Chapter 1
PLAN OF THIS COLLECTION

Text Ruut Veenhoven, June 2020

1/1 CALL FOR GREATER HAPPINESS

All humans want a satisfying life for themselves and their children and this appears in high ranking of happiness in the value hierarchy of students all over the world (Diener et al 2000). Individually people seek ways to a more satisfying life and in Western societies this quest manifests in soaring sales of 'how-to-be-happy books', such as 'The art of happiness' by the Dalai Lama (1998). It also reflects in the development of life-coaching businesses. Citizens in western societies also call on governments for improvement of required social conditions and 85% of the British agree with the statement that 'a governments prime aim should be achieving the greatest happiness of the people, not the greatest wealth' (BBC 2006, question 14).

Consequently, interest in happiness is rising among policy makers. Happiness is a new topic on the political agenda, next to sustainability. A recent manifestation of this trend is the international conference on Happiness and Wellbeing held at the UN headquarters in New York in April 2012 (Thinley 2012), which was followed in June 2014 by a decision of the general assembly to celebrate an 'International Day of Happiness' on March 20th every year.

1/1.1 Ideological context

At first sight this interest in happiness is something quite new, but it is the revival of a long-standing creed. The idea that there is a moral obligation to advance human happiness is a fruit of the European 'Enlightenment', an intellectual movement that took a position against religious views that had dominated thinking in the European Middle Ages. One of the contested views was that happiness can be found only in the afterlife and that an earthly life serves only as an entrance test to Heaven. The enlightened opinion was that happiness is possible on Earth and that we should not renounce it. Another contested view was that morality roots in divine revelation, and in particular in the 'Ten Commandments'. Enlightened thinkers came to see morality more as a matter of human agreement and discussed the intellectual foundations for social contracts.

Much of this thought is voiced by Jeremy Bentham (1789) in his famous book On Morals and Legislation, in which he argues that the good and bad of actions should be judged by their effects on human happiness. In his view, the best thing to

do is that which results in the “greatest happiness, for the greatest number.” This moral creed is called ‘the greatest happiness principle’ and is also known as ‘utilitarianism’.

This secular ideology met with considerable resistance. In the 18the century the opposition came mainly from the churches, which were still quite powerful. In the 19th century the greatest happiness principle was met with reservations in the liberal and socialist emancipation movements that were more interested in freedom and equality than in happiness. In the early 20th century considerable opposition came from the then-virulent nationalism that laid more emphasis on the glory of the nation than on the happiness of its inhabitants. All these ideologies lost power in the late 20th century, and partly for reason we have seen a revival of Bentham’s greatest happiness principle. Rising prosperity was another factor in this ideological shift. Pressing problems, such as poverty and illiteracy, were well solved in western nations, and the removal of the ‘negatives’ gave room to ‘positive’ goals’ on the political agenda.

1/ 1.2 Need for knowledge

Calls for greater happiness are often accompanied by recommendations about the way to achieve that. At the individual level such advice typically involves ‘alternative’ ways of life, such as consuming less and meditating more, while at the political level greater happiness for a greater number is seen in social reform, such as less economic competition and more family life (e.g. Layard 2005).

Yet a rational pursuit of happiness should be based on established fact rather than on ideological belief. As such, the pursuit of greater happiness is like the pursuit of better health. In the past we have learned a lot from empirical research on conditions for good health and, using that information, we live now longer than ever before in human history. Likewise, orienting on scientific knowledge about happiness will probably mean that we will also live happier long lives.

Information for private choice

We are faced with many choices in our private lives, next to the many minor daily choices, such as what to eat for dinner; we also must make major life-choices, such as having children and accepting a job abroad. Deciding such major choices is inevitably based on assumptions about future happiness

Limitations to information

Deciding such major choices is inevitably based on assumptions about future happiness and these assumptions are often wrong. As a result, we often ‘miss-predict’ our future happiness. For example: a person may accept a better paying job at a longer distance from home, expecting that the higher pay will buy more

happiness, but end up less happy because of an unforeseen loss of happiness due to the longer time spent commuting (Stutzer & Frey 2008).

In his 'Stumbling on Happiness' Daniel Gilbert (2006) reviews several of the cognitive mechanisms involved in misprediction of our happiness, such as our tendency to predict future happiness on the basis of what we remember we have enjoyed in the past. We also must deal cultural sources of misinformation, such as faulty folk wisdom and misleading advertising.

Put into the words of economists, the happiness we anticipate when making a choice is expected utility (or decision utility), and the happiness we feel later because of this choice is experienced utility. The observed discrepancy illustrates the limitations of the assumption that Homo Economicus is fully informed about his or her preferences (Kahneman & Thaler 2006). In this view a lot of happiness can be gained (utility optimized) if we are better informed about the consequences of our choices.

