

Chapter 1: Introduction

– Ilona Boniwell

Background

Thirty years ago, the Fourth King of Bhutan famously proclaimed that “Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product,” thereby setting Bhutan on a holistic development path. Following this historic declaration, Bhutan developed a Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index and screening tool to evaluate all new policies, proclaiming that:

“Gross National Happiness measures the quality of a country in more holistic way [than GNP] and believes that the beneficial development of human society takes place when material and spiritual development occur side by side to complement and reinforce each other.”¹

In July 2011, 68 nations joined Bhutan in co-sponsoring its UN General Assembly resolution on “Happiness: Towards a Holistic Approach to Development”.

On 2nd April 2012, at United Nations headquarters in New York, a historic event took place. At the invitation of the Royal Government of Bhutan, 800 distinguished delegates, including the President of Costa Rica, the United Nations Secretary-General, the Presidents of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, leading scholars, civil society and spiritual leaders, gathered to launch a new development paradigm designed to nurture human happiness and the well-being of all life on earth, based on a healthy balance among thriving natural, human, social, cultural, and built assets, and recognising ecological sustainability and the fair distribution and efficient use of resources as key conditions for the new model. As a result of this meeting, the Kingdom of Bhutan was also specifically requested to elaborate the details of the new development paradigm.

On the 28th July, His Revered Majesty, the King of Bhutan issued a Royal Edict to formally convene an International Expert Working Group and its Steering Committee, with members appointed individually. The outcomes and results of the Working Group were to be presented to the United Nations during the 68th and 69th Sessions of the General Assembly in 2013 and 2014. The current

¹ <http://www.educatingforgnh.com/>

report submitted to the 68th Session of the General Assembly in 2013 has been prepared by the Working Group on Happiness and Wellbeing, with the second report due to be submitted to the 69th Session of the General Assembly in 2014. The current report includes thorough literature reviews and examinations of existing best practices, to achieve a clear understanding on the actual, practical workings of the new paradigm and to provide practical suggestions on possible policies that can be put in place by governments around the world.

The second report will focus on the key conditions required to achieve the sustainable happiness goal, including the measurement and accounting systems required to assess sustainability, and the appropriate governance, resource, investment, financial, trade, and regulatory policies and mechanisms appropriate for such a development model.

Rationale

The adoption of a new global development paradigm is now widely acknowledged as an urgent necessity. The notion of progress in the modern world is tightly linked with the measure of Gross National Product (GDP), or the market value of all officially recognised goods and services produced within a country in a given period. The present GDP-based system was devised prior to any knowledge of climate change or the finite limits of the earth's resources. Regardless of the approach taken to estimate the GDP, it is fundamentally based on measuring *external conditions* of human existence, which are subsequently openly or inadvertently promoted as the ultimate good. It prioritises material growth and consumption — frequently at the expense of nature, people, community, and culture. This focus on external conditions and consumption translates into the continuous desire to possess more and more, often confusing the state of happiness and fulfilment with “having”. Unfortunately, the “hedonic treadmill”, or the well-known phenomenon of happiness adaptation, means there is no limit to the pursuit of materially-based gratification and, subsequently, to destroying the planet.

This present system, fuelled by consumerism, has depleted resources, degraded ecosystem services, accelerated greenhouse gas emissions, diminished biodiversity, and now threatens the survival of humans and other species on the planet. It has created yawning inequities, and is generating global economic insecurity, indebtedness, instability, and conflict. The system we have created is unsustainable for the planet, and is equally unsustainable for human happiness, because the goals promoted by the system (even if achievable) cannot and will not make the population happier.

At the same time, the world has never possessed greater knowledge, technical capacity, material abundance, and productive potential to create a sane, secure,

connected and socially and ecologically responsible global order to enhance human happiness and the well-being of all life, and to achieve all the necessary conditions for such a new global order. Humankind has the ability, for example, to feed everyone on earth healthily and sustainably, achieve harmony with nature and to shift the widespread emphasis from “having” to “being”.

Perhaps most encouraging in this moment of life-threatening planetary crisis and malaise is the powerful surge of activity from civil society movements around the world — taking the lead where governments feared to tread, and giving courageous expression to humankind’s basic goodness and inherent wisdom. This energy will and must generate the political will to act.

But while we are witnessing a growing consensus, clearly expressed in speech after speech at 2012 World Economic Forum, that the present global system is bankrupt, we as yet have no consensus on a clear, coherent, practical and detailed blueprint of the new development paradigm that must take its place. Fortunately, elements of this consensus are rapidly emerging and include the following key messages:

- In sharp contrast to the present GDP-based system, the new paradigm needs to enhance human happiness and the well-being of all life.
- The new development model must function within planetary boundaries, without degrading nature or depleting the world’s precious resources.
- Those resources have to be distributed fairly and used efficiently.

