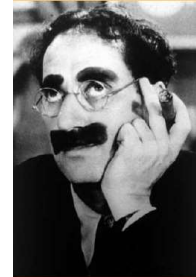


1

«Life is plenty of things that are more important than money. The problem is that they are extremely expensive»



2

## US: GDP and happiness, 1946-1996 The Easterlin paradox



3

## Measures of well-being

### Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

- happiness
- life satisfaction

### Objective data

- mental illnesses
- suicides
- psychiatric drugs
- addictions

4

## American distress

- Epidemic of anxiety and depression
- 1999-2014: the age-adjusted suicide rate increased by 24%

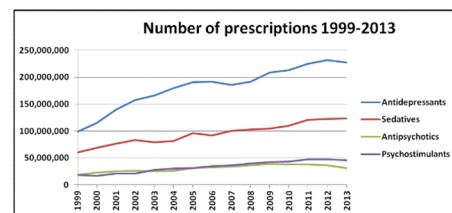


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## The sedated society

### Share of the psychiatrically medicated adult population

- US: 20%
- Great Britain: 15%



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## US: Soaring addictions

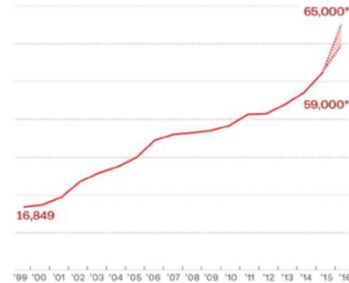
- 2.5 million cases of opioid abuse in 2015.
- In 2016 about 60,000 died for overdose
- 58,000 US soldiers died in the entire Vietnam War



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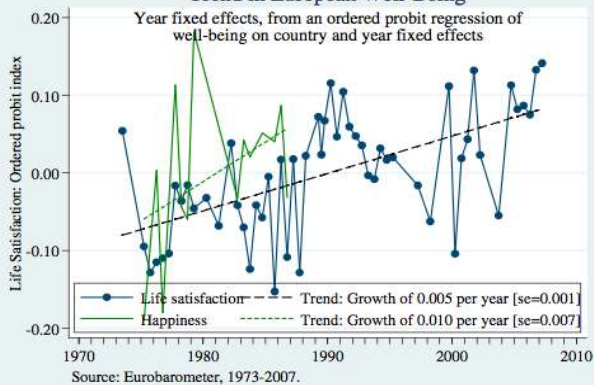
## US: Epidemic of drug overdoses

Drug overdoses deaths in the US 1999-2016. Source: Katz 2017



8

## Trend in European Well-Being



Source: Stevenson and Wolfers 2008

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## What matters for happiness?

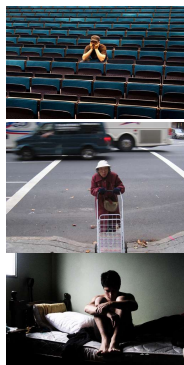
- Money? It matters little and mostly at low income levels
- Relationships matter a lot



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## Loneliness has become a mass problem

- ¼ of Americans have no one to share their confidences with
- ½ If family members are not counted
- 15–30% of the general population, loneliness has become a chronic state
- Feeling lonely:
  - 80% of people under 18 years
  - 40% of individuals over 65 years



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## The decline of American relationships

**Diminution in:** trust, solidarity honesty, social participation, civic engagement



**Lower quality and quantity of relationships:** among friends, family members, neighbors



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## Social poverty vs. economic prosperity?

The decline in relationships, time and well-being points to a long-term social crisis

Is there a relationship between social crisis and economic dynamism?

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## Defensive growth



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Private wealth



Common poverty

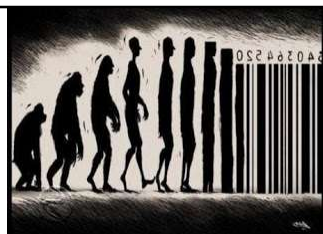


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## The Role of Materialistic Values

To be materialistic means to give:

- a high priority in life to extrinsic motivations such as money, consumption, success
- a low priority to intrinsic motivations such as relationships, pro-social behaviors in general



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## Materialism and well-being

Materialistic people:

- are less happy
- have greater symptoms of anxiety and irritability
- have a higher risk of depression
- are unhealthier

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## Materialism and Relationships

Materialistic individuals have lower quality relationships with others:

*They are less:*

- generous
- empathic
- Cooperative

*They tend more to:*

- instrumental friendships
- cynicism
- distrustful of others



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## Advertising and happiness

"I'm an ad-man. In my line of work, nobody wants you to be happy, because happy people do not consume"

*Frederic Beigbeder, famous advertising executive*



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## Advertising and happiness

«Advertising at its best is making people feel that without a product, you are a loser. Kids are very sensitive to that ... You open up emotional vulnerabilities and it is very easy to do with kids because they're the most emotionally vulnerable»

*Nancy Shalek, president of Shalek Agency*



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## Pubblicità e felicità

«The mission of business is the organized creation of dissatisfaction»

*Charles Kettering, director of R&D at GM in the 1920s*



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## Therapy: Policies for relational goods

**Changing:**

- Cities
- Media
- Work
- Schools
- Healthcare
- Income inequality
- Democracy
- Culture

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Stefano Bartolini

MANIFESTO  
PER LA FELICITÀ

Come passare  
dalla società del ben-avere  
a quella del ben-essere



Saggiere



STEFANO BARTOLINI

**Manifeste  
pour le bonheur**

Comment passer d'une société de l'avoir  
à une société du bien être



LLL  
LES LIENS QUI LIBÈRENT

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## Advertising and children

- In the 2000s spending on advertising to children was 150 times the amount spent in the 1980s
- Soaring materialism. Seventy-five percent of American children want to get rich
- Children more exposed to advertising are more materialistic, less happy and have poorer relationships



## Reducing advertising

- In Sweden tv-ads targeting children (under 12) are forbidden. Tv programs targeting children cannot be longer than half an hour per day
- Ban tv-ads targeting children
- Reduce tv programs targeting kids
- Heavy taxation on advertising
- "Impossible ads"



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## Changing schools

What do people learn at school?



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## Academic achievements vs. happiness

- Time to enjoy is not time to perform
- **Wrong:** happiness is the key to academic achievements
- Schools are a factory of anxiety. 55% of students are anxious even if they are well prepared. 66% feel stressed about poor grades (OECD 2017)



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## Extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation

- School of materialism: Intrinsic motivations are unimportant
- **Wrong:** intrinsically motivated students score higher (OECD 2017)

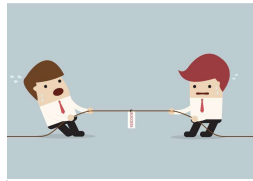


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## Competition vs. cooperation

- Schools teach to compete
- The underlying belief is that competition
- **Wrong:** comparisons undermine self-esteem
- Self-confidence, and not peer pressure, is the key to learning



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## Cognition vs. emotions

- Focus on cognitive intelligence
- **Wrong:** emotional intelligence matters more
- The idea of conflict between cognition and emotions dates back to positivism and is outdated



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## Tests vs. learning

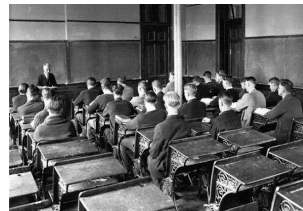
- Tests performance is what matters
- **Wrong:** focus on tests destroys critical and original thinking
- Hurry has a similar effect



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- The bad news: schooling does not work



- The good news: we know what works



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## Evidence: participatory teaching

- Teaching methods differ. We can exploit this variability to understand which teaching practices work better.
- **Participatory teaching:** Students work in groups on common projects and ask teachers questions. The central relationship in the classroom is between the students.
- **Vertical teaching:** teachers primarily lecture and ask students questions, while students mostly take notes or read textbooks. The central relationship in the classroom is between the teacher and the student

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## Evidence: participatory teaching increases relational skills and happiness

- Participatory practices promote individuals' cooperative capacities with other students and teachers and non-cognitive skills, such as self-esteem and positive social attitudes (Algan et al. 2013 study on hundreds thousands of students from dozens of countries)
- People feel happier in nations where participatory teaching prevailed (Brulé and Veenhoven 2014).