Information required

What information do we need? A first thing to know is how such choices tend to work out for the happiness of most people, second thing is how such choices have worked out for people like you and a third thing is how it does work out for your own happiness once you have made that choice.

Example of occupational choice

Most of us must choose how to make for a living. In deciding on an occupation, we will want to know how much we will earn and how happy we will be in that job. We are mostly better informed about the former than about the latter. We can make a more educated guess about how happy we will be in this work when we have information about the average happiness of people currently working in that job. Once we have chosen what type of work we want to do, we can also choose how much we work we want to do and that begs the question of whether we will be happier in a part-time job than in full-time work. At the end of our working life we are faced with the choice of when to stop working and at that stage we would like to know how well those who have taken early pension are doing against those who continued working until the mandatory age of retirement. Likewise, it is worth knowing whether your working conditions will make a difference, such as being an independent entrepreneur or in paid employment and working in a large company or a small organization. When making these choices, it is also helpful to know how such choices have worked out for other people, in particular for people like you. Still another choice is whether to go for job advancement or not, and in this context, it is worth knowing whether the chances for happiness are better on the upper rungs of the social ladder. Are successful people typically happier? Does occupational

success buy happiness for people like you?

Information for public choice

If a government decides to pursue greater happiness in their country, the government typically wants to know whether there are pockets of unhappiness, or, whether there is any truth in the claims about unhappiness categories of citizens advanced by organized advocacy.

Taking a broader view, governments would like to know what the drivers of differences in happiness among citizens are: in particular to what extent these correspond with things over which a government has some control, such as income, schooling, health care and safety. Again, this typically involves the sifting of competing claims of special interests presented by lobbyists. Interior struggles also call for information about winners and losers of policies, for example, whether emancipation of women will come at the expense of the happiness of men and children.

In an even wider perspective, which some governments take, questions about societal conditions for happiness arise. What is the secret of the happiest countries, such as Denmark? Is it in institutional things such as a strong welfare state? Is it in the political regime, such as interest groups having much voice? Or is it policies, such as promotion of equal rights for men and women? What is the role of the well-being professions, such as psychologists and life-coaches?

1/2 STATE OF KNOWLEDGE ON CONDITIONS FOR HAPPINESS

1/2.1 Rising research output

Over the ages the subject has absorbed a lot of thought. Happiness was a major theme in early Greek philosophy and gained renewed interest in the later West-European Enlightenment. The philosophic tradition has produced a lot of ideas, but little operational knowledge. In fact, philosophers have raised more questions than they have answered. Most of the controversies they have raised could not be solved by the logic of reasoning. Settlement based on reality checks has long been encumbered by lack of adequate research techniques.

The advent of the social sciences in the 20th century promised a breakthrough. New methods for empirical research opened the possibility to identify conditions for happiness inductively and even to test theories. This instigated a lot of research, most of which has been embedded in the newly established specialization of 'social indicators research' and 'health related quality of life research'.

To date (2020), some 7000 empirical studies on conditions for happiness have been done, in the beginning mainly as a side issue in studies about health and aging, but currently also as a main subject. This stream of research is growing exponentially as can be seen on figure 1/2/1. Reviews of this research literature have been published by Argyle (1987), Diener (1999), Dolan et. al. (2006) and Veenhoven (1984, 1991, 2015).