There is an urgent need to explore how the new system will work in practice and what mechanisms, policies, and institutions are necessary to achieve these goals. The current document is an attempt to develop and describe such system, based on existing practices, as well as scholarly research and thinking.

Objectives

The objective of this report is to propose a detailed set of recommendations for public policy from the perspective of having sustainable happiness as one of the major policy goals of any government. It is therefore intended to:

- Contribute to a greater understanding and debate in relation to happiness as the underlying principle behind public policy;
- Strengthen awareness of the importance of the proposed happiness-based economic paradigm for wider goals and challenges in world (e.g., environmental challenges);

- Draw together emerging international research and practice across a number of disciplines;
- Make concrete and grounded recommendations for effective action;
- Highlight potential difficulties in implementing these recommendations.

Structure of the report

As the primary objective of this report is to detail multiple policy recommendations for the promotion of sustainable happiness, it is vitally important to define these terms. Therefore, the report commences with a chapter on the definitions of terms, including happiness, subjective and objective well-being, quality of life, collective and national well-being, as well as approaches to their measurement.

Despite worldwide enthusiasm for the creation of the new economic paradigm, the idea is sometimes met with criticisms threatening to undermine the collective effort necessary for its successful implementation. Thus two separate chapters has been included to explore and debate some of the prominent academic, media and other publically expressed objections to basing any public policies on happiness as an outcome measure (Booth, 2012; Diener et al., 2009), such as:

- Subjectively defined happiness captures irrelevant information.
- Happiness measures are short-term, transient and shallow measures of people's genuine well-being.
- Subjective happiness is relative and can be manipulated.
- Similarly to the documented failure of governments to control or directly affect GDP growth, it can be expected that any attempts to directly influence happiness growth will also fail.
- On the basis of recent empirical findings that happiness is related to income, it can be argued that the best way to increase happiness is indeed through the raise of GDP.
- Empirical findings that equality is related to happiness are based on limited or questionable evidence.
- Behavioural economics demonstrate that changing human behaviour is very hard to achieve.
- Government involvement in changing behaviour interferes with personal responsibility.
- Increasing government expenditure (through putting additional, happiness-based policies in place) may directly decrease the happiness of its citizens.

- Centralising governmental decision-making is likely to be perceived as intrusive, limiting autonomy and freedom, and, therefore, may have an inverse effect on the population happiness (fascist and communist societies).
- As the majority of means of achieving greater happiness are internal individual changes, the government has a very limited, if any, role in increasing the happiness of its population.
- Applying principles of utilitarian philosophy to the society as a whole may be very dangerous.
- Challenging the idea of progress used by the global community (the GDP) may destabilise the markets and cause dramatic negative changes in the living conditions.

The subsequent chapter addresses the importance and benefits of happiness. Research shows that happy people are likely to be friendlier, healthier, more cooperative, and better citizens. Furthermore, they are more likely to be successful and productive at work, and to earn more money. In other words, happiness leads to circumstances associated with a better quality of life. The benefits of happiness generalise to the societal level in that happy societies are on average healthier and have higher social capital. Therefore, it is essential for societies to monitor subjective well-being or “happiness” not only because the measures of happiness broadly reflect the quality of life in the society, including circumstances beyond money, but also because they assess a characteristic that helps the society function effectively. The chapter advocates that happiness can no longer be viewed as a luxury; for we now know it is essential for quality of life, whilst also being a crucial societal resource in producing good outcomes.

Main policy recommendations presented by this report are structured in accordance to the nine GNH domains that are used by the government of Bhutan to measure the happiness levels of its nation. The nine dimensions of GNH were selected on normative grounds and map specifically the key areas of GNH. These dimensions and therefore the corresponding chapters include:

1. Psychological well-being: Psychological well-being is an intrinsically valuable and desired state of being comprised of reflective and affective elements. Reflective indicators provide an appraisal of how satisfied people are in various aspects of their lives, while the affective indicators provide a hedonic evaluation guided by emotions and feelings.
2. Health: Health is often conventionally described as simply an absence of illness. However in Bhutan, health has always been associated with both physical health and mental health (Wangdi, 2009). This understanding conforms to the WHO’s definition of health as ‘a state of complete

physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. While physical and mental health is important, a holistic approach towards health would focus on social circumstances, emotional states and spiritual aspects. Good health provides an individual with an ability to meet life's opportunities and challenges and maintain a level of functioning that has a positive influence on well-being.

