

HAPPINESS AND GAMES OF CHANCE

When I began devoting myself to happiness research in the early 1970s, I felt very forlorn. The available scientific knowledge was extremely tenuous. An anthology "Anatomy of Happiness", published in 1971 in Germany, opened with the statement by the editor, Herbert Kunderl, "Happiness, so it appears for the time being, is not a subject for modern-day science." In the late 1960s, the psychologist Charlotte Buehler who had emigrated to the U.S. from Austria noted: "It is an interesting fact that American scientific literature hardly treated the experience of happiness at all."

The term "happiness" could not even be used without embarrassment in scientific work. Charlotte Buehler already noted that the younger American generation felt the use of the term happiness was ludicrous. Two hundred years earlier, a sentence written into the Declaration of Independence in this same country America was heard around the world and moved the world: the sentence about the human right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But now, in the midst of the 20th. century, a respected colleague, professor Norman Bradburn of the University of Chicago, decided to avoid the word "happiness" in the title of his book which, because of its content, would have had to be called "The Psychology of Happiness"; he said the term sounded too unscientific. "The Structure of Psychological Well-Being" was the title he eventually chose for his book, which appeared in 1969. We shall return to this; for in a certain sense it set a beginning. Bradburn was the first to systematically use the newly developed methods of representative survey research to find out what makes people happy or unhappy.

I myself immediately made up my mind to use the word "happiness" in unadulterated form. The first contribution I published on this topic, after giving a lecture in 1973 in Budapest, was an essay in 1977 for the festschrift for the sociologist Helmut Schelsky, and the title of this contribution read: Public Policy and Happiness.

At that time I did not even know what the root of the German word for happiness, "Glueck" was. But I had confidence in this word, the root of which can be traced back to the early Middle Ages. As late as the 17th century, the word was rather soft, as it were, and it was used in a broader sense than it is today.

I remember one of the saddest hours in my life. It was August of the year 1943. At the time, I was the youngest subeditor of the famous, 100 year-old Frankfurter Zeitung. The complete staff - editors, commercial clerks, technicians and workers - were called together to the big typesetting room. We were notified that, upon Hitler's orders, the newspaper would have to cease publication; it would appear for the last time on August 31. And then a sheet of paper was distributed, about the size of your hand, containing a poem from the year 1636, in the middle of the Thirty Years' War. Paul Fleming, title: "To thyself."

The first four lines read:

Be not faint-hearted, and be not forlorn.
Yield not to hap, and rise above envy.
Find satisfaction in thyself and consider it not a sorrow.
If hap, time and place conspire against thee.

Sei dennoch unverzagt, gib dennoch unverloren,
Weich keinem Gluecke nicht, steh hoeher als der Neid,
Vergnuege dich an dir und acht es fuer kein Leid,
Hat sich gleich wider dich Glueck, Ort und Zeit verschworen.

The word "Glueck" appears twice, and both times it is used in a different way than we would use it today : "Yield not to hap (Glueck)" and "If hap (Glueck), time and place conspire against thee."

Hap (Glueck) is used where to our mind misfortune should be the expression, or, even better, fate. The word happiness is not yet restricted to the positive, the light side of life. The word is still open to ups and downs as well. We find very much the same idea expressed in the German word for gambling and games of chance, "Gluecksspiele". Both elements are contained here - good luck and bad luck as it is dealt out in a game; we can leave the question open for now whether the game itself here stands for chance or for fate.

What can be said about the relationship of happiness and games of chance? (The German language naturally calls to mind this relationship in the words Glueck and Glueckspiel). One could start with the statement that being happy and having luck are not the same. Again, the German language suggests a similarity by using "Glueck" for both; in the English language, the relationship is not nearly as pronounced. I am certain, however, that in both languages we would easily find agreement if we said that having luck and being happy do not amount to the same thing. But is this really true? At the time we took our dancing lessons, we used to find consolation in the adage: "Unlucky at games - lucky in love". Thus, are not having luck and being lucky the same thing?

Let us turn to happiness to begin with. If in the early 1970s it was correct to say that science, for whatever reasons, simply bypassed the subject, this has changed greatly in the meantime.