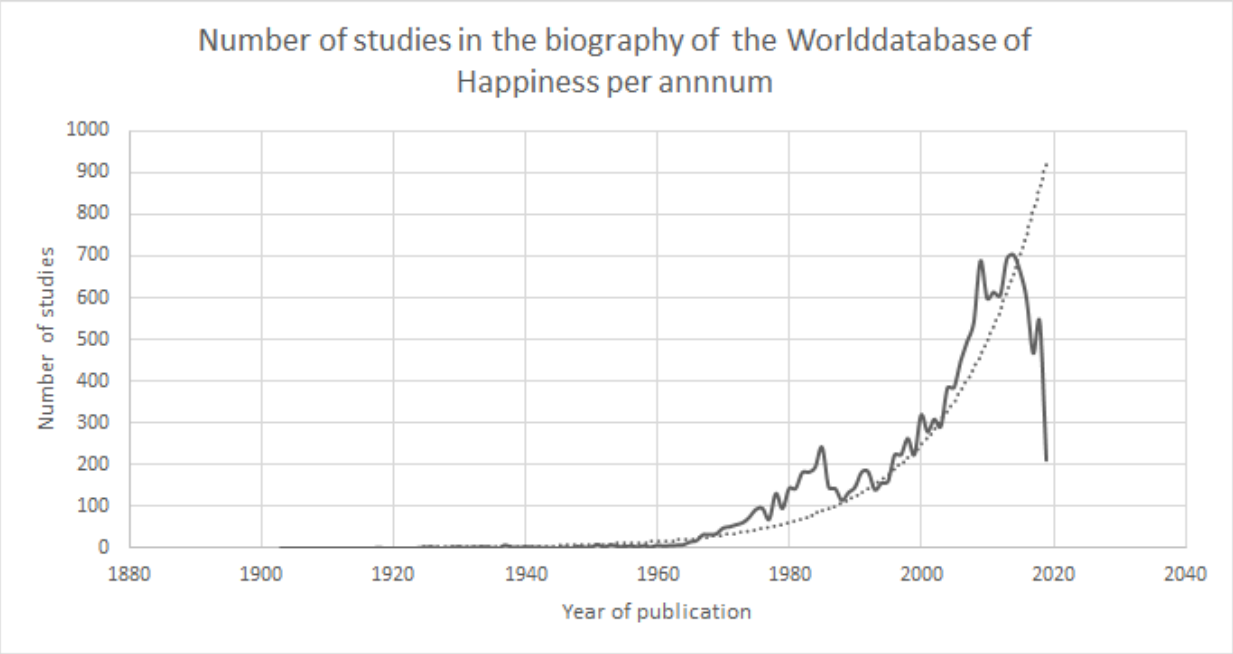
1/2.2 Stagnating understanding

As yet, this recent empirical research on happiness has not crystallized into a sound body of knowledge. Preliminary questions about conceptualization and measurement are now well solved, but the understanding of determinants and consequences of happiness is still very incomplete and tentative. There are several reasons why the growing stream of empirical research has not yet brought greater understanding. In addition to complexities in the subject matter, there are several practical problems.

Lack of overview

The first and most simple reason for the lack of progress is lack of coordination. There is high redundancy in the research effort; the same issues are investigated repeatedly, in the same way. As a result, the range of variables considered is still rather small and methodological progress slow. A related problem is that research findings are very scattered. Most observations are in fact bibliographically irretrievable. Consequently, many of the findings get lost.

Figure 1.2.1
Rise of research output on happiness[1]



Conceptual confusion

The second reason is the confusion of tongues. As there is no consensus on use of words, it is quite difficult to select the data that pertain to happiness as defined here. Moreover, the matter is measured in different ways. Getting an overview of the research findings requires first selecting studies that measured happiness as defined here, and next a grouping by comparable indicators.

Little view on contingencies

A more basic reason for the stagnation lies in the dominant research approach. The bulk of empirical happiness studies consist of cross-sections countries. Typically, investigators try to identify universal conditions for happiness using their local correlates. For instance, the observation in American studies that the happy tend to

[1] The decline in the solid line around 2020 is due to a backlog in entering recent publications

have high incomes is seen to mean that money buys happiness everywhere and that the basic underlying mental process is social comparison.

Yet, conditions for happiness are probably not the same at all times and at all places. Neither are its consequences. Though there are obviously several universal requirements for a happy life (such as food and possibly meaning), most effects seem to be contingent on characteristics of the person and situation. For instance, happiness correlates strongest to income in poor and socially unequal countries, and most so among materialistic persons. Usually, such contingencies cannot be detected in single studies in one country. They can be identified only if many studies are compared in a systematic meta-analysis. This requires first that the available data be compiled.

Little view on causality

Lastly, correlations say little about cause and effect. If rich Americans tend to be happier, this does not prove that money buys happiness, because happiness can also boost earning chances. Separation of cause and effect requires panel studies and experiments. Such studies are scarce as yet, and the results difficult to retrieve. Progress requires at least that these scattered findings be brought together.

1/2.3 Growing need for research compilation

A main priority is therefore to gather the available research findings on happiness and to present these in a comparable format. Without a complete and detailed view on the available data, there will be little cumulation of knowledge. This need for a focused archive of research-findings becomes ever more pressing. The higher the pile of research reports the greater the need for a good data collection.

Now that more than 7000 studies have been published, the heap of data has grown too big to be handled by narrative research reviews. At the same time the stockpile becomes ever more suitable for quantitative research synthesis. Yet research-synthesis requires much investment in gathering of relevant research and in homogenizing the findings. Investment is particularly high if one wants to cover all the world's research. Such investments are made in capital-intensive fields such as pharmacological research, but uncommonly in the social sciences. The few meta-analyses of empirical happiness research are based on small collections, e.g. Stock et. al. (1983). As yet, all have been one-time shots, leaving no common database to build on. Hence each new investigator must make a new start. Not surprisingly few do so.

1/2.4 Limitations of research synthesis

Summarizing research findings sounds an easier task than it is. Several problems arise when using this methodology.