3. Education: GNH highlights the importance of a holistic educational approach that ensures citizens gain a deep foundation in traditional knowledge, common values and skills in addition to studying reading, writing, maths, science and technology. Creative learning and expression are also promoted.
4. Cultural diversity and resilience: The diversity of the culture is manifested in forms of language, traditional arts and crafts, festivals, events, ceremonies, drama, music, dress and etiquette and more importantly the spiritual values that people share.
5. Time use: The balance between paid work, unpaid work and leisure are important for one's well-being. Similarly, a flexible working life is vital for the well-being of individual workers and their families and communities. The value of time-use information lies in the fact that time is the ultimate resource and unlike other resources dependent on income or social status, time is shared equally by everyone. Further, time-use data is an important resource which brings into view voluntary work in communities and domestic work at home besides providing an overview of time spent in both the production and consumption of goods and services.
6. Good governance: Many definitions of good governance have been coined in literature, hence the relevant concept is particular to the vision and goals of the country and to the approach of governance being followed. In general, some of the key attributes are participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, a consensus orientation, equity, empowerment and inclusiveness.
7. Community vitality: From a GNH standpoint, a community must have strong relationships between community members and within families, must hold socially constructive values, must volunteer and donate time and/or money, and lastly must be safe from violence and crime. It is vital that volunteering and donations of time and money be recognized as a

fundamental part of any community development. Socially constructive values can act as tools through which activities can be implemented for positive change in communities.

8. Living standards: The living standards domain refers to the material well-being of people. It ensures the fulfilment of basic material needs for a comfortable living. The corresponding chapter discusses the relationship between Gross National Happiness (GNH) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), including the background and the shortcomings of GDP as a welfare indicator. It considers the possibility of a healthy economy in the absence of economic growth and going on to outline the role of the economy and business in a GNH oriented society.
9. Ecological diversity and resilience: The environmental domain includes three subjective indicators related to perceptions regarding environmental challenges, urban issues and responsibilities. Perception of environmental issues in general and how they vary across time has long been of interest to researchers and policymakers; however, perceptions of environmental issues are affected by the extent to which people are informed on those issues.

Each of the nine principal chapters roughly adheres to the following format, although there are some considerable differences between chapters:

- i. Domain
 - a. Existing sub-domains: listing of the existing sub-domains measured by the GNH Index with a brief explanation as to the relevance of each sub-domain to the over-arching domain.
 - b. Alternative sub-domains: Identification of potential sub-domains not covered by the Index.
- ii. Intrinsic value of the domain discusses the extent to which it is an 'end-in-itself' and how it contribute directly to well-being. Considering well-being as a holistic and multidimensional state of flourishing, the analysis of the GNH Index indicates that these domains constitute our very sense of well-being. (2) For example, it is of intrinsic value to be in a state of health rather than pain, illness, or lack of energy. People value health, not

² For example, analyse your own actions: why do I do what I do? How do my actions try to advance well-being? When you analyse, you will come to recognise a simple set of reasons that 'need no further reason' because they are of intrinsic value. Your list may be a bit different than the nine domains of GNH because the nine domains have to cover the diversity of humanity. But yours are probably not entirely different from these

‘because it makes me happy’ (‘I can be unhappy and in good health’), but for its own sake. Similarly, feeling a part of a vibrant community with supportive relationships, friendships, peace, creativity, and safe space for discussions, is good in itself.

- iii. Instrumental value of the domain: This section examines relationships between domains (and to happiness and well-being). For example, being healthy also means greater national productivity as people are not absent from work; being healthy means children can learn in school; being healthy means people have the time and energy to volunteer in their communities, and so on. Similarly, having an active community also is instrumental to many kinds of practical social support: if someone falls ill others will look after them; if they lose their job others will take care of them for a bit. If violence enters, the community will be able to resolve the problem by working together. Furthermore, research indicates, for example, that people who are satisfied with their community are also happier overall.
- iv. Traditional public policy: While a single ‘traditional’ public policy simply does not exist, we can nevertheless explore how major international institutions and governments already frame each domain and seek to support it. This section intends to highlight the current state of affairs, its advantages and limitations. For example, in the case of health, sometimes public policy frames healthcare mainly as instrumental to worker productivity. In that case, the care for the elderly may be under-emphasized, as well as the care for the disabled, and even for the poor and uneducated. In contrast, an idea of universal healthcare does not position its benefits solely in terms of productivity. Traditional public policy may only regard community vitality from the perspective of low crime rates, and as a result, we witness loneliness, isolation, a lack of volunteerism or civic respect, and breakdown of communities around the world.
- v. Major research findings of potential relevance to new public policy: Based on the current state of research we seek to identify the key ‘unmet needs’ that people have – e.g. for community relationships, or mental health care. Then we can ask what an appropriate and cost-effective role for public policy can be, identifying some key, high impact, feasible actions that are the ‘low hanging fruit’, but which would really make a big difference in people’s lives.
- vi. Recommendations: The main recommendations concern a) what not to do – which actions/policies need to be stopped or modified so as to ‘do no

harm' and b) what to do - in so far as there are general prescriptions. This section often includes some examples of existing case studies, evaluated projects and novel initiatives.