All of a sudden, there is a social science literature on the subject of happiness that is rapidly growing. As often happens in the history of science, expeditions have set out almost simultaneously from different places to reach the same destination. Rather than being a mere coincidence, this simultaneity ap-

pears to have had plausible reasons. With the advent of the fifties, sixties and seventies, many people in the industrial nations were disappointed in their expectations, which had taken the place of a quest for the sources of happiness. To be sure, there was the adage "Money doesn't make you happy; it only makes you sleep easier at night", but nonetheless, at first people still held on to the simple notion that a better, i.e. happier life means more prosperity, more security and less work. But when all these things came true, disappointment spread in the industrial nations, subjectively as well as objectively. Using the methods of survey research, it was established that the number of people who termed themselves happy was not on the increase. The difference between satisfaction and happiness became obvious. If satisfaction was increasing, why wasn't happiness? In surveys, you can hardly find anybody who says he is happy but not satisfied. But there are many people who say they are satisfied but who do not term themselves happy. When people in industrial nations as well as in developing ones were asked about the future, the optimism of the latter contrasted with the apathy prevailing in the former. It was as if the ceiling has been reached and there is no way to go any higher. If the simple and immediately plausible answer is no longer acceptable, i.e. what counts in the pursuit of happiness is more prosperity, more security and less work - what then is the answer?

There is still another development which may also have provided a stimulus for more serious and more consistent research into the human sense of happiness. The increasingly perfected ways the modern social state can intervene in the lives of individuals raises doubts about whether people of this or future generations can be forced into happiness. It would be desirable for lawmakers who possess such powerful means of taking action to start out from correct assumptions about human nature. There is a warning proverb from antiquity: "The tyrant laughs, the populace cries."

It would be useful if politicians familiarized themselves with what happiness research appears to have established most firmly: the recognition of the great

influence work has on psychological well-being and the importance of a subjective sense of freedom. The saying "A man's mind is his kingdom" confirms this, and as to the opposite positions on work as a bane and work as a boon, research results support the latter much more than the former. Established most firmly means that different research groups working with different methods have reached the same result.

Happiness research is not methodically simple. The answers given to direct questions and, to an even greater extent, the answers given to questions about the reasons for being happy or unhappy are indistinct. If asked directly whether they are happy, the majority of people in Europe and America answer "half and half". That is why the information sought must be ascertained additionally by indicators that are easier to ask about or to observe and that are empirical equivalents of the information that is being sought. The strong methodological development of happiness research over the last years begins at this point.

Four approaches of happiness research can be distinguished at present. Let me briefly characterize the four approaches. All of them employ the method of representative surveys as part of the investigation procedure, but use different indicators.

1. Comprehensive interviewing of people on their ideas about quality of life and intensive mathematical and statistical analysis of data. The tools are a "delightful-terrible" scale for numerous activities and a typology of respondents by replies given at the beginning and the end of an interview to the question about how happy their awareness of life is (Andrews/Wirhey).
2. Asking question about positive and negative feeling states, reconstruction of an affective balance scale from the replies instead of a self-rating as

being either happy or unhappy. Investigation into the relationship to behavior patterns and life circumstances (Bradburn).

3. Using pocket beepers which they carry with them, representatively selected persons create snapshots of their location, activities, circumstances and condition when they are requested to at certain times chosen by random methods. The statistical analysis of these data shows which circumstances contribute to a more or to a less happy condition (Csikszentmihalyi).
4. Physiognomic characteristics, facial and body language are employed as indicators of a happy or a less happy feeling and the connection with qualities, lifestyles, attitudes, etc. is analyzed (Noelle-Neumann).

The affect balance scale developed by Norman Bradburn, University of Chicago, which measures with the help of ten indicators, has a peculiar stability, although the individual statements on which it is based appear to be almost perfunctory, superficial and highly subjective. The five positive and five negative feeling states are described in the following. They are presented together with results from surveys conducted almost simultaneously in the U.S. and the Federal Republic of Germany (1973/74). As compared to the first measurement made a decade earlier in the U.S., in 1963, the frequency distributions changed to an amazingly limited extent. In the comparison between the U.S. and West Germany the differences are mostly relatively low, in some points they are considerable.