One of the problems sits in the *conceptual focus*. What precisely should be summarized? Narrative reviewers are often not very precise and fail to provide a clear definition of the subject matter, see for example the review of research on 'successful aging' by Martinson & Berridge (2015). Quantitative reviewers are in most cases more specific conceptually but do not always focus on exactly the same, see for example the meta-analyses of research on internet use and 'well-being' by Huang (2010) and Cikrikci (2016). As focal concepts shift, most such studies are a one-time assessment rather than a step in an ongoing accumulation of knowledge in the field.

A related problem is that research syntheses tend to be *selective* in several ways. Most studies limit to findings reported in scientific journals and this involves various biases, such as underrepresentation of findings on non-differences and neglect of findings that do not fit fashionable theories or are made by people from outside scholars' own communities. Likewise, findings from modern English-speaking nations are typically overrepresented, which limits our view on cultural variation and change over time.

A related problem is that synthetic studies are mostly *incomplete*. Their coverage is typically restricted to what one scholar can handle within the restrictions of teaching load and a temporary grant. For instance, it is almost impossible to cover all the research on job-satisfaction.

In addition, research money is more easily found to produce new findings than for the accumulation of past research data. As a result, there is not only little research synthesis being done *little continuity* in that strand. Synthetic studies are typically one-time assessments that soon become outdated. Consequently, research syntheses typically do not build on each other. There is little accumulation of knowledge in the research strand that aims at accumulation.

At the same time, it is also difficult to build on earlier synthetic studies because they tend to be *badly documented*. Review articles have long lists of references, but typically provide little detail about the research findings they summarize. Scientific journals do not provide the room for such detail and book publishers tend not to be enthusiastic about using paper to print all these details for a small readership.

1/3 TECHNIQUE OF A 'FINDINGS ARCHIVE'

Much of the above-mentioned problems can be dealt with using the technique of a 'Findings archive', denoted as a 'support system for research synthesis'.

1/3.1 What that is

A 'Findings archive' is a collection of empirical research findings on a phenomenon, in the case at hand here 'happiness'. Detailed descriptions of this technique can be found with Veenhoven 1984, 2004, 2009 and 2020.

1/3.2 Building blocks

Research findings are described in a standard format and terminology on electronic *finding pages*, which can be sorted in various ways, such as on subject (e.g. relation with income), population (e.g. poor countries), and method (e.g. experimental study). Pages are organized in *collections*, from which *reports* are generated. Reports are bundles of pages on a subject. This organizational structure is presented in Figure 1/3.2.

1/3.2.1 Finding pages

At the heart of the findings archive are *finding pages* consisting of a standardized summary of a quantitative research observation. Two kinds of findings are involved: a) 'distributional findings', that is, observations on the spreading of the focus variable (happiness) in a population, and b) 'correlational findings' about the degree to which other things than the focus variable go together with it.

Distributional finding page

A page of this kind describes how happy people are in a population, as observed using a measure of happiness. Next to the frequency distribution, the page reports two summary statistics: mean and standard deviation. Information about the people

under investigation is taken from a 'study page', information on the measure of happiness is taken from a 'happiness measure page' and information on the original research report from a 'publication page' (cf. section 1/3.1). An example of such a page on a distributional finding can be found here.

Correlational finding page

This kind of page contains the description of the observed statistical associations between happiness and something else, called a 'correlate', in a particular public and using a particular measure of happiness. The page is partly built from the above-mentioned pages on a particular 'publication', 'study' and 'happiness measure'. Additional elements are description of the correlate and the observed statistical association.

The description of the correlate consists of three parts: 1) the name by which the correlate is called in the original research report, 2) the name we assigned using our classification of correlational subjects and 3) detail about the measurement of the correlate. Our subject classification is based on what is measured, and disregards theoretical meanings imputed by the original investigator. Detail about the subject classification of correlates is found in chapter 5 of this introductory text.

Description of the observed statistical association of the correlate with happiness involves the following elements: the *statistics* used for quantifying the degree of association and for assessing statistical significance, the *values* obtained in the study and elaborations *or specifications*. An example of a page with a correlational finding can be found here.

Accompanying pages

These 'finding pages' draw on accompanying pages on 1) a particular publication, 2) a particular study and, 3) a particular measure of happiness, which also use a standard format and a standard vocabulary.

Pages on an empirical study. If a publication reports an empirical investigation that used an acceptable measure of happiness, that investigation is described briefly on a 'study page'. Standard descriptives are the population under investigation (i.e. public, place, and time), sampling, response rate, number of participants (N) and method of observation, such as face-to-face interview or web questionnaire.