- vii. Barriers to implementation: Of course, moving from the present to the future scenario cannot and will not be straightforward. The majority of proposed changes must be implemented incrementally and be presented and viewed within a broad context of transition towards social, economic and environmental sustainability. This section tends to identify and detail several possible barriers related to the implementation of each recommendation, including: key institutional barriers (from international policies and cultures; to the need for new ministries or businesses), political barriers (lack of political will; risk-aversion and fear of failure; will it win votes?); economic and financial barriers (high cost, or high uncertainty); human resource barriers; lack of advocacy (citizen demand is not articulated), etc.
- viii. Policy actions: Some of the chapters include word 'boxes' which profile key actions, addressing some of the 'barriers to implementation' above.
- ix. Data and measurement for policy: At present, many of the proposed changes would be 'invisible' because they would not affect GDP. What is required is a measure of GNH that would be sensitive to these interventions. This section details some recommended indicators, based on the Bhutan GNH Index for this domain, or otherwise.
- x. Monitoring: Related to the above, what else would be a sign of progress in this domain? What would need to be put in place to ensure an appropriate implementation and monitoring of relevant policies? Are there special bodies that may need to be created? This section is intended to consider indicators of public expenditure, private sector initiative, NGO activities and donor actions.

Unfortunately, even the most advanced set of public policy recommendations is unlikely to have any impact unless these recommendations are actually implemented both at the policy and individual level. The final chapter of the report considers public policies targeting individual-level changes in the light of most robustly researched contextual influences on our behaviour, putting across some suggestions about the way forward to achieve lasting behaviour change. The report concludes with summarising the next steps for elaborating the practical workings for the new development paradigm.

Sources of policy recommendations

The number of academic studies of happiness and its determinants has grown rapidly in the past three decades, resulting in a substantial amount of research on well-being undertaken by economists, psychologists, and other social scientists. Much of the current happiness data comes from aggregated self-reports of respondents to social surveys, such as World Values Survey (WVS), the European Values Survey (EVS), the Eurobarometer, the Gallup World Poll, the US General Household Survey (GSS), the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), the European Social Survey (ESS), the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP), and the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). However, despite proliferation in happiness research that allows us to confidently point out findings of relevance to public policy, the practical recommendations of what can be done to achieve a happy sustainable society are few and far between and are often hard to identify.

In order to ensure the comprehensibility of the current set of recommendations, an analytical framework was put forward to guide the search and development process prior to the commencement of the review (see Figure 1). This was done in order to ensure that we assess the usability of the recommendation sources in terms of accuracy, reliability and comparability. The dimension of *implementation* was proposed to ensure the inclusion of both existing/novel practices and theoretical ideas, whilst attending to the *evaluation* allowed the contributing authors to distinguish the evidence-based-practices and critically evaluated theoretical propositions from experimental/not yet evaluated practical policies and novel, theoretically based ideas put forward by this report.

		IMPLEMENTATION	
		PRACTICE	THEORY
EMPIRICAL OR CRITICAL EVALUATION	ESTABLISHED	Q1. Existing policies and practices, in place and evaluated	Q2. Existing theoretical ideas published in either academic, spiritual or policy literature (papers, books, reports)
	NEW	Q3. New policies and practices, in place, but not researched or evaluated	Q4. Novel theoretical ideas developed for the purposes of this report

Table 1. *The analytical framework*

Quadrant 1 relies on existing policies and practices, already in place (implemented) and evaluated. These include academic and other published intervention research related to different domains of well-being, reports and findings from recent commissions of inquiry, 'grey' literature and evidence from voluntary and community based service providers on the costs and wider social impacts of different service delivery methods, government and other publicly available statistics (e.g. on the costs of service provision). The quality of evidence is of ultimate importance here, so information on controlled evaluations was included where possible.

Quadrant 2 draws on a wide range of existing theoretical ideas published in either academic, spiritual or policy literature (papers, books, reports, white papers, etc). Theoretical papers, empirical (though not intervention) papers, current policy documents, national strategies and outcome assessment were consulted as part of this group of sources.

Quadrant 3 concerns new policies and practices, in place, but not researched or evaluated. This quadrant relies mainly on case studies to provide illustrative examples of the current implemented policies and practices, explicitly or implicitly aimed towards well-being outcomes.

Quadrant 4 includes novel theoretical ideas developed for the purposes of this report, coming from the multidisciplinary perspectives of its contributors.

Although it could have been desirable to base this report solely on the existing evidence-based public policies that promote sustainable happiness, the scarcity of such policies call for a more inclusive and innovative approach to recommendation development. At the current level of happiness-centred policy development, sticking solely to the Quadrant 1 sources of recommendation would have been a considerable limitation.