Affect Balance Scale According to Norman Bradburn

QUESTION: "We want to find out how people generally feel today - how have you felt recently, for example?"

	1974 USA (n = 7954)	July 1973 West Germany (n = 1041)	Dec. 1978/ Jan. 1979 West Germany (n = 1894)
<u>Positive feelings:</u>	%	%	%
I was pleased about having accomplished something	82	91	84
Proud because someone complimented me on something I had done	66	67	63
Particularly excited or interested in something	64	53	55
I felt that things were going my way	69	49	48
I felt on top of the world	34	35	30
	<u>315</u>	<u>295</u>	<u>280</u>
<u>Negative feelings:</u>			
I felt so restless that I couldn't sit long in a chair	45	41	41
I felt depressed or very unhappy during the past few weeks	28	43	37
I felt very lonely or remote from other people	25	33	28
I was terribly bored	35	23	25
I was upset because someone criticized me	19	27	22
	<u>152</u>	<u>167</u>	<u>153</u>

Sources: USA - Norman Bradburn
West Germany - Allensbach Archives, Surveys 1735 and 3063

Bradburn proves it is not the number of positive and negative influences and feelings that is decisive for a happy or unhappy state of being but the balance of what predominates and the extent of the preponderance of positive and negative feelings in the balance.

For the subject of "feeling state research" it is first of all important which factors are included in this scale. "Glad to have accomplished something": this statement represents work on the scale, indicating that work is one of the factors that influence psychological well-being. The factor analysis shows

high positive correlations with the four other positive and markedly negative correlations with the negative feeling states.

Csikszentmihalyi comes to the same conclusions with the instrument of "snapshots" requested by beepers. The test persons, who have with them a pad with a brief questionnaire that takes two minutes or so to complete, note down their mood and many details about what they are doing on a pre-choice scale. Those who characterize their work positively show a distinctly higher overall well-being. Csikszentmihalyi discovered a process which he terms flow experience.

He first encounters it among artists, mountain-climbers and architects; then he finds out that people from all walks of life, all age groups are familiar with this experience, an experience of complete forgetting of self in what one is doing. What one is doing and one's ego flow into one another and merge; hence, the expression "flow experience". This experience is accompanied by a feeling of great well-being, and is most likely to occur at work. Those people who are capable of having this experience relatively frequently work with greater concentration, according to the snapshot notes. They note down much less frequently that they are at their job but are talking or passing the time some other way rather than working. Csikszentmihalyi measures all this among workers, so it does not apply to higher professions exclusively. More than 80 percent of the test persons in a group of workers have had the flow experience. Those persons who say that they have it at least once a week work about half an hour longer per day according to the snapshot notes. Their ability to concentrate, Csikszentmihalyi establishes, also carries over to their other activities outside of work.

Bradburn's affect balance scale lacks the element of "subjective feeling of freedom", freedom to make decisions.

Csikszentmihalyi deems it so important that it is measured for each snapshot recording in the brief questionnaire according to three categories:

I am doing what I'm doing voluntarily I'm
doing it because I have to
I'm doing it because I don't have anything else to do right now

The connection between a good mood and voluntary activity can be distinctly proven.

Both results of the American researchers were confirmed in West Germany, too, using the instrument of the physiognomic expression test: the connection between work one likes to do and joy in working and the connection between subjective freedom to make decisions and psychological well-being in all social classes is substantiated in detail in the aforementioned contribution "Public Policy and Happiness", festschrift for Helmut Schelsky. The Allensbach approach, which has been pursued since 1973, is particularly disconcerting. For each interview, the interviewers make observations on the respondent's facial expression and gestures. This approach is supported by a study published in 1972 by three American anthropologists, Ekman, Friesen, Ellsworth: "Emotion in the Human Face". The main thesis, empirically well established, reads that the expression of happiness in the human face has universal meaning. Peoples and races who have never had any contact with each other can tell by the facial expression whether someone from a different people or a different race is happy or unhappy.

Only one of the ten expression characteristics of the Allensbach tests - which are easy for the interviewer to note down and do not require training - is used here, to keep this description brief. This is the note: all in all, the respondent looks quite cheerful, or, the opposite: does not look so cheerful. As in the American investigations, conducted according to completely different methods, one result - unexpected for many - is that men and women appear to be equally happy.