On each study page is a reference to the publication from which the information is drawn, when possible with a link to the full text. Study pages also have links to the pages discussed below regarding the 'measure of happiness' used and the observed 'distributional' and 'correlational' findings. An example of a study page is found here.

Pages on a measure of happiness. Pages of this kind describe a way of measurement of happiness, mostly survey questions. Such pages present the full text of a question and answer categories and in the case of multiple questions, also how a sum-score is computed. If available, texts in other languages are added.

These measure-pages also have links to all the studies in which this measure is used and to the findings obtained with that measure in each of these studies. An example of such a page can be found here.

1/3.2.2 Collections

The above-mentioned pages are gathered in collections. The World Database of Happiness has five such collections: 1) the Bibliography of Happiness, 2) Directory of Happiness Investigators, 3) the collection of 'Measures of Happiness, 4) the collection of 'Distributional findings' and 5) the collection of 'Correlational Findings. The way in which these collections are linked is depicted in the flowchart on the start page of the website a screenshot of which is presented in Figure 1/3.2

.

1/3.2.3 Reports

Selections of pages are assembled automatically from each of the above-mentioned collections and presented in 'reports. Two kinds of reports are particularly useful in research synthesis: 1) 'publication reports' and 2) 'finding-reports'.

Publication-reports

Reports of this kind list the publications on a subject, using the subject classification of the Bibliography of Happiness. Unlike the *finding-reports* mentioned below, these publication-reports cover all that is written on a subject, not only research reports but also literature studies and theoretical treatises. Among the research reports mentioned, the *publication-reports* do not limit to publications on studies that used acceptable measures of happiness (cf. section 2.4), but also contain publications on studies that are not included in the finding collections. As such, *publication-reports* are designed to a complete overview of the literature, which is helpful in narrative research synthesis. A list of publications on happiness and environmental pollution can be generated by the following search on subject in the Bibliography: *CORRELATES OF HAPPINESS >> Situational correlates of happiness >>Physical environment >> Natural environment >>**Pollution***.

Finding-reports

Reports of this kind are more focused and limit to empirical observations yielded using an accepted measure of happiness, that is, one of the indicators listed in the *collection* of 'Measures of Happiness' (cf. chapter 2, sections 2.2 and 2.4). Finding

reports may list distributional findings and/or correlational findings.