Levels of policy recommendations

The report distinguishes between five different possible levels of recommendation on the basis of target or an application point for policy implementation, including individuals, groups/communities, businesses/organisations, central governments and international organisations, as follows:

Individual level

Most of scientific evidence derived from psychology and behavioural sciences focus on an individual' own actions, such as taking up physical exercise, spending more time socialising or engaging with a hobby, or deliberate changes in perception, such as focusing on the positive aspects of one's day, rather than

the negative ones. Importantly, as the bulk of the literature points towards the prevalence of internal over external conditions in achieving happiness, a substantial number of policies are selected on the basis of this premise. Recommendations at the individual level directly encourage individuals to change their attitudes and behaviour, targeting recipients of the message through actions such as public health campaigns, events and festivals, social marketing drives, literacy tools, healthy lifestyles advice and all other possible forms of education. So, understanding that it is an individual him/herself who has the greatest capacity to make transformation in their own lives, various information provision and knowledge transfer methods must be deployed to ensure that a set of actions that enhance an individual's personal well-being are made available to general population in a clear, engaging and motivating form.

Communities/local government level

The community category encompasses policies that may affect particular groups of people (e.g. a local mother and baby group) or organisations with a significant public-facing element (e.g. a social service department of a local authority). These are the policies that motivate or facilitate action on well-being within groups/communities, integrating the wider objectives of the sustainable happiness model into the design and delivery of initiatives with a local target and impact.

Businesses/organisations level

Within an organisation, decisions can be made that affect all employees, or all people who interact with the organisation (customers, suppliers, etc). Therefore, organisations could be encouraged to examine their processes and look for ways to increase opportunities for promoting sustainable happiness in the way that they deal with employees and clients, through integrating relevant considerations into existing systems, processes and activity to influence ways of working. This may include introducing flexible working or decreasing burden of commuting, for example. Although the individuals will be undoubtedly on the receiving end of these changes and will be affected by them, these policies themselves would be targeted at organisations.

Central government level

At a country-level, strategic decisions about economic, social, and environmental policy influence the background context within which people go about their daily lives. It is therefore deemed possible to enact policies affecting the whole population (or significant groups within it) with the explicit intention of promoting sustainable happiness, perhaps by restricting or mandating certain kinds of activity, or by incentivising and/or lifting barriers to certain decisions and behaviours (e.g. marriage, divorce, etc). Many policies on mental health (shifting from the emphasis on treatment to health promotion and preventative systems) are falling into this category.

International community level

However, there are situations where the principal actor is neither the individual, nor an organisation or a state-level policy-maker taking strategic decisions. The 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on “Happiness: Towards a Holistic Approach to Development” has encouraged the United Nations Member States to give more importance to happiness and well-being in determining how to achieve and measure social and economic development. World Health Organization already plays an important leadership role in gaining greater recognition of the potential benefits of a population wide approach to health as positively defined. Many countries across the EU are using the European commitment to ‘mental health for all’ to develop or strengthen national policy and action to promote mental well-being. These are some of the recent examples of policies at the international level.

Of course, some of the domains of the GNH lend themselves more easily towards one level of target, whilst others – to the other. For example, psychological well-being – to the individual level, education – to the communities’ level, good governance – to the central government level, etc. Nevertheless, multiple crossings of boundaries should be seen as a norm rather than exception.

Theoretical foundations and the main themes of the report

According to empirical evidence (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon and Schkade, 2005), intentional activities at the individual level often offer the best potential route to higher and sustainable levels of happiness. Intentional activities are goal-directed actions or practices in which people can choose to engage, that usually require some degree of effort to enact. Several longitudinal studies by Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2006) indicate that increase in happiness that is dependent on circumstances does not last as long as the one that results from intentional activity. Furthermore, research shows that high levels of goal progress or attainment predict increased well-being (Brunstein, 1993; Sheldon, 2002). However, this increase is most likely when the goals a person chooses and attains are self-concordant or congruent with oneself (Sheldon and Elliot, 1998; 1999; Sheldon and Kasser, 1995; 1998).

A wide range of studies in different activity domains (professional, clinical, educational, etc.) provide strong empirical support for the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Intrinsic motivation takes place when an activity is enjoyable and subjectively valued by itself, rather than for its result. In this case a person maintains the activity for a prolonged time without any external incentives. Extrinsic motivation takes place when an activity is undertaken for the sake of obtaining rewards, either external or

internal (e.g., pride), or for the sake of avoiding punishments, either external or internal (e.g., guilt or shame). Extrinsic activities therefore stop when the incentives cease. A wide range of studies show that whilst intrinsic motivation is associated with higher well-being and life satisfaction; extrinsic motivation is associated with lower well-being and life satisfaction.

