro
- and quick overview of data,
- so that you can get going with research from day 1
- ideally we'll figure out, or at least get closer
- to what you want to study in this class :)
- but first some super basic things

happiness, what is it?

- super-interdisciplinary; in this class:
- social psychology, geography, and sociology
- it's a cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole
- not domain (say neighb, financial satisfactions)
- not affective (happy at a moment)
- so technically properly called "life satisfaction"
- but typically used interchangeably with
- "happiness", and there is also a scientific term
- SWB: Subjective Wellbeing

how do we study it?

- typically in this class and in my world:
- if you cannot measure it with numbers, you cannot study it
- and there is no point collecting data, because it already has been collected!
- a typical survey question reads:
- "are you satisfied with your life as a whole"
- and is answered on a Likert scale say from 1 to 5 or 1 to 10
- it's reasonably valid/reliable
- and the we regress it on what we're interested in
- say age, education, income, inequality, poverty, etc

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if you cannot measure it, it doesn't exist

- depending on your research interests and skills, get familiar with at least one dataset from the next slide
  - (i use them and can also share with you my Stata code)
  - ie download it and play with it, read literature using it, eg google scholar "happiness, general social survey"

the datasets (more coming later)

- difficult but comprehensive containing almost everything panels (need to be great with data management):
  https://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/,
  https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/DSDR/
  add-health-data-guide.html and https://www.icpsr.umich.
  edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/21600/datadocumentation

- user friendly but still comprehensive cross sections:
  http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp
  http://gss.norc.org/

- interested in communities/localities, ie counties? use brfss!
  http://cdc.gov/brfss

- want to use any other data? interested in anything specific? let me know!

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this will be a great class!

- you'll become happier (really)
- because this is my area of research
- so i know a lot here
- and we can publish something together
  - i want to spend on this much time and have discussion like 30min
  - so that we can start figuring out collaborations asap
- first check out my research, and then each of you discuss yours `theaok.github.io`

2 questions about you

- what do you study or want to study?
- ◦ (we'll be able to link just about anything to SWB)
- what data are you using or want to use?
- ◦ (i am a "quant," and it's better if you are too)