Let us explain the method by means of an example. At the end of many interviews the question is asked: "Did you find this interview interesting?" and

"How did you like this interview all in all?" The result, according to findings from spring 1979: 22 percent of the cheerful looking persons found the interview "very interesting", 12 percent of the not-so-cheerful ones found it so. The difference recurred for all age groups. 70 percent of the cheerful looking persons, 48 percent of the not-so-cheerful ones liked the interview "a lot" or "very much".

Here one encounters an influence which has great significance for psychological well-being, namely interest. Bradburn already included in his scale the feeling "I was particularly excited or interested in something" and in the negative part, "I was terribly bored". Csikszentmihalyi had his test persons note in their snapshots how interesting they found the activity they were actually pursuing and he found the connection between interest and a good mood confirmed. What rouses interest, what kills it?

It is striking that cheerful looking persons produce more associations in the interview when they are asked about the ideas they associate with a certain city, or a certain profession or a certain political concept. This points to imagination, inventiveness. In answer to the question which persons they had identified with in the TV series Holocaust, where they had had the feeling "that could have been me", the responses from cheerful persons indicated more frequent identification.

Cheerful persons have a better recollection; the not-so-cheerful ones more frequently answer questions from various areas with "I can't remember." It is to be surmised that there is a disposition, a development over time behind this complex phenomenon of "interest" which appears to be so closely linked with a happy life. One assumes the faculty of observation, experiences, knowledge, held by a more powerful, better trained recollection, all of which allows for new associations of ideas, imaginativeness, imagination -and this is what seems to constitute real wealth.

You often hear people say that children ought to be able to play alone. Apparently this also holds true for grown-ups. Csikszentmihalyi begins his inquiry into happiness in the early 1970s with investigations into playing. And he comes up with the observation that someone who is able to work with concentration also tends to be able to play well. This is not always the case, there are no absolute if-then connections, but the probability is higher. The concentration with which work is done, spills over, as it were and encompasses the other areas of life as well, not always, but there is a better chance.

Here we are confronted with a peculiar finding. Haven't we frequently heard that work and enjoyment of life are opposites? The Germans have traditionally been regarded as a people who work hard rather than enjoy life. After World War II, the saying appeared in our country: "You don't live to work, but you work in order to live." If a survey were conducted today, a high percentage of the German population would agree with this thesis. And yet it can be shown to be false. For it suggests that work and enjoyment of life are alternatives. But this is just not the case, as the results of happiness research show. The results of the research conducted by Csikszentmihalyi show the dynamics on which the connection between enjoyment of work and of life is based. During work one is not really especially happy, one often feels that it is quite a strain. But, you rest easier after a good day's work, as the German proverb goes. Or, for our subject here, we could say: after joyfully and well-done work one feels much better than without.

And here we are confronted with our subject again, that is, games of chance and gambling. When the Allensbach Institute was first commissioned by the Northwestern Lottery in North Rhine-Westphalia to find out, in a representative population survey, who takes part in games of chance, the lottery or the football polls, we found what was over and over again confirmed - in our last 1980 survey as well: It is not lazy people and those who do not like to work who take part in games of chance, hoping to strike it rich without effort. Quite the contrary, active people, people who take more than average satis-

faction from their work and their lives; people who make long-term plans -all of these play games of chance more than the average.

For someone who thinks along conventional lines, this is very hard to explain. If the Germans are asked about their notion of a typical participant in games of chance, the top items on the positive side are daring and adventurous and, on the negative side, greedy and frivolous. 48 percent conceive of the typical participants in games of chance as "poor people" - a notion that can be clearly refuted by survey results. 45 percent feel that participants in games of chance are "unstable"; only 38 percent characterize them as "industrious, hard-working" ⁺⁾

Gambling as a reward, opium for the people, that is the way Orwell viewed it when he described 1984: "The Lottery, with its weekly pay-out of enormous prizes, was the one public event to which the proles paid serious attention. It was probable that there were some millions of proles for whom the Lottery was the principal if not the only reason for remaining alive.