Intrinsic motivation is facilitated by satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: the need for *autonomy* (making one's own choice), *competence* (the experience of success in what one does), and *relatedness* (the experience of being close to other people). They also show that environment can either support intrinsic motivation by providing opportunities for people to satisfy those basic needs, or support extrinsic motivation by controlling people using rewards and punishment (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

The extent to which different activities (work or leisure) are satisfying also depends on the content of goals at which those activities are directed. As Kasser and Ryan (1993) suggest, some goals (*intrinsic*, such as community contribution, health, personal growth, and affiliation) are more conducive to basic need satisfaction with resulting subjective experiences of meaning and happiness than other goals (*extrinsic*, such as fame, financial success, and physical appearance). Intrinsic goals are satisfying in their own right and more conducive for intrinsic motivation, as opposed to extrinsic goals that are undertaken for the sake of consequences external to the activity/task itself. However, an activity directed at extrinsic goals may be beneficial if it is instrumental for reaching intrinsic goals. For instance, when money is an end result of one's work (a 'having' orientation, in terms of Fromm, 1976), work may be psychologically detrimental to well-being, but when money is earned for the sake of an intrinsic goal (e.g., helping a charity), it becomes rewarding.

People focused on extrinsic goals are more social comparisons prone (Patrick, Neighbours and Knee, 2004; Sirgy, 1998), inclined to value contingent approval (Kernis, 2003) and strive for external signs of self-worth (Kasser et al., 2004). Strong extrinsic, relative to intrinsic, goals and aspirations lead to lower happiness, self-esteem, and self-actualization; higher depression and anxiety; poorer relationship quality; less cooperative behavior; and greater prejudice and social-dominant attitudes (e.g., Duriez et al., 2007; Kasser and Ryan, 1993; 1996; McHoskey, 1999; Sheldon and McGregor, 2000; Sheldon, Sheldon and Osbaldiston, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). These results have been successfully replicated with various cultural and age groups (Vansteenkiste, Lens and Deci, 2006; Kasser and Ryan, 1996; Ryan et al., 1999).

Other approaches to the study of goal content show similar results. For example, Emmons (2003) demonstrates that there are three goal themes

empirically associated with higher well-being are *intimacy* (“goals that express a desire for close, reciprocal relationships”), *spirituality* (“goals that are oriented to transcending the self”), and *generativity* (“a commitment and concern for future generations”), whereas the presence of power (“goals that express a desire to influence and affect others”) or financial strivings is associated with lower well-being. Happiness, or a good life, is simply not proportionate to the amount of money or power one has. Consequently, intrinsic and meaningful activities are rewarding and support happiness, whereas extrinsic activities drain us and lead to unhappiness.

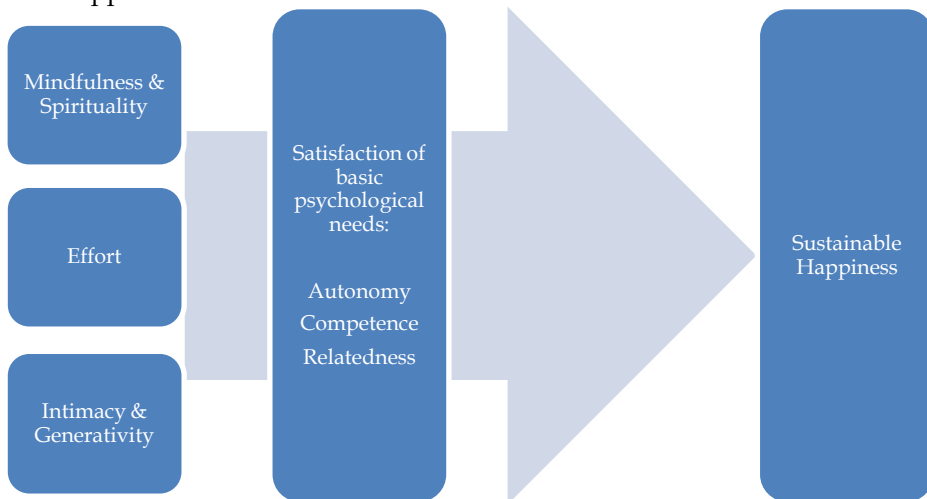


Figure 1. Theoretical foundations for policy recommendations

Sustainable happiness can thus be viewed as based on autonomous and self-determined action towards intrinsic goals guided by pro-social concerns (Figure 2). We therefore propose that the proposed policy measures would take the following theoretically-based themes into account:

A. Supporting autonomy/control. Providing citizens with more autonomy and control in different life domains encourages them to engage in consciously chosen activity, rather than that imposed upon them. It is vitally important that intrinsic goals cannot be imposed upon people (when people are forced to act even in accordance with intrinsic goals, the motivation is extrinsic and detrimental to well-being). Theoretical and empirical studies support policy measures aimed at providing more opportunities for people to act in accordance with intrinsic goals, giving citizens an option to use them or not. While the results of such policy may not seem immediately evident, it is the only sustainable way in the long-term, because it fosters autonomy in citizens.