Figure 1/3.1
Building blocks of the findings archive

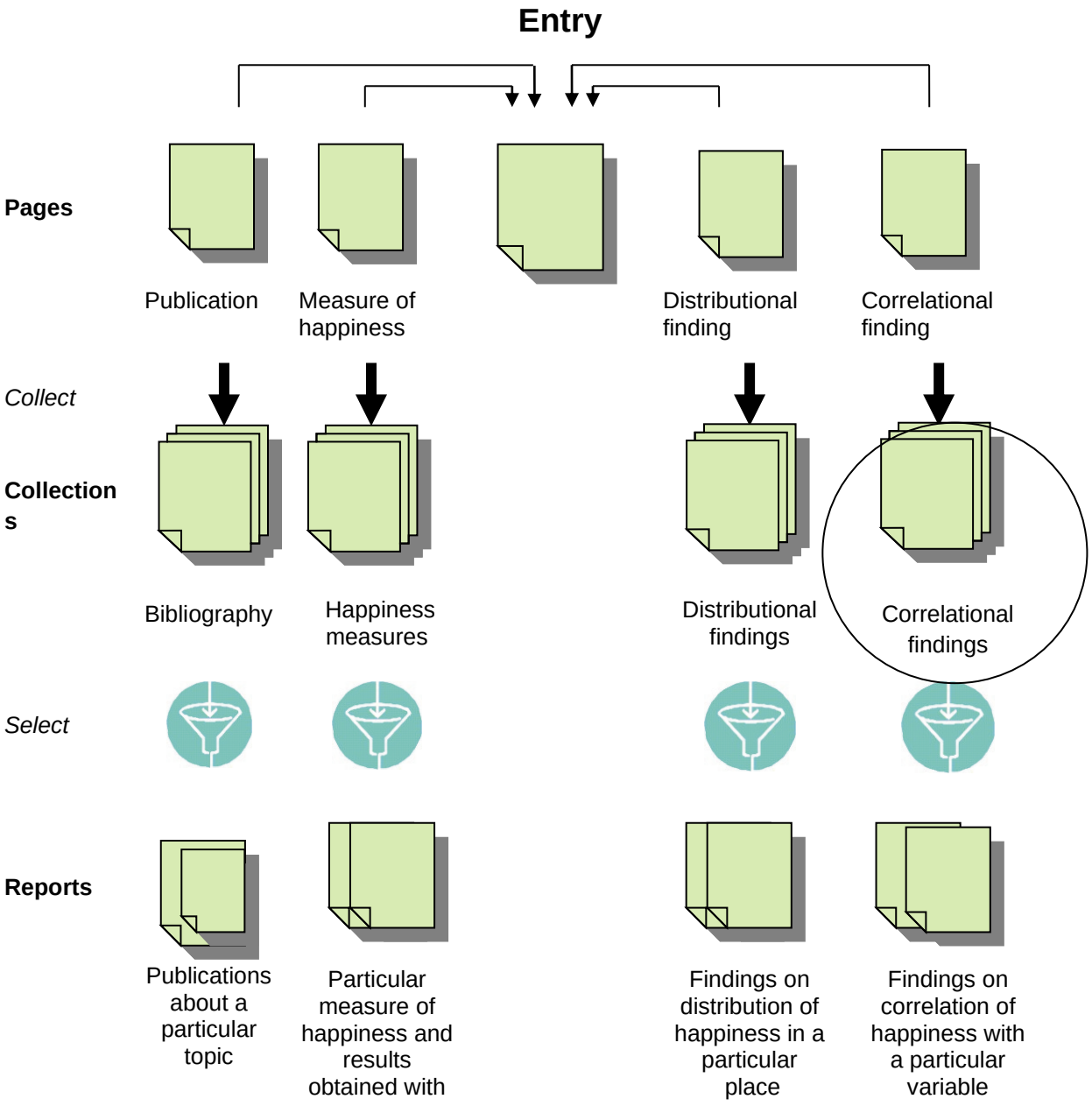


Figure 1/3.2
Structure of the World Database of Happiness

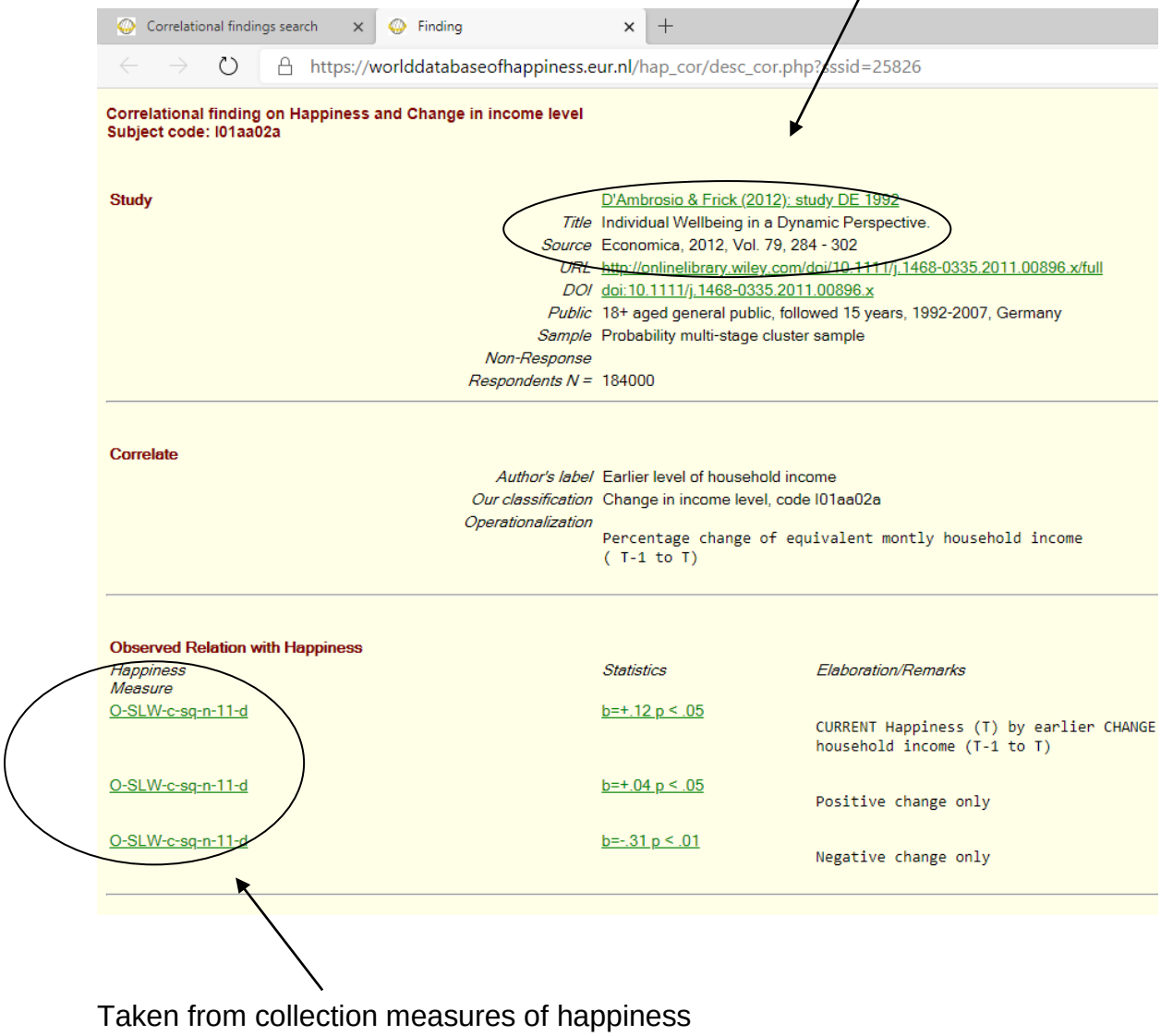
1/3.3 Place of this collection of correlational findings in the archive