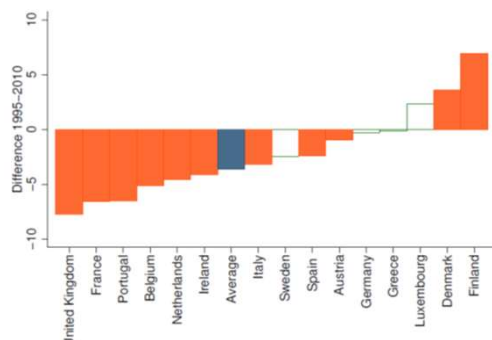
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## Evidence: Social and Emotional Learning

- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs have a positive impact on social and emotional skills, attitudes toward self and others, positive social behavior, behavioral problems, emotional distress and academic performance (+11%) (Durlak et al. 2011, study on 270.000 students from kindergarten through high school)

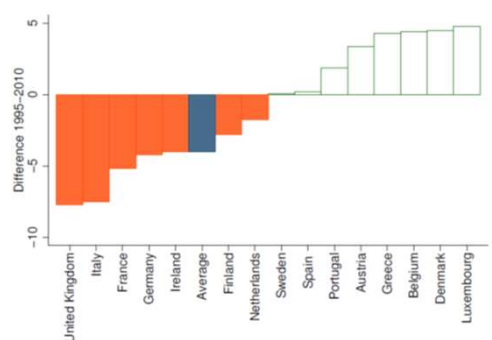
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## Job discretion: difference 1995 – 2010 (source: Eurofund 2015)



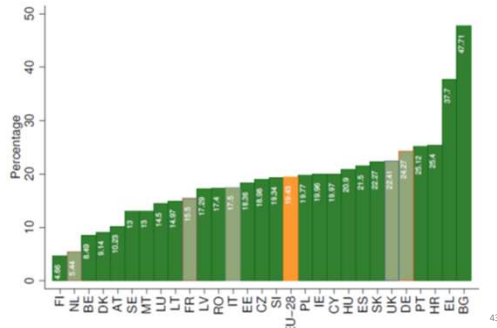
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## Cognitive demand: difference 1995 – 2010 (source: Eurofund 2015)



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## Low job satisfaction: share across Europe in 2013 (source: Eurostat)



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## Disengagement

% of employees	Year		Europe
	2009-10	2011-12	2011-12
Engaged	11	13	14
Not engaged	62	63	66
Actively disengaged	27	24	20
Total	100	100	100

(Source: Gallup World Poll)

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## Changing work experience: what should we do?

- Redesign the content of work processes so as to make them more interesting (e.g. job redesign, job rotation)



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## Changing work experience: what should we do?

- Increase the degree of discretionality and autonomy of workers



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## Changing work experience: what should we do?

- Increase the compatibility between work and other aspects of life.



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## Changing work experience: what should we do?

- Reduce those aspects of work organization that produce stress: pressure, controls, incentives



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## Happier but less productive?

- According to many economists, stress, dissatisfaction, pressures, tensions, competition, conflicts and difficult relations, repetitive and boring tasks are the price to pay for high production
- But studies on organizations do not confirm this belief
- Workers who are more satisfied have a higher “organizational citizenship”, that is the capacity of cooperation with others and with the organization in which they work in ways that are not strictly connected to their assigned tasks

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## The limits of incentives

- Incentives tend to shift the efficiency of the performance to that which can be measured to the detriment of that which cannot
- Incentives work well when performance is highly measurable and when the task is extremely boring and repetitive
- But this is not the general case
- **The message: it is not possible to build an efficient economy completely free of incentives. But we must invert the tendency of considering them as all that matters.**

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## Changing our cities

For 5000 years, cities have been built as a place where people could meet



Then cars arrived ....



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## The main victims: generational inequalities



## “One generation ago, ten-year-olds had more freedom than a teenager does today”

- In a single generation since the 1970s, the ‘radius of activity’ of children declined by 90%
- 1969 - 2001: the share of students walking to school decreased from 41% to 13%
- Similar data from Europe
- Consequences:
  - Obesity
  - Relational deprivation

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## New Urbanism: the shortcomings of car-dependence

- Where cars play a less dominant role people are happier and have more relationships.
- The relational city: High residential density, mixed use, pedestrian areas, parks, sport centers, walkability, car restrictions, public transport, cycling.



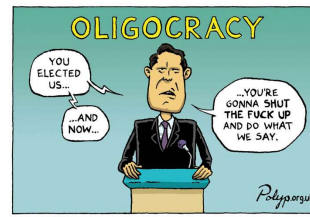
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## Democracy?



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## Post-democracy



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