One essential aspect of autonomy development is in supporting *mindfulness* and *spirituality* (which are the resources necessary for making choices) by providing time and encouraging people to reflect on their life and lives of other people, to devote time to choosing and evaluating their life goals, making them more self-congruent and congruent with larger interests.

B. Supporting relationships/relatedness. The second essential theme underlying the whole report is about helping people to find more and better opportunities to establish and maintain relationships, give and get social support in different life domains (family and wide community, work, unpaid work, etc.), which leads to higher experience of relatedness and higher well-being. Based on intrinsic goals of intimacy and generativity, relatedness is the primary thread of recommendations running through the whole report.

C. Supporting competence. Giving people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups (unemployed, retired, disabled) more opportunities to avoid feeling powerless and develop competence. A specific aspect of this is supporting effortful action, rather than passive consumption. An effort has to be made in order to feel one's ability to change something in oneself or in the world.

D. Supporting meaningful engagement. The policy measures at different levels can be aimed at supporting the importance of intrinsic, rather than extrinsic goals. This means providing people with more opportunities to engage into activities that benefit other people and planet as a whole, with social messages emphasizing universal human values, dedication to a cause rather than success, health rather than physical appearance, giving rather than having.

8. Conclusions and further directions

Evidence shows that above a certain level, economic growth does not produce an increase in human happiness; on the contrary, it appears that economic growth strategies in the world market economies have damaging effects on human and planetary well-being (Pickett, James and Wilkinson, 2006; Marks et al., 2006; Eckersley, 2005; 2006). This report argues that in the developed world, we have reached the limits of the benefits of affluence, demonstrates how consumerism promotes individual anxiety and undermines social solidarity, reveals the short- and long-term costs of inaction and offers and elaborates on concrete action steps to confront the current artificial status quo and to promote true human happiness.

References

Babyak, M. A., Blumenthal, J. A., Herman, S., Khatri, P., Doraiswamy, P. M., Moore, K. A., Craighead, W. E., Baldewicz, T. T. and Krishnan, K. R., 2000.

- Exercise treatment for major depression: Maintenance of therapeutic benefit at 10 months. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 62, 633-638.
- Booth, P. M. ed., 2012. *...And the pursuit of happiness*. London: Institute of Economic Affairs.
- Brunstein, J., 1993. Personal goals and subjective well-being: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 1061-1070.
- Deci, E. L. and Ryan, R. M., 2000. The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 4, 227-268.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J. and Griffin, S., 1985. The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, 71-75.
- Diener, E., Lucas, R., Schimmack, U. and Helliwell, J., 2009. *Well-Being for public policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E. and Smith, H. L., 1999. Subjective well-being: three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 276-302.
- Dolan, P., Hallsworth, M., Halpern, D., King, D. and Vlaev, I., 2010. *MINDSPACE: Influencing behaviour through public policy*. London: Cabinet Office.
- Duriez, B., Vansteenkiste, M., Soenens, B. and DeWitte, H., 2007. The social costs of extrinsic relative to intrinsic goal pursuits: Their relation with social dominance and racial and ethnic prejudice. *Journal of Personality*, 75, 757-782.
- Eckersley R., 2006. Is modern Western culture a health hazard? *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 35, 252-258
- Eckersley, R., 2005. *Well & good: Morality, meaning and happiness*. 2nd ed. Melbourne: Text Publishing.
- Emmons, R. A., 2003. Personal goals, life meaning, and virtue: Wellsprings of a positive life. In: C.L.M. Keyes, ed. *Flourishing: The positive person and the good life*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (pp. 105-128).
- Fromm, E., 1976. *To have or to be?* New York: Continuum.
- Kahneman, D., 2011. *Thinking fast and slow*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux.
- Kasser, T. and Ryan, R. M., 1993. A dark side of the American dream: Correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 410-422.
- Kasser, T. and Ryan, R. M., 1996. Further examining the American dream: Differential correlates of intrinsic and extrinsic goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 280-287.
- Kasser, T., Ryan, R. M., Couchman, C. E. and Sheldon, K.M., 2004. Materialistic values: Their causes and consequences. In: T. Kasser and A. D. Kanfer, eds. *Psychology and consumer cultures: The struggle for a good life in amaterialistic world*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (pp. 11-28).