This collection of correlational findings is an integral part of this findings archive. In Figure 1/3.1 it is positioned in the middle of the right-hand column and in Figure 1/3.2 at the right bottom of the scheme.

The collection consists of numerous finding pages. Next to information about an observed statistical association, these pages contain information drawn from other collections in the archive, such as on the people investigated, the measure of happiness used and the publication in which the finding was originally reported. See Figure 1/3.3.

Taken from Bibliography

Figure 1/3.3
Example of a correlational finding page: Elements taken from other collections



Taken from collection measures of happiness

1/4 DIFFERENCES WITH CURRENT PRACTICE OF RESEARCH COMPILATION

This collection of correlational findings stores research results at the level of *findings*. Research findings are summarized in standard excerpts on finding pages. These excerpts are ordered by subject, population and methodology. The differences with current tools for research compilation can be summarized as follows:

1/4.1 Focus on findings

The collection is more than a bibliographical guide to the literature. It differs from current abstract-systems in that it lists *findings* rather than 'publications' or 'studies'. The collection differs also from data-archives. Data archives provide access to 'raw' data, while this finding browser presents the results of earlier data-analysis.

1/4.2 Conceptual specificity

This inventory is based on a specific concept of happiness. It does not include everything ever associated with the term but is limited to observations based on measures of ‘overall appreciation of one’s life-as-a-whole’. In that respect it differs from most reviews and meta-analytic studies, which typically refer to broader matters, such as 'satisfaction' or 'subjective well-being'[2]. This specificity differs also from current practice with data-archives, where variable labels are typically quite variable.

1/4.3 Completeness

This collection of correlational findings also differs from current review studies in its presentation of *all* the findings, rather than summarizing a 'trend in findings'. In these respects, this collection resembles the "Human Area Files" in anthropology, which is an archive of observed behaviors in non-western societies ordered by society type.

No methodological selection

Synthetic studies often limit to studies that meet certain methodological criteria, e.g. representative sampling or ratio level of measurement. This collection selects only on

---

[2] See for instance review-studies by Argyle (2001), and Diener (1999,2013), and meta-analyses by Stock et al (1983)

indicators of happiness used. It ensures that all the data pertain to the same thing. Methodological requirements vary with the use of the data. Therefore, the excerpts provide much methodological detail.

Grey literature included

Data for this collection is largely drawn from publications on happiness in books and journal-articles. However, this database is not limited to findings that reached `authorized' publications. Grey reports and mere data-files are included as well.

One reason for this strategy is that the original investigator does not publish many findings that may be relevant in a meta-analysis because they appeared not to be relevant in the context of his report. Another reason is that the publication process involves some systematic bias, one of which is under-report of non-significant correlations.

By deliberately including `unpublished' data this database allows a more realistic view of conditions for happiness. Therefore, meta-analyses based on this database can yield conclusions that differ from impressions based on narrative literature surveys.

1/5 VALUE FOR RESEARCH SYSTHESIS

This collection does not present a full synthesis of empirical happiness research, but limits to the *preliminary phase of data gathering and -organization*. All research-synthesis requires that one selects relevant studies, takes out relevant information and summarizes that information in a uniform way. This collection elaborates that phase more systematically than usual in research-synthesis. Criteria for selection are more explicit, coverage is more exhaustive, and notation of findings more uniform. Unlike current studies, it presents the pre-organized data in full detail.

In fact, many review-studies are sloppy in this respect. It is often unclear how the data are gathered and organized. Narrative review-studies (verbal summaries of the literature) typically report trends and conclusions only, and do not emphasize much on presenting the data on which inferences are based. As a result, it is difficult to check the conclusions of such studies; the critical reader must go through the entire literature. Also, it is mostly quite difficult to build on earlier research-synthesis. As the pre-phase is not systematically reported, the next reviewer must start all over again and must go through an even greater pile of literature. Not surprisingly, enthusiasm for research-synthesis is low in the richest fields.