But now, according to the results of social research, it is not the people who lack interest, the dull, the passive and those who are incapable of acting independently who prefer to play the lottery, but rather the active ones, those who make plans of their own. The person who works well, also plays well, Csikszentmihalyi had found. How can that be explained?

Science offers very little assistance. What we need to understand better than in the past is the relationship between proficiency and happiness, proficiency and luck, proficiency and fate. Modern science is still evasive when it comes to the subject of fate.

Let us take another look at the poem from the time of the Thirty Years' War:

⁺⁾ George Orwell, 1984, Penguin Books, New York, 1949, pp. 71-72.

Be not faint-hearted, and be not forlorn. Yield not to hap, and rise
above envy, Find satisfaction in thyself and consider it not a
sorrow. If hap, time and place conspire against thee.

That which grieves and pleases you, deem everything chosen.
Bow to thy fate, and do not have regrets.
Do what must be done, before thou art forced.
For what thou hopest will always be borne.

Sei dennoch unverzagt, gib dennoch unverloren,
Weich keinem Gluecke nicht, steh hoeher als der Neid,
Vergnuege dich an dir and acht es fuer kein Leid,
Hat sich gleich wider dich Glueck, Ort und Zeit verschworen.

Was dich betruebt und labt, halt alles fuer erkoren, Nimm dein
Verhaengnues an, lass alles unbereut. Tu, was getan muss sein, und
eh man dir's gebeut. Was du noch hoffen kannst, das wird noch stets
geboren.

For our subject we can take from these lines how the two things are associated: "Bow to thy
fate, deem everything chosen" - that is the one. And "Find satisfaction in thyself" - "Do
what must be done, before thou art forced."

Do feeling happy, being happy and having luck go hand in hand more than we thought in the
first place? If one goes back even further, more than one hundred years before the time of
the poet of the Thirty Years' War, one encounters Machiavelli, for whom the relationship
between fortuna and virtu was a main subject. If you think of a peaceful river, says
Machiavelli, which a sudden tempest turns into a raging torrent that makes bridges collapse
and sweeps away people, trees and houses, then this is a stroke of fate perpetrated

by unpredictable fortuna, who deals out fortune and misfortune. If one uses the peaceful times when fate is in abeyance, for instance, to construct dams against the river, or to build a canal, then one is doing what humanity can do, taking precautions, making use of one's capabilities, developing virtue. We cannot evade the stroke of fate, but we can try, as far as possible, to attract fortune rather than misfortune. If we think of the participants in games of chance we know from the representative surveys, people who tend to be active and hard-working, we can see now that they want to give luck a chance, in addition to relying on their own hard work.

You might say that one has to take an active part in searching out happiness oneself. Ability and luck, being happy and having luck might tend to come together then, rather than separating, even though they are not the same thing. Or does our experience teach us that the person who has luck tends to be unhappy?

The poem that I have used as a leitmotiv has a third verse yet. It reads:

Why complain, why praise? One's happiness and unhappiness
 Is in oneself. Look at everything,
 For all this is in thyself. Leave thy vain delusion,
 And before thou goest ahead, go back into thyself.
 He who is his own master and can be master of himself,
 Is master of the world and all in it.

Was klag, was lob man doch? Sein Unglueck und sein Gluecke
 Ist ihm ein jeder selbst. Schau alle Sachen an,
 Dies alles ist in dir. Lass deinen eiteln Wahn,
 Und eh du foerder gehst, so geh in dich zuruecke.
 Wer sein selbst Meister ist und sich beherrschen kann,
 Dem ist die weite Welt und alles untertan.

The poem, characterized by resignation to fate, ends with triumphant self-determination.

Tracing the roots of words is not a particularly exciting activity for most people. But I cannot resist sharing the derivation of the word "Glueck". The word goes back to the language of medieval craftsmen. When someone had made a pot with a lid that fit perfectly, this was called a Geluekke.

I stated that even before I was familiar with the root, I had faith in the word "Glueck". Perhaps the reason why is clearer now. The root of the word includes both proficiency, the craftsman's ability, and luck, some of it fate, some of it chance. And, in order to be happy, all of this - what you are and what you do and how you live - must come together perfectly, as perfectly as the way the lid fits the pot in a well-made piece of work.