- Kernis, M., 2003. Toward a conceptualization of optimal self-esteem. *Psychological Inquiry*, 14, 1-26.
- Kopperud, K. H. and Vittersø, J., 2008. Distinctions between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being: Results from a day reconstruction study among Norwegian jobholders. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 3, 174 - 181.
- Lyubomirsky, S. and Lepper, H. S., 1999. A measure of subjective happiness: preliminary reliability and construct validation. *Social Indicators Research*, 46, 137-155,
- Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. and Schkade, D., 2005. Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 111-131.
- Marks, N., Thompson, S., Eckersley, R., Jackson, T. and Kasser, T., 2006. *Sustainable development and well-being: relationships, challenges, and policy implications*. A report by the centre for well-being, nef (New Economics Foundation) for DEFRA (Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs).
- McHoskey, J. W., 1999. Machiavellianism, intrinsic versus extrinsic goals, and social interest: A self-determination analysis. *Motivation and Emotion*, 23, 267-283.
- Parkinson, J., 2006. *Measuring positive mental health: Developing a new scale*. Scotland: NHS Health Scotland.
- Patrick, H., Neighbours, C. and Knee, C. R., 2004. Appearance-related social comparisons: The role of contingent self-esteem and self-perceptions of attractiveness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 501-514.
- Peterson, C., Park, N. and Seligman, M. E. P., 2005. Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full life versus the empty life. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6, 25 - 41.
- Pickett, K. E., James, O. W. and Wilkinson, R.G., 2006. Income inequality and the prevalence of mental illness: a preliminary international analysis. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 60, 646-647.
- Ryan, R. M. and Deci, E. L., 2001. On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 141-166.
- Ryan, R. M., Chirkov, V. I., Little, T. D., Sheldon, K. M., Timoshina, E. and Deci, E. L., 1999. The American dream in Russia: Extrinsic aspirations and well-being in two cultures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 1509-1524.
- Ryan, R.M., Huta, V. and Deci, E. L., 2008. Living well: A self-determination theory perspective on eudaimonia. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9, 139-170
- Samman, E., 2007. Psychological and subjective well-being: A proposal for internationally comparable indicators, *Oxford Development Studies*, 35, 459-486.

- Sheldon, K. M. and Elliot, A. J., 1998. Not all personal goals are personal: Comparing autonomous and controlled reasons for goals as predictors of effort and attainment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24, 546–557.
- _____. 1999. Goal striving, need-satisfaction, and longitudinal well-being: The self-concordance model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 482–497.
- Sheldon, K. M. and Kasser, T., 1995. Coherence and congruence: Two aspects of personality integration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 531–543.
- _____. 1998. Pursuing personal goals: Skills enable progress but not all progress is beneficial. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24, 1319–1331.
- Sheldon, K. M. and Lyubomirsky, S., 2006. Achieving sustainable gains in happiness: Change your actions, not your circumstances. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 7, 55–86.
- Sheldon, K. M. and McGregor, H. A., 2000. Extrinsic value orientation and the “Tragedy of the Commons”. *Journal of Personality*, 68, 383–411.
- Sheldon, K. M., 2002. The self-concordance model of healthy goal-striving: When personal goals correctly represent the person. In: E. L. Deci and R. M. Ryan, eds. *Handbook of self-determination research*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press. 65–86
- Sheldon, K. M., Elliot, A. J., Ryan, R. M., Chirkov, V., Kim, Y., Wu, C. and Sun, Z., 2004. Self-concordance and subjective well-being in four cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 35(2), 209–223.
- Sheldon, K. M., Sheldon, M. S. and Osbaldiston, R., 2000. Prosocial values and group assortment in an N-person prisoner’s dilemma. *Human Nature*, 11, 387–404.
- Sirgy, M. J., 1998. Materialism and quality of life. *Social Indicators Research*, 43, 227–260.
- Stewart-Brown, S., Tennant, A., Tennant, R., Platt, S., Parkinson, J. and Weich, S., 2009. Internal construct validity of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): a Rasch analysis using data from the Scottish Health Education Population Survey. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 7, 15 - 22
- Thaler, R. H. and Sustein, C. R., 2009. *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness*. London: Penguin Books.
- Ura K., Alkire S., Zangmo T. and Wangdi K., 2012. *A Short Guide to Gross National Happiness Index*. Thimpu: Centre for Bhutan Studies.
- Ura K., Alkire S., Zangmo T. and Wangdi K., 2012. *An Extensive Analysis of GNH Index*. Thimpu: Centre for Bhutan Studies.

- Vansteenkiste, M., Duriez, B., Simons, J. and Soenens, B., 2006. Materialistic values and well-being among business students: Further evidence for their detrimental effect. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36, 2892-2908.
- Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W. and Deci, E. L., 2006. Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal contents in self-determination theory: Another look at the quality of academic motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, 41(1), 19-31.
- Vittersø, J., Overwien, P. I. and Martinsen, E., 2009. Pleasure and interest are differentially affected by replaying versus analyzing a happy life moment. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(1), 14-20.
- Wangdi, K., 2009. Health. In: *Gross National Happiness Survey Findings 2007-2008*. Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies. 80-111.
- Watson, D., Clark, L.A. and Tellegen, A., 1988. Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect; The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 1063-1070