1/5.1 Homogenization of data

The comparability of the findings is enhanced in several ways: Firstly, by the *selection* on subject (i.e. entering in bibliography or not) and on indicator (i.e. entering in test bank or not). Secondly, the findings are described in a *common terminology*. The techniques of investigations are described in a standard language that is defined explicitly. Correlated factors are denoted by standard names that are part of the classification by which findings can be searched. Thirdly, distributional findings are presented on a *common scale*. Transformation procedures have been developed for this purpose, which can be applied automatically on the frequency distributions in the inventory of distributions and on the frequency tables in the inventory of correlations. Fourthly, the correlational findings are homogenized as far as possible. The system involves several routines for converting different statistics to a *common effect size*. Lastly, the data-system allows the selection of comparable

studies, both with respect to methodology and population.

1/5.2 Preparation for comparative analysis

Current reviews focus typically on the mainstream of findings and on universals. This collection is designed to bring out varieties. Therefore, all the findings are presented with full detail about measurement, population and sampling. For the same reason, the presentation of findings - within subject-categories - is ordered by nation and time.

1/5.3 Preparation for causal analysis

Identifying causes and effects requires focusing on the experimental- and panel-studies. This collection is designed to present these scarce data is such a way that they do not get lost in the bulk of simple correlational findings. For that purpose, each subject-category has sub-categories on developmental aspects; for instance, in the presentation of findings on the relation between happiness with income, 'current' income is distinguished from 'earlier' income, 'change' in income and 'later' income. This way of presentation is standard in all subject categories.

REFERENCES

Argyle, M. (2001)
The Psychology of Happiness
Routledge, UK (2nd edition)

BBC 2006
The Happiness Formula: Opinion Poll.
GfK-NOP poll 421059, commissioned by BBC, 2006, London, UK

Bentham, J. (1789)
An introduction to the principals of morals and legislation
London

Dalai Lama & Cutler, H.C. (1998)
The Art of Happiness
Riverhead Books, New York

Diener, E., Lucas, R.E., Smith, H.L. & Suh, E.M. (1999)
Subjective Well-Being: Three Decades of Progress
Psychological Bulletin, 125, 276 – 301

Diener, E., Napa, C.K. & Oishi, S (2000)
Positivity and the Construction of Life Satisfaction Judgements: Global Happiness is not the Sum of its Parts.
Journal of Happiness Studies, 1, 159 - 176.

Diener, E. (2013)
The Remarkable Changes in the Science of Subjective Well-Being.
Perspectives on Psychological Science, 8, 663 - 666

Gilbert, D.T. (2005)
Stumbling on Happiness.
Vintage Books, New York, USA

Kahneman, D. & Thaler, R.H. (2006)
Anomalies Utility Maximization and Experienced Utility
Journal of Economic Perspectives, 20, 221 - 234

Layard, R. (2005)
Happiness. Lessons from a New Science

Penguin, New York, USA

Stutzer, A. & Frey, B.S. (2008)
Stress that Doesn't Pay: The Commuting Paradox
The Scandinavian Journal of Economics, 110, 339 - 366

Thinley, J.Y. (2102)
Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley's Speech at the UN

Veenhoven, R. (1984)
Conditions of Happiness,
Dordrecht, Netherlands, 1984, Reidel, (now Springer/Nature).

Veenhoven, R. (1991)
Questions on Happiness: Classical Topics, Modern Answers, Blind Spots.
In: Strack, F., Argyle, M., & Schwarz, N. (Eds.): "Subjective Well-Being", Pergamon, 1991, Oxford, UK, 7 - 26

Veenhoven, R. (2004)
World Database of happiness: Continuous register of subjective appreciation of life
Published in: Glatzer, W., Von Below, S. & Stoffregen, M. (eds.), 'Challenges for quality of life in the contemporary world: Advances in quality-of-life studies, theory and research', Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, Netherlands, 2004, Social Indicators Research Series, vol. 24, ISBN 1-4020—2890-3 (e-book 1-4020-2903-9), pp 75-89

Veenhoven, R. (2009)
World Database of Happiness: Tool for dealing with the 'Data-Deluge'
Psychological Topics, Special issue on Positive Psychology18: 221-246,

Veenhoven, R. (2015)
Informed pursuit of happiness: What we should know, do know and can get to know
Journal of Happiness Studies, 16 (4) 1035-1071

Veenhoven, R (2020)
World Database of Happiness - A 'findings archive'
In: Welsch, H., Maddison, D. & Rehdanz, K. (Eds) Handbook of Wellbeing, Happiness and the Environment. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham UK, Chapter 2, pp. 